



# Family Handbook

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## 2021-2022

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Grades K1-7:  
21 Queen Street, Dorchester, MA 02122

Grades 8-12:  
197 Centre St, Dorchester, MA 02124

Phone: (617) 825-0703  
Fax: (617) 825-1829  
Email: [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org)  
Web: [www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org)

English:

If you would like a copy of this handbook in Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Vietnamese, or another language, please contact the front office at [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org) or 617-825-0703.

Cape Verdean Creole:

Si bu kre un kópia di es manual na Kriolu Kabuverdianu ó na un otu lingua, pur favor, kontakta Sekretaria di skóla.

Haitian Creole:

Si ou ta vle liv-sa nan Kreyol, jis rele lekòl-la epi na ba ou yon kopi an Kreyol.

Spanish:

Si necesitas una copia de este libro en Español, o otro idioma, por favor de llamar a la oficina.

Vietnamese:

Nếu bạn muốn một bản sao của cuốn sổ tay này tại Việt Nam, hoặc một ngôn ngữ khác, xin vui lòng liên hệ với Văn phòng chính.

The following resources (and more) are available on the school's website ([www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org)):

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [After School Registration Form](#)
- [Staff List](#)
- [Annual Report](#)
- [Title I Report Card](#)
- [Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan](#)
- [Wellness Policy](#)
- [Title IX Policy](#)

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Dear Families,

Welcome to the start of the 2021-22 school year at the Neighborhood House Charter School. Whether you are a new or returning family, there is a lot to know about NHCS. In this year as we return to school after the unprecedented year of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have updated the procedures in this handbook. Please know that information is subject to change, and we will mark mid-year handbook updates with footnotes, as well as update information on our website at [www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org). We have endeavored to adjust and update our policies with our guiding principles in mind: Safety, Equity, Engagement, and Connection.

Neighborhood House is truly a community and I am grateful for how we have come together throughout the spring and summer, working hard to provide the structures for our children to learn and grow safely this year. I encourage all families to work in partnership with the school by participating in the Family Council, collaborating with your child's teachers and advisors, and attending virtual events. We welcome your involvement!

On behalf of the entire staff of Neighborhood House, we look forward to working with you and your children and we know that while it will be an unusual year, together we will make it a positive one!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kate" and last name "Scott" clearly distinguishable.

Kate Scott, Executive Director

**Queen Street Campus** (Grades K1-7) • 21 Queen Street • Dorchester, MA 02122  
**Centre Street Campus** (Grades 8-12) • 197 Centre Street • Dorchester, MA 02124  
tel: 617.825.0703 • fax: 617.825.1829 • [www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org)

# Mission Statement

Neighborhood House Charter School combines rich and structured learning with extensive social/emotional programming to help all our students succeed in school and in life. We strive to develop scholars who *seek knowledge, embrace effort, act thoughtfully, and commit to the common good.*

Many children come to us with significant needs. We don't give up on them. Our goal is that all of our students thrive at Neighborhood House, graduate from high school, and pursue post-secondary education on the path to life success.



# Remote Learning Confidentiality & Privacy Policy

Our teachers and related service providers may arrange to provide services and instruction through remote means for various reasons.

By participating in virtual meetings/services, you are agreeing that Neighborhood House Charter School may:

- disclose your child's name and email address and possibly your name and email address for the purpose of participation in virtual meetings and service,
- display the appearance and voice of your child, and sometimes of you, via the internet, for the purpose of participation in said group activities, and
- record audio and video content from the virtual services it provides to your child for instructional and/or publicity purposes.

Also, please be advised that student meetings/lessons may be viewed by individuals in other students' households and the Neighborhood House Charter School cannot ensure your child's privacy. By allowing your child's participation, you are acknowledging and accepting the privacy limitations inherent in virtual meetings/classrooms. NHCS requests that you respect the privacy of our students and that you refrain from disclosing any student information that you may have access to during the course of your child's participation in virtual activities.

By allowing your child's participation in virtual activities, you acknowledge and accept this privacy policy.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### School Contact Information

Office Hours	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Email address	info@thenhcs.org
Telephone Number	(617) 825-0703
Fax Number	(617) 825-1829
Mailing Address (K1-7)	21 Queen Street Dorchester, MA 02122
Mailing Address (8-12)	197 Centre Street Dorchester, MA 02124
School Website	www.thenhcs.org

You are welcome to contact administrators and support staff directly at the extensions listed below. While staff will not be able to answer their desk phones during remote learning, they can receive voicemails. To contact your child's teacher, the best option is to email them or to call the front office and leave a message. We do not give out classroom extensions.



In an emergency, please contact the Dean of Student Culture for your child's grade (listed below).

	Position	Name	Ext.
<b>Queen St. Campus (K1-7)</b>	Front Office Coordinators	Denise Choukas	0
	Dean of Student Culture (K1-4)	Melissa Freeman	3274
	Dean of Student Culture (5-7)	J.D. Kimenker	3286
	MS Guidance Counselor	Leona Watson	3259
	Principal of K1-4	Cara McCarthy	3230
	Principal of 5-7	Khoi Tau	3250
	Dean of Campus Operations	Meisha Reece	3203
	OST (After School) Coordinator	KJ Grubbs	3270
	Operations Coordinator	Jess Burke	3297
	Nurse's Office	Mary McNulty-Anglin	3271
<b>Centre St. Campus (8-12)</b>	Front Office Coordinator	Melissa Galvin	1
	Dean of Student Culture (8-12)	Joanne Auguste	3429
	Asst. Dean of Student Culture	Cassie Devine	3405
	Principal of 8-12	Jahmeelah Bai-Grandson	3418
	Dean of Campus Operations	Meghan Harrison	3432
	Nurse's Office	Alicia Gray	3428
	Athletic Director	Scott Urban	3424
<b>Org-wide Staff</b>	Family Engagement Coordinator	Tanisha Cooper	3214
	Director of Student Services	Dana Reder	3220
	Director of Talent	Mary McCarthy	3217
	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Emily Davidson	3275
	Director of College and Career Pathways	Tamy-Feé Meneide	3438
	Chief Schools Officer	Sean Shirley-Davidson	3280
	Executive Director	Kate Scott	3222

## Emergency Contact Information

It is critical that families keep current contact information on file with the school. Please be sure to email [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org) or call the school's front office to notify NHCS in the event that any of the following information changes:

- Parent/guardian's home or work telephone numbers
- Parent/guardian email addresses
- Mailing and home addresses
- Emergency contact person (must be someone other than the parent/guardian) with current phone number and address
- Health insurance information

## Changes to Custody

Please contact the front office immediately if there is a change in custody. NHCS must be notified if there is someone who is specifically prohibited from seeing or picking up a student. A court order barring visitation must be on file with the school.

## School Hours

	Full Day (M, T, Th, F)	Early Release (Weds)
K1 – 1st grade	Arrival/Breakfast: 8:10 am Class begins: 8:30 am Dismissal: 3:20 pm	Dismissal: 12:30 pm
2 – 5th grade	Arrival/Breakfast: 8:00 am Class begins: 8:30 am Dismissal: 3:30 pm	Dismissal: 12:30 pm
6th – 7th grade	Arrival/Breakfast: 7:40 am Class begins: 8:00 am Dismissal: 3:35 pm	Dismissal: 12:30 pm
8th – 12th grade	Arrival/Breakfast: 7:50 am Class begins: 8:10 am Dismissal: 3:30 pm	Dismissal: 12:45 pm

## Snow Days and Cancellations

Neighborhood House will follow the Boston Public Schools decisions regarding school cancellation or closing due to inclement weather or other emergencies. If the Boston Public Schools are closed during the school day due to weather, so is NHCS. If BPS excuses tardies due to weather, so does NHCS. In these cases, NHCS does not send telephone calls, text messages, emails, or any other communication to parents about inclement weather closures. Parents and guardians should monitor major television or radio stations for announcements about school closings.

## After School

NHCS offers After School care for students in grades K1 through 7. This is a fee-for-service program that provides project-based activities, the arts, athletics, and time for homework. After School rates are on a sliding scale based on income and household size. All services end at 6PM.

We provide one snack per student per day for free. To enroll in After School, please contact the OST Coordinator (see page 6 for contact information).

## **Visitor Policy**

All members of the school community (parents and other family members, prospective students and families, board members, community partners, funders, alumni, and officials) are welcome to visit NHCS during regular school hours. Visits to particular classrooms should be scheduled with the classroom teacher in advance. If a family member does have a scheduled appointment, they should tell the front office, who will then contact the appropriate staff member. Please note that teachers are generally not available and we do not interrupt class time except in emergencies. If a family member comes to visit teachers without an appointment, they will be asked by the front office staff the reason for their visit. The appropriate staff member will then be contacted when they are free. Family members may be asked to return at another time if no staff members are available. All visitors are required to sign in and get a visitor's pass at the front office. It is important to maintain a positive learning environment at all times; therefore, visitors should not disturb classroom or school building activities during their visits. This policy is subject to change according to public health guidelines.

## **School Supplies**

Students must come to school prepared to be successful, which includes coming with the appropriate supplies. Parents are expected to provide some basic school supplies (crayons, pencils, paper, glue, etc.) for their child, while NHCS will provide other supplies. A list of required school supplies is available on the NHCS website at [www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org) along with information about Materials Kits.

## **Lockers and Cubbies**

Each NHCS student will be assigned a cubby or locker. Students may use lockers and cubbies to store personal items and are required to keep these areas tidy. Lockers and cubbies remain the property of NHCS, and the school reserves the right to search student lockers at any time. NHCS is not responsible for items missing from unlocked lockers.

Any valuable items should be stowed during the day. Middle and High School students may visit their lockers before and after school or during brief passing periods during the day. The inside of student lockers may be decorated with tape. Stickers and writing are prohibited. Students are financially responsible for any damage to their lockers

## **Lost and Found**

Lost and Found items are located in boxes near the front offices. These boxes are emptied several times a year and unclaimed items are donated to charity. Parents should put nametags or labels on sweaters, coats, hats, mittens, scarves, lunchboxes, backpacks, and any other easily misplaced items. Teachers and staff are not responsible for students' hats, coats, gloves and other items lost throughout the year.

# Transportation

Students who reside in Boston are eligible for transportation to Neighborhood House Charter School as follows:

Grades K - 5	Eligible for yellow school bus if address is more than 1 mile from school
Grade 6 & up	Eligible for an M7 pass (preloaded unlimited T pass)

The eligibility rules above are determined by the Boston Public Schools Transportation Office and NHCS does not have the ability to make exceptions. However, if students are not eligible for the M7 passes because they are not Boston residents, we will be glad to issue S-passes upon request. S-passes do not have pre-loaded value but they allow students to ride at a discounted rate.

**NHCS does not allow 6th and 7th graders to ride the yellow school bus unless accommodations are specifically listed in an IEP or 504 plan.** Any exceptions to this policy would need to be approved in writing by the Middle School Principal and the Dean of Campus Operations.

MBTA M7 passes will be distributed during the first full week of school. There is a replacement fee for lost/stolen passes: \$10 the first time, \$15 the second time, and so on (maximum \$25).

Additionally, students on IEPs, 504s, or BPS-Approved Medical Requests may be eligible for door-to-door transportation. Please see <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/transportation> for more information.

## School Bus

If your child is eligible, the BPS Transportation Department will send a notice with the bus stop location, time of pick-up and drop-off, and bus number. Students who ride the school bus must have a bus tag that lists their bus stop and emergency contact information. Bus tags will be distributed at Orientation and on the first day of school.

If you do not want your child to take the bus after school on a certain day, or if you want your child to be dismissed with another student, **you must contact and speak directly with your child's teacher or the front office** at ext. 0 before 1:00pm on regular dismissal days or before 10:00am on early dismissal days.

## Denial of Transportation for Boston Residents

NHCS considers the school bus and the MBTA (when coming to and from school) to be "an extension of the classroom." This means the NHCS Code of Conduct applies at these times. Students and guardians will receive a bus handbook clearly outlining expectations and discipline procedures. Students and guardians will sign and return a form saying they have read and understand bus procedures and policies. School-provided transportation, including free MBTA passes, may be denied for severe or repeated offenses of the NHCS Code of Conduct. Transportation privileges may also be denied whenever a student's actions endanger the health, safety, or comfort of any rider or the driver. If any issues arise with routes, drivers, or timeliness of

buses, please contact the Boston Public Schools Transportation Department at (617) 635-9520. For other bus issues during the school year, please contact Jess Burke at extension 3297.

Students with disabilities whose IEP services include transportation cannot be denied bus transportation in excess of 10 school days, unless a Manifestation Determination Meeting has been held and the Team determined that the behavior is unrelated to the disability. If a student cannot get to school without transportation services, the student will be marked excused and shall be provided an opportunity to complete missing assignments, make academic progress, and earn credits.

## Cars and the Parking Lot (Queen St. Campus)

Families who drive to the Queen St. Campus must drive slowly through the parking lot yielding to all pedestrians. On-site parking is limited. Parents may use any clearly marked parking spot that is available. If there is no available parking, park on Neponset Street and walk your child up the hill. *Do not park in handicapped spaces* or in the center lanes of either the lower or upper parking lots, and do not block the fire lane by parking in unmarked locations around the traffic circle.

Consistent with section 16B of chapter 90 of Massachusetts General Laws, individuals may not idle personal motor vehicles on school grounds. **If you are dropping off a child in front of NHCS, your child should be able to exit the vehicle on his/her own. You may not block the flow of traffic. If you need to exit your vehicle, please park your car in an appropriate parking spot. Please follow directions given by NHCS personnel regarding traffic during drop off and pick up.**

## Private Transportation Companies

Some families arrange to have their students driven to and from school by a private transportation service or individual. For safety reasons, the school will not release a student to anyone other than the custodial parent or guardian without the parent's permission. If you are making private transportation arrangements for your child, be sure to sign a release form, which you can get from the front office. This form releases NHCS from any liability if there is a problem with private service.

## Early Pick-Up

Students are not allowed to leave school grounds without permission. If you need to pick up your child from school early, please inform the front office at (617) 825-0703. It is important that NHCS has an accurate count of students in the building in case of an emergency. When you pick up your child, you should go to the front office, not to your child's classroom. If your child returns to school later in the day, he or she needs to check back into school at the front office before returning to class.

We ask that students are not picked up early from school less than 30 minutes before dismissal. This causes a backlog in the front office and can interrupt classes. If a student is being routinely picked up early, the family will be reported to the Dean of Campus Operations and the school's Principal. Additionally, if your transportation plans change, please inform the front office as early as possible to give the front office staff enough time to communicate with your child's teacher. If

you call after these times, we cannot guarantee that your child's teacher will be informed of the change.

## **Late Pick-Up (Queen St. Campus)**

We ask that students be picked up **by the end of dismissal from school**. Picking up your child late from school can cause an undue burden on teachers and the front office staff. If a family is consistently picking their child up late from school, they will be reported to the Family Engagement Coordinator and the Dean of Campus Operations. After the third report, this could result in a \$20 per hour afterschool charge.

## **School Meals**

### **Community Eligibility**

All school meals at NHCS (breakfast and lunch) are available at no charge to all students. NHCS participates in the community eligibility provision (CEP) of the National School Lunch program, and is proud to be able to provide this service to our families. However, to ensure that NHCS orders the right amount of food, we ask that families decide at the beginning of the year whether they expect their children to opt in to school lunches regularly. All students will be offered a meal each day; no coupons or tickets are required.

Questions about school meals should be directed to the Dean of Campus Operations.

### **Menus**

Monthly menus are available on the Parent Information section of the NHCS website: [www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org).

## Snacks

Students are allowed to bring a healthy snack to enjoy during a mid-morning break each day. NHCS does not allow soda, juice or candy during snack. The after school program provides one free snack per child per day. If your child brings an unhealthy snack, teachers are directed to hold the snack and return it at the end of the day. We also provide students with a second chance to eat school breakfast during the morning snack time.

## Attendance

Excellent attendance and school success go hand in hand. The more frequently a student is absent – even if the absence is unavoidable – the harder it is for the student to keep up with the class.

**Parents must send an email to [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org) or call the school each day their child is absent.** The email or phone call must include the reason for the absence. While we expect communication from families to explain all absences, only the following reasons will result in the absence being excused:

- An illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school. If such an illness or injury results in an extended absence of more than two consecutive days, it must be verified by documentation from a health care provider.
- A death in the immediate family.
- Court appearances.
- Medical, dental, or psychological appointments during the school day. The parent must show evidence (such as a note from a health care center) that the appointment could not be scheduled after school.
- Religious observances.
- Approved visits to high schools for Middle School students and to college visits for High School students
- Other extraordinary situations approved by a Principal.

Here are a few examples of absences that will not be excused, even if the parent sends a note:

- Absence due to illness or injury for more than two consecutive days without documentation from a health care provider.
- Transportation issues (e.g. flat tire, traffic, MBTA problems)
- Student needed to baby-sit.
- Family vacation.
- Any absences beyond seven in a six-month period, consistent with section 1 of chapter 76 of Massachusetts General Laws.

Students are expected to see their teachers and make up work after an absence, either excused or unexcused.

## Chronic Absenteeism Procedures

Repeated unexcused tardies and/or absences will result in communication with parents and, when appropriate, may result in a referral to the school's Student Support Team, a home visit, referral to social service agencies, CRA or truancy proceedings, retention, or even withdrawal from NHCS (if the students' whereabouts cannot be determined after sufficient time and a thorough investigation).



Additionally, in grades 9-12, absenteeism from class has consequences for course credit and graduation, as follows:

- If a student misses 18 or more classes in a full-year course (9 classes in a semester-long course) they may not receive credit for that course even if they pass the course. They may be required to make up the course in Summer School or repeat the course the following year.
- Any time a student is not in class it counts as 1 class absence (including if they are absent for the day, dismissed early or skip a class).
- Missing more than half of a class will count as 1 class absence
- Loss of credit may lead to retention.

Students are afforded rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("Section 504"), the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") should their absences be related to a disabling condition. Other rare exceptions may apply.

NHCS keeps accurate records of attendance and will make the records available for inspection by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as needed.

## **Tardy Policy and Procedures**

Being at school on time and ready to learn is a critical first step toward academic success. Tardiness and repeated absences mean students miss out on class time and disrupt learning.

Students in all grades who are late to school will be required to sign in at the front office and take a pass to enter class.

Students in grades 5-7 will receive one demerit for every minute they are late to class, and may receive a sign-in if they are late to school and require a pass to class.

Students in grades 8-12 are subject to the following:

- Any student arriving tardy before 8:30 am will receive 1 sign-in
- Any student arriving between 8:30 am and 8:45 am will receive 2 sign-ins
- Any student arriving after 8:45 am will receive 3 sign-ins, which is an automatic detention
- A continuation of this pattern will lead to increased consequences

# Dress Code

Students who do not arrive at school in proper attire will be sent to the office and may be asked to retrieve clothes from home or required to wait until someone can drop off appropriate clothes for them at school.

## Grades K1 - 5

Students in grades K1 - 5 are expected to dress appropriately at all times.

- Outerwear such as coats and gloves will not be worn in the building.
- Hats, baseball hats, hoods and casual headwear are to be removed upon entering the building.
- Offensive slogans and/or insignia are not permitted.
- Any clothing that is considered revealing is not permitted.
- Flip flops, sandals, and slides are not permitted, nor are heels that exceed two inches from the ground.

For grade 5 only:

- Any clothing that has rips or tears is not permitted.
- Leg coverings (shorts or skirts, etc.) that do not go past the fingertips will not be permitted.

## Grades 6 – 7

In addition to the guidelines above, students in grades 6 – 7 are expected to adhere to the following dress standards. Students not in dress code may not be allowed to attend class until they have changed into appropriate attire.

### Middle School Academic Days

- White or light blue Oxford or polo shirts that may be long- or short-sleeved (must have a **collar**, must be worn **buttoned**, and must be **tucked in**).
- Navy blue sweater or sweatshirt (may not have a hood or logo/design other than that of Neighborhood House). NHCS sweatshirts are available for purchase from the school.
- Khaki or navy blue pants, skirt, shorts, or jumper (skirts, shorts, or jumpers may not go past the student's fingertips). Jeans, cargo pants, drawstring pants, athletic pants, and pants with any type of side pocket or loops are not acceptable.
- Pants must be worn above the hips.
- Belts must be worn if pants or skirt has belt loops.
- Shoes must have closed heels (**no sandals, flip-flops or slides**) and heels may not be higher than 2 inches.
- Shoes or **solid** black sneakers.
- Narrow headbands are allowable. Bandanas, sweatbands, head-wraps, and hats or baseball caps are not allowed unless given permission from administration.
- Only white, black or navy blue undershirts, tights, and leggings are allowed.
- Students are not allowed to wear any clothing that has been defaced in any way including

marks, coloring, or tearing.

### Middle School Physical Education (PE) Days

- Every student is expected to purchase official NHCS PE clothing:
  - One official pair of PE pants (either wind pants or sweatpants).
  - One official PE T-shirt.
  - One official PE sweatshirt (optional).
- Entirely navy blue shorts that are no more than 2 inches above the knee may be worn on hot days.
- Students may wear any type of sneakers on PE days.
- Students are not allowed to wear any clothing that has been defaced in any way including marks, coloring, or tearing.

### Middle School Casual Dress

All students are eligible to dress down one day per week in appropriate casual attire if they have met a set of expectations the previous week. The following conditions must all be met in order for students to earn casual dress privileges: no tardies, no homework detention, no dress code infractions, and no behavioral incidents including but not limited to trips to the office. Dress down clothing must adhere to the appropriate dress guidelines outlined under “Dress Code – Grades K1 – 5.”

### Middle School Scholar Dress-Down Days

On the school day after progress reports are sent home, if a student receives a passing grade in all classes they may dress down in their NHCS Scholar shirt. The Scholar shirt must be the outermost layer or displayed prominently.

## Grades 8-12

Dress code apparel is available for sale at <http://www.customhype.com/NHCS>.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academic Days

- Please see the section above entitled “Middle School Academic Days.” The same requirements apply to 8th grade Academic Days.

### 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Academic Days

- Grey or white Oxford or polo shirts that may be long- or short-sleeved (must have a collar, must be worn buttoned, and long sleeve shirts must be tucked in).
- Grey or white sweatshirt or cardigan (may not have a hood or logo/design other than that of Neighborhood House).
- NHCS-branded black quarter-zip sweatshirts may be worn at any time. NHCS PE sweatshirt may be worn at any time, but scholars **must** wear a collared shirt (polo-style or long-sleeved) underneath. Graphics or other markings should **not** be visible on the shirt worn underneath either the quarter-zip or sweatshirt.
- Khaki or black pants, skirt, shorts, or jumper (skirts, shorts, or jumpers may not be more than two inches above the knees).
- **Not acceptable:** Jeans, cargo pants, drawstring pants, athletic pants, and pants with any

type of side pocket or loops below the belt. Jackets of any kind **will not be allowed** in classrooms.

- Pants must be worn at a natural waistline. Belts must be worn if pants or skirt have belt loops.
- Shoes must have closed heels (no sandals, flip-flops, or open backed shoes of any kind) and heels may not be higher than 2 inches.
- Any color shoes or sneakers. Crocs of any style are no longer permitted.
- Narrow headbands & headwraps are allowable. Bandanas, sweatbands, bonnets, and hats or baseball caps are not allowed.
- Only white or black undershirts or tights are allowed. Leggings are NOT permitted as primary clothing. They may be worn under pants or skirts for warmth during the winter.
- Only black leggings are permissible for warmth during the winter months.
- Students are not allowed to wear any clothing that has been defaced in any way including marks, coloring, or tearing. Clothing with offensive, vulgar, unprofessional language, markings, or imagery are not permitted and subject to the discretion of the Dean of Student Culture, Assistant Dean of Student Culture, and/or Principal.

#### **8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Physical Education (PE) Days**

- Every student is expected to purchase official NHCS PE clothing:
  - One official pair of PE pants.
  - One official PE T-shirt.
  - One official PE sweatshirt (optional but highly recommended).
- Entirely navy blue shorts that are no more than 2 inches above the knee may be worn.
- Students may wear any type of sneakers on PE days.
- Students are not allowed to wear any clothing that has been defaced in any way including marks, coloring, or tearing.

#### **9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Casual Dress-Down Days**

All students are eligible to dress down one day per week in appropriate casual attire if they had a “good week” the previous week. A “good week” means no tardies, no homework detention, no dress code infractions, and no behavioral incidents including but not limited to trips to the office. Dress down clothing must adhere to the appropriate dress guidelines as outlined below:

- Outerwear such as coats and gloves will not be worn in the building.
- Sunglasses are not permitted in the building
- Hats, baseball hats, hoods/hoodies and casual headwear are to be removed prior to entering the building.
- Offensive slogans and/or insignia are not permitted.
- Any clothing that is considered revealing by the Principal or Deans is not permitted.
- Leggings are not permitted as primary clothing
- Headphones of any kind are not allowed to be worn around the neck of scholars during class or transitions. Headphones can be utilized, at teacher discretion, in the classroom at various points, but they are not a part of the uniform and should not be visible in common areas.
- No pants or jeans with rips or tears above the knee.
- Torsos should remain fully covered during school events.

#### **Scholar Shirt Days**

On the school day after progress reports are sent home, if a student receives a passing grade in all classes they may dress down in their NHCS Scholar shirt. The Scholar shirt must be the outermost layer.

## **Admissions**

All new students interested in attending NHCS must complete a basic application by the deadline (February 28) in order to be eligible for enrollment. The application for admission is made available online at the NHCS website ([www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org)). Applications are accepted for all grade levels.

NHCS will determine the number of spaces available each year by grade level. In cases where there are more eligible applicants than available spaces, students shall be accepted for admission by a lottery process. Students receive an offer of enrollment in the order their names are drawn (or ranked electronically), subject to the preferences below, up to the number of available slots. All additional names are added to a waitlist.

**Preferences:** Preference will be given first to applicants who have siblings currently attending NHCS, and then to applicants residing in Boston. By law, siblings are defined as students who have a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption.

## **Accreditations and Affiliations**

### **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Charter School Office**

NHCS is authorized through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Charter School Office. The Charter School Office reviews NHCS and all other charter schools every five years to determine whether the school's charter should be renewed. NHCS successfully completed the renewal process in 2014 – 2015 and will be going through its renewal again during the 2019-2020 school year. NHCS also submits an annual report to the Charter School Office for review, and this is available to the community on the NHCS' website: [www.thenhcs.org/](http://www.thenhcs.org/) or by request at DESE's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports). Parents can also request a copy of the annual report from the front office.

# ACADEMIC PROGRAM

## Academic Progress

### Student Report Cards Grades K1 – 4

In grades K1 - 4, students receive report cards three times a year. Parent-teacher conferences will be held in the first and second trimesters. If you have questions or concerns at any time during the year teachers are available to discuss your child's progress. In grades 1-4 weekly work completion reports are sent home.

Report cards and progress reports are graded on the following scale:

Mastery
Proficient
Developing
Emerging

In addition to academic grades students also receive a grade for effort and for conduct.

### Student Report Cards Grades 5 – 12

In grades 5 – 12, students receive report cards four times a year, at the end of each quarter. Two copies of each report are sent home. One copy of each report must be signed and returned to the school. Progress reports are sent home multiple times each quarter. Report card grades appear on the official transcript, while progress reports do not. Progress Report letters must also be signed and returned to the student's advisor. Core academic classes are graded on the following numeric scale:

97 – 100 = A+	87 – 89 = B+	77 – 79 = C+	0 – 69 = F
93 – 96 = A	83 – 86 = B	73 – 76 = C	
90 – 92 = A-	80 – 82 = B-	70 – 72 = C-	

Other specials such as art, music, technology, and physical education, are graded on the following scale:

Outstanding = O
Satisfactory = S
Needs Improvement = N
Unsatisfactory = U

In addition, students in grades 5-12 receive a citizenship grade in every class each marking period using the scale above. Citizenship grades are based on teachers' assessment of students'

conduct, behavior, and demonstration of community values and expectations. Students who have earned at least one “Outstanding” and nothing lower than a “Satisfactory” for all of their citizenship grades in a particular quarter earn Citizenship Honor Roll.

## **Midterm and Final Exams**

All students in grades 6 – 12 will complete final exams in the core academic classes during the final week of the school year. Final exams are a culmination of the year’s learning and count as one-fifth of each student’s grade in that course for the school year. Teachers will conduct review sessions for final exams. Additionally, high school scholars in grades 9 – 12 will take midterm exams at the end of the second quarter for year-long classes.

Students in grades K1 – 5 do not take midterms or final exams.

## **Academic Awards**

In the Middle School and High School, NHCS recognizes high academic achievement with the following awards:

- High Honors – Awarded to students who have earned an A (90% or above) in each of the core academic classes and an S or an O in all other classes.
- Honors – Awarded to students who have earned an A or B (80% or above) in each of the core academic classes and an S or an O in all other classes.
- Students who pass all classes at each progress report are allowed to dress down in their SCHOLAR shirt the day after they receive their report card.

## **MCAS**

NHCS administers the MCAS assessments as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Tests are administered in the spring, with results reported the following fall.

## **College Entrance Exams**

NHCS administers college entrance exams such as the ACT® and/or SAT® for eligible high school scholars. In addition, all NHCS 11th graders take the PSAT/NMSQT, 10th graders will have the option to take the PSAT-10; these exams are benchmarks of college-readiness rather than entrance exams

## **Homerooms and Advisories**

All students are assigned either a homeroom teacher (grades K1 – 4) or an advisor (grades 5 – 12). The assigned homeroom teacher or advisor is the primary contact for the student and his or her family, and oversees the student’s progress, conducts parent meetings, and provides support and guidance to the student.





## **Field Lessons**

Individual classroom teachers arrange field lessons as an important part of the curriculum. Attending field lessons is a privilege. Students are expected to participate but if they have difficulty adhering to school rules, they may not be allowed to do so. Occasionally parents will be asked to contribute to the cost of the trip or asked to chaperone, provided they have a completed CORI application on file with the school's Human Resources Director.

Teachers will send home a permission slip prior to each field lesson. It is imperative that students have a signed permission slip turned in by the deadline. Teachers and school administrators reserve the right to 1) deny field lesson privileges to students who do not turn in a permission slip and 2) obtain oral permission in certain cases. 3) keep a student at school if they have demonstrated poor behavior prior to the trip.

From time to time, Neighborhood House students will leave campus with their teachers as part of their regular program. For example, students might participate in PE or Field Day activities at Hemenway Park and you will not receive permission slips for these activities. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any concerns.

## **Homework**

Homework is integral to a child's education program. It extends the learning process, connects school to home and helps to develop academic independence and responsibility. Parental interest and support are very important in the development of these skills and for the successful completion of homework. Parents are encouraged to provide a quiet, comfortable place where their child can establish a consistent study schedule, work without interruption, and learn to organize their assignments. Homework assignments are collected, graded and are a component of your child's final grades.

### **K1**

Beginning in October, K1 scholars will take home a literacy bag filled with engaging read aloud books. We encourage families to spend approximately 20 minutes each day reading aloud to their child.

### **Grades K2 and 1**

Scholars will receive a weekly homework schedule focused on independent practice that continues to develop foundational literacy, language and math skills.

### **Grades 2, 3 and 4**

Scholars develop increasing independence throughout their elementary years. Beginning in grade 2 scholars will receive daily homework assignments in ELA and math and weekly assignments in science/social studies. Each day scholars will record their homework in their homework log. Parents are encouraged to check their child's log each night. Homework assignments will be logged on google classroom streams as an additional resource for

families. All assigned homework is due the following morning unless explicitly stated otherwise in the planner/google stream.

## **Grades 5 – 7**

Students receive homework planners at the beginning of the year from their teachers. Students should use their planners to record their homework assignments on a daily basis. Parents should check their child's planner each night. The planner should never be blank; if a teacher assigns no homework then "none" will be written in that subject's box in the planner.

Students who miss more than two assignments per week will serve after-school homework detention on Fridays. Students who are failing one or more subjects are required to attend Homework Club from 3:35 until 4:30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Students in Homework Club focus on work due for the next day – not on missing assignments. If homework is not completed at the end of detention, the student is sent home and expected to complete the work at home.

## **Grades 8 – 12**

As in grades 5-7, students receive a homework planner at the beginning of the year. Students who fail to complete homework, or have a failing average for a class, may be required to stay after school for office hours. Office hours vary by grade and content.

# **Promotion and Retention**

## **Grades K1 – 4**

Classroom teachers, support personnel, and parents provide input for promotion decisions. The decision to retain a student will be made by the principal. A student's academic progress, attendance, language development, social development, special needs, and age are factors in making promotion decisions. Discussions about promotion typically begin in early spring and the school will inform parents as early as possible if retention is being considered for their child.

## **Grades 5 – 8**

Students' final grades will be computed based on an average of their grades for each of the four quarters of the school year as well as their grade on the final exam. Students must have an overall average of 70% in each class to pass and be promoted to the next grade.

- If a student fails one class (below 70%), he or she will be required to attend the NHCS Summer Academic Program or another approved summer school program.
- If a student fails two or more classes, he or she will not be promoted to the next grade and may also be asked to attend the NHCS Summer Academic Program or another approved summer school program.

## Grades 9 – 12

Promotion from grade-to-grade in high school is based on credit accumulation in conjunction with the fulfillment of core requirements and academic standards / expectations.

- To advance to 10<sup>th</sup> grade: Students must earn a minimum of 4.5 credits (with a minimum of 1 credit in math or ELA)
- To advance to 11<sup>th</sup> grade: Students must earn a minimum of 10 credits (with a minimum of 3 credits in math or ELA)
- To advance to 12<sup>th</sup> grade: Students must earn a minimum of 16 credits (with a minimum of 5 credits in math or ELA)

## Graduation Requirements

An NHCS diploma is awarded in recognition of the completion of the academic requirements described below. A minimum of 22 credits is required for graduation. During the senior year (Grade 12), full-time students must be enrolled in a minimum of 5 credits. The following class requirements must be met in order to graduate:

English – 4 units

Mathematics – 4 units

Science – 3 units

History – 3 units

World Language – 3 units

Additional year long course in history, science, or world language – 1 unit

Arts/Technology – 1 unit

College and Career Readiness – 1 unit

Choose from the below list – 2 units

- Additional unit of core content
- Additional unit of arts/technology
- Additional unit of college and career readiness
- Fitness (PE, Health, Sports)

In addition, students must:

- Earn a proficient score on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 MCAS tests, and a passing score on the Science Technology and Engineering MCAS, **or**
- Earn a passing score on the English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science Technology and Engineering MCAS and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan, **and**
- Apply to college and have a post-secondary success plan.

## Supports for All Learners

NHCS believes that it is critical to ensure that all possible efforts are made to meet student needs in general education classrooms and to support teachers in analyzing and accommodating the wide range of student learning styles and needs that exist in any school. NHCS offers a wide range of accommodations, instructional supports and strategies within the general education program, and has an established process for determining effective interventions for struggling

learners, as documented by the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). A copy of the DCAP is available upon request. For a notice of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend NHCS and receive accommodations and support services, please visit [www.thenhcs.org/enroll](http://www.thenhcs.org/enroll). The notice is available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

## **English Language Learners**

English Language Learner (ELL) students are children who come from families or communities where English is not their primary language. ELL students can be foreign-born or U.S.-born. They may come to school with little or no English, or have developed considerable amounts of social and “conversational” English. The process to identify students who are English Language Learners is enacted by a certified ESL teacher and is overseen by the Director of Student Services. All ELL students who have not opted out or granted a waiver will be placed in Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classrooms. ELL students have equal rights of access to all courses of study. They also have the right to participate in all school-sponsored activities.

## **Academic Counseling and General Curricular and Occupational/Vocational Opportunities**

Beginning in Middle School, NHCS students may receive information about summer enrichment and other academic opportunities that may be available to them. Our College and Career Pathways Department works with students and their families on Post-Secondary Placement and Transition. All students in grades 7 -12, from linguistic, racial, and ethnic minorities; all genders; homeless students; and students with disabilities will all receive, in grades 7-12, the same information and academic counseling as other students on the full range of general curricular and any occupational/vocational opportunities available to them.

## **The Student Support Team Referral Process**

The Student Support Team referral process is a regular education process initiated by any staff member or parent when they have concerns about a student’s progress, either academic or social/emotional. The members of the Student Support Team meet with the classroom teacher(s) and serve as a resource by helping to identify instructional strategies or program modifications that might benefit the student. The team meets again after a period of four to six weeks to assess the student’s progress and to make further suggestions. The Student Support Team may make a referral for a special education evaluation if the student continues to have difficulty or a disability is suspected. Parents are informed of a classroom teacher’s concern prior to a referral.

# Special Education

## Services

Federal and state laws guarantee every student the right to a free and appropriate public education regardless of disability. NHCS strives to be an inclusive school, placing all students in the least restrictive learning environment. Classroom teachers and special education staff work together to ensure that each student's education is appropriate to meet his or her needs and that all students with special needs have access to the general education curriculum. Accommodations are made to allow students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to be successfully included in the general education classroom. NHCS employs a range of educational professionals with specific qualifications to meet the needs of students with special needs. These staff members include learning specialists, occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists, and school psychologists.

## Process

If a student is having continued difficulty in school and if accommodations have not proved to be effective, a special education evaluation may be requested. A teacher or specialist, an administrator, the Student Support Team, or a parent may request that a student be evaluated. Parents should contact the Director of Student Services if they would like an evaluation. NHCS is responsible for responding to the request within five school days and completing the evaluation upon signed parental consent within 30 school days.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the school will convene a team meeting to review the results and determine if the student meets the eligibility criteria for special education services. If it is appropriate for the student to receive services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. Parents are important members of the decision-making team and their input is critical. It is essential that parents attend these team meetings. Parents may invite individuals from outside the school who play a valuable role in their child's education to attend this meeting.

## Eligibility

A student must meet all of the following criteria in order to be eligible for special education services:

- The student must have a disability.
- The disability must lead to a lack of effective progress in regular education.
- The student must need specially designed instruction and/or related services (Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language and/or counseling) to make effective progress.

## **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

The IEP is the legal document that identifies the services and accommodations that are necessary for a student to make effective progress. Parents play an important role in the development of this document because they often know how their child learns best.

The IEP is reviewed yearly by the team – the student’s teachers, any specialists such as the Speech-Language Pathologist or Occupational Therapist, the parents, anyone that the parents invite, and, quite often the student depending on his or her age. At this meeting, the team will discuss the student’s progress, map out future goals, and determine appropriate services and accommodations for the upcoming year.

Parents have the right to accept or reject parts of the IEP or the entire IEP. No services can be provided to the student until his or her parent or guardian signs the IEP. Re-evaluations of eligibility for special education services occur every three years.

## **504 Accommodation Plan**

A 504 Plan is a legal document which outlines accommodations within the general education program. It is not an IEP. In order to be eligible for a 504 Plan, a student must have a documented disability which “substantially limits one or more major life activities,” such as learning. However, the student may still be making effective progress in the general education curriculum. There may only be a need for some classroom accommodations and/or consultation with the classroom teacher to address the disability. A 504 Accommodation Plan is reviewed annually by the team.

## **Special Education Parent Advisory Council**

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a group of parents who discuss the services and issues related to students with special education needs. We welcome all parents to attend the SEPAC meetings. It provides an opportunity for families to network, attend trainings, and share information. NHCS encourages parents of students with special education needs to attend. Parents work closely with the Director of Student Services to organize meetings and disseminate relevant content.

# PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A strong partnership between families and school is critical to students' success and an important part of building a positive school community. Our goal is to encourage parents to be as involved as possible in activities that support their children's learning.

## School-Family Compact

This compact outlines how families, school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement, and the means by which the school and families will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards. The compact shall be reviewed annually by the NHCS Parent Council.

It is the responsibility of NHCS to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction, in a supportive and effective learning environment to help students meet the state's academic standards. NHCS will provide regular reports to families on their child's progress as well as reasonable access to staff and opportunities to volunteer, observe, and participate in their child's classroom.

It is the responsibility of families to support their child's learning at home and outside school. Families should:

1. monitor student's completion of work done at home;
2. make sure their child gets to school every day and on time, or during COVID closure, attends all scheduled virtual classes;
3. reward their child's efforts;
4. volunteer in their child's classroom, extracurricular, or sports teams;
5. participate in decisions relating to their child's education; and
6. maintain ongoing communication with the school, including attending parent-teacher conferences, responding to phone calls and emails, and notifying teachers of circumstances that may impact their child's learning.

## Family Council

The purpose of the NHCS Family Council is to build community among the families of NHCS, to fundraise for the school, and to promote an environment of understanding and common purpose among families and school staff. The Family Council welcomes all parents and is coordinated by a Steering Committee elected in May. Family Council meetings are held in the evening, and a light dinner and childcare are provided if they are able to be held in-person. Please contact the Steering Committee at [nhcsparentcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:nhcsparentcouncil@gmail.com) if you wish to become involved!

## Communication from and with the School

It is the responsibility of parents to stay informed about all school activities. NHCS communicates with parents primarily through email, text message, and telephone calls. Notices and reports are sometimes mailed or sent home in print with your child. Please contact your scholar's teacher if you feel you are not receiving communication that you should be.

Important reminders about meetings and school activities are often sent by email. Please make sure the school has your current email address and update us whenever there is a change. You may send contact information updates to [info@thehcs.org](mailto:info@thehcs.org) or call the front office.

When parents receive a phone message from their child's teacher, it is very important that they return the phone call as soon as possible. If parents wish to contact a teacher, they may leave a voicemail message and should expect to be contacted within 24 hours. We are unable to pull students out of class to take phone calls and students are unable to call home from the front office or a personal cell phone during school hours.

Other than contact information updates, NHCS encourages parents to share important information such as a death in the family, the loss of a pet, changes in family situation, and changes in employment with classroom teachers and advisors. These changes can affect a student's performance in the classroom as well as their interactions with their classmates. Please contact your child's teacher or the appropriate Principal to discuss this type of information.

## Celebrations

There are many learning celebrations throughout the year that give families an opportunity to celebrate student learning. Some examples include Kindergarten 'Bee the Change' learning celebration, First Grade Tall Tales Living Museum and Second Grade Heroes who Change the World. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend. Individual classroom teachers will also arrange classroom celebrations throughout the year. Some examples include pajama day, beach day, and camping day.

No food is allowed into classrooms for celebrations at any time of the year. Classrooms may opt to celebrate student birthdays at the teacher's discretion; however, **no food may be brought to the classrooms for birthday parties.**

Teachers must be mindful of the severity of food-related medical issues, and even if no students in their class are known to have such issues, they must obtain approval for any food-related activities from the principal and ensure advance consultation with the school nurse. If approved, teachers must inform all parents of the activity.

No food will be provided for students as rewards or incentives. School employees are encouraged to use physical activities (e.g., extra recess, physical education time, etc.) as direct rewards for academic performance and/or good behavior.



# Parent and Student Rights

## Title I

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funds a number of grants. The largest of these is Title I, which aims to improve basic education for low-income students. Under this law, NHCS parents have the following rights:

1. The NHCS must inform you on an annual basis about the school's accountability level. Possible accountability levels range from 1 – 5 with the highest performing schools earning a Level 1 rating and the lowest performing schools in Level 5. Neighborhood House remains a Level 1 school.
2. At your request, the school must provide information about the qualifications of the professional staff in your child's school.
3. The school must inform you when your child will be taught by a teacher who is not "highly qualified" (as defined by federal and state law) for longer than four consecutive weeks.

In addition, the school holds an annual Title 1 parents meeting to inform parents about the rights and responsibilities associated with having their child enrolled in a school wide Title 1 program. Finally, parents are encouraged to be involved with updating and evaluating the Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy on an annual basis.

NHCS' Title I report card is available at [www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org)

## Student Records

A student's record consists of his or her school transcript and temporary record. As the parent or guardian of your child you have the right as mandated in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and 603 CMR 23.00 (copies available upon request) to inspect all portions of your child's student record upon written request to the Executive Director. You may also request copies of any part of the record. To obtain a copy of a student transcript or report card, please email [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org) and allow up to two business days to receive a response, or bring a signed, written request in person to the front office. Any student who is at least 14 years old has the right to view and receive a copy of his or her student record. Any student regardless of age shall have the right to receive a copy of his or her transcript. A student's temporary record shall be destroyed seven years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from NHCS.

## Confidentiality of Student Records

No individual or organization other than the parent, guardian, eligible student, or authorized school personnel is allowed access to a student's record without specific written consent of the parent, guardian, or eligible student unless authorized by law. Under FERPA regulations, staff have been instructed not to disclose information about a student's circumstances. NHCS may provide the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for enrollment-related mailings pursuant to Massachusetts Charter School regulations, but a parent may request that the school withhold their child's information by submitting a request in writing no later than thirty calendar days after the student's enrollment date (i.e. first day in

school). As provided by 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), NHCS may release any “directory information” (including name, address, and telephone listing) to third parties without prior written consent, but a parent may opt-out of release of their child’s directory information by submitting a request in writing no later than thirty calendar days after the student’s enrollment date (i.e. first day in school). The above types of requests must be sent via email to [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org) or mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered to the front office. These requests will only be applicable for the academic year unless otherwise noted. As provided in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(g) NHCS does not seek specific prior consent from eligible students or parents when forwarding student records to authorized school personnel of a school to which the student seeks or intends to transfer.

## **Media and Photo Release**

NHCS is eager to share the work that students and teachers are doing. This means that students can be interviewed, photographed, filmed, or have their work publicly exhibited. Teachers, staff, and designees will occasionally take pictures and/or video recordings of students engaged in school activities for promotional use in media—greeting cards, mailings, annual report, press releases, and so on. If you do NOT wish to give NHCS permission to photograph or videotape your child, you must submit a request in writing no later than thirty calendar days after the student’s enrollment date (i.e. first day in school). The request must be mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered to the front office or sent via email to [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org). This request will only be applicable for the academic year unless otherwise noted.

## **Homeless Education Act**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is the federal law that entitles children who are homeless to a free, appropriate public education, and requires schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance, and success in school. All homeless children have a right to receive an equitable level and quality of services provided to other children, including transportation, educational services, and nutritional and health services. Please contact the Director of Student Services if you have any questions.

## **Grievance Procedures**

Students or family members who have a grievance with regard to discrimination on the basis of race, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement should submit a complaint to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will address complaints either verbally or in writing. Any individual who believes that the school has violated any provision of the charter school law or regulations may file a complaint in writing to the NHCS Chair of the Board of Trustees, reachable at [compliance@thenhcs.org](mailto:compliance@thenhcs.org). The Chair will respond to the complaint in writing.

## **Nondiscrimination**

NHCS does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of gender, in accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA).

In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to NHCS on the basis of race, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, proficiency in the English Language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement, as required by M.G.L. c.71, §89(I); 603 CMR 1.06(1).

Finally, no person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges, or access to the courses of study offered by NHCS on the basis of race, gender, gender identity, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation as required by M.G.L. c. 76, §5.

For a full copy of the NHCS Title IX and Sexual Harassment Policy, please click [here](#). The Executive Director of NHCS oversees compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (serving as the school's Title IX coordinator), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974.

## **Gender-neutral Facilities**

NHCS maintains gender-segregated communal restrooms and changing facilities for male and female students, as well as gender-neutral private restrooms for staff and students. With respect to all restrooms or changing facilities, students shall have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Any student who is uncomfortable using a communal gender-segregated facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon the student's request (or parent's request for Lower School students), be allowed to use a gender-neutral private restroom. No student shall be required to use gender-segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity, nor shall a student be required or asked to use a gender-neutral restroom on the basis of their actual or perceived gender identity. Students should determine which facilities are consistent with their gender identity and let their homeroom teacher or advisor know.

## **Accessibility of Extracurricular Activities**

NHCS provides equal opportunity for all students to participate in intramural and interscholastic sports.

Extracurricular activities or clubs sponsored by the school do not restrict student participation on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness.

## **Freedom from Harassment**

All NHCS students and staff members are entitled to work and learn in an environment that is free from verbal, physical, or emotional harassment on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, or proficiency in English.

Harassment can consist of, but is not limited to, the following: jokes, name-calling, gestures, the display of pictures or symbols, written notes, innuendoes, comments, or other behavior that offends or shows disrespect to a student or staff member including, but not limited to the following: race, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, or proficiency in English. This includes all face-to-face, internet, or written infractions whether direct or through a third party.

Sexual harassment can consist of, but is not limited to, the following: sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

NHCS has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. Bullying is repeated behavior directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying, and the school is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultations with these constituencies, we have established this plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation. The Chief Schools Officer is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan, which can be found on the Parent Information section of our website or upon request at the front office.

Appropriate disciplinary action (including trips to the office, detention, or suspension) will be enacted in cases where students are found to be harassing or bullying other students or staff members or treating them in a discriminatory manner. Students, family members, or staff members who have a concern about harassment should make a written complaint to the Chief Schools Officer. The Chief Schools Officer or designee will respond to concerns verbally or in writing within 48 hours.

## **Payment of School Fees**

Neighborhood House Charter School offers some services and products to our families for a fee: after school care, replacement of lost or stolen MBTA passes, replacement of books and technology, some field lessons, and apparel. This section outlines how NHCS calculates, communicates, and collects those fees. Consistent with law and regulation, NHCS does not charge students any fee related to the provision of required educational programs.

NHCS encourages families to create an account with [MySchoolBucks](#), an internet-based

transactions vendor, to pay school fees online. If families are unable to pay online, they may pay by cash, check, or money order at the front office.

NHCS intends that our programs be available to all families, regardless of means. We recognize that at times families may face financial difficulty. We encourage families to discuss any financial difficulty with the Family Engagement Coordinator who may be able to point the family to outside assistance and resources or to ask for possible payment options. Depending on the nature of the fees and the circumstances, NHCS may allow a payment plan or may waive a fee.

NHCS will regularly review student accounts to determine if any students have more than \$50 in outstanding fees. These families will receive reminders to settle their accounts. **At the end of the year, outstanding fees may result in students' inability to participate in end-of-year field trips and celebrations including stepping up ceremonies and graduation.** As a last resort, families with large outstanding balances may be referred to an outside collection agency.

NHCS believes that financial buy-in improves a student's educational experience, and we expect all families to pay fully for the fee-based services that they opt into. Having full financial participation increases the quality of the services we are able to provide to our students.

# SAFETY & WELLNESS

The Neighborhood House Charter School is deeply invested in the safety and wellness of our students and believes that these are prerequisites to student learning. Operations staff in collaboration with teachers ensure building safety, while the Student Support staff provides health and social services on-site and works in partnership with a variety of agencies and organizations to provide different educational, health, and social service programs.

## Fire and Lockdown Drills

NHCS has documented fire and lockdown procedures which will be practiced by students and staff multiple times each year.

## Health Services and Procedures

NHCS employs a full-time registered nurse at the Queen Street campus and a full-time nurse at the Centre St. campus. The nurse provides in-school care for students, implements required screenings, manages health records and forms for all students, and contacts parents regarding health problems.

Please be sure to contact the nurse and your child's teacher if your child has any unusual health concerns or if your child is absent from school due to a contagious disease as precautions may need to be taken to protect the other children.

## Immunizations and Physicals

NHCS requires all newly enrolling students to submit a physical exam and immunization record from a qualified healthcare provider within 30 days of school entry. **In addition, all returning students entering K2, 3rd, 7th, and 9th grades must submit updated physical exams and immunization records.** The physical exam must have been performed during the previous year by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant. In accordance with state law, students in K1 through 12th grade are required to be immunized with DTaP/Tdap, polio, MMR, Hepatitis B, and Varicella vaccines. Immunization records must include the day, month, and year that the immunizations were given. Requirements vary by grade level. For the most up-to-date requirements, visit the Massachusetts State Website at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/immunization-requirements-for-school-entry-0/download>.

## Absence Due to Illness

For the safety and welfare of all students, it is important to keep your child at home if they:

- Has had a fever over 100 degrees for the past 24 hours
- Is taking cold- or fever-reducing medication
- Has a sore throat and/or swollen neck glands

- Has an undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions
- Has vomited or had diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Has head lice that have not been treated

Please follow the Attendance Policy and notify the front office in case of absence due to illness or injury.

## Allergies

NHCS is an allergy-aware school. We have posted signs around the campuses about allergy preparedness and we train our staff on the proper prevention of and response to allergen-related episodes. For a full copy of NHCS's Allergy Policy, please visit [www.thenhcs.org](http://www.thenhcs.org) or contact the school nurse at either campus.

## Medications

As much as possible, students should take medication at home. If students must take medication at school, parents (not students) must provide the nurse with the medication, a signed physician's medication instruction form, and a signed parent consent form. All medication, including over-the-counter medication (i.e. Tylenol, Sudafed, etc.) and prescription medication, must be administered by the nurse. In the case that the nurse is not available, another staff member will be designated to administer medication. The nurse and/or designated staff person will call parents prior to administering the medication. In the case of an emergency related to allergies, the nurse and any other trained personnel can administer an Epi-pen. On field lessons, the nurse may delegate another adult to administer medication to the student.

## Medical Emergencies

If a student is sick or injured at school, the school will make every effort to reach the parent or the emergency contact person on file with the front office. A member of the administrative team and the nurse will decide what action to take. School personnel will only provide first-aid treatment. Most illnesses and injuries that occur during the school day are minor and can be treated by the nurse. If the student's condition is serious as determined by the nurse, a Principal, or the Principal's designee, a member of the school staff will call for an ambulance. A school employee will stay with the student in the ambulance and at the hospital until the parent arrives.

## Home and Hospital Services

Eligibility: NHCS students whose medical needs require that they must remain at home or in a hospital setting on a day or overnight basis (or any combination of both) for a period of not less than 14 school days in any school year are eligible for educational services in the home or hospital.

Process: Upon receipt of a physician's written notice verifying that the student's medical needs necessitate that he or she remain at home or in the hospital (or any combination of both) and upon a minimum of 14 school days of related absence, the Director of Student Services, in consultation with the Principal of the Lower, Middle, or High School will arrange for educational

services to take place in the home or hospital. Such services will be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as they do not interfere with his or her medical needs.

Home or hospital services are not considered special education services unless the student has been determined eligible for special education services, and the services include services on the student's IEP.

## **Sports-Related Head Injury Policy**

NHCS seeks to prevent concussion and provide a safe return to activity for all students after an injury, particularly after a head injury. In order to effectively and consistently manage these injuries, we have adopted procedures to aid in ensuring that concussed athletes are identified, treated and referred appropriately, receive appropriate follow-up medical care during the school day, including academic assistance, and are fully recovered prior to returning to athletic activity. A full copy of the Sports-Related Head Injury Policy is available upon request to [info@thenhcs.org](mailto:info@thenhcs.org).

## **Warm Clothing for Winter Months**

During the winter months, it is important that children be dressed appropriately. Warm jackets with hats and gloves are necessary as recess is an important part of our school day. Children in grades K1-7 go out for recess every day with the exception of days when the appropriate principal determines that the weather is extreme based on temperature, wind chill, and precipitation, among other factors. Sending in a second set of clothes for our younger students (grades K1 – 2) would be helpful.



# CODE OF CONDUCT

NHCS strives to nurture a positive and safe school culture by understanding students' behaviors through various contexts. By building a strong sense of belonging within the NHCS community we are working to support individual development along with social responsibility. Additionally, we work diligently to pay attention to possible biases that could lead to disproportionate discipline. Discipline strategies allow ongoing access to instruction and enable students to learn from their mistakes and develop a sense of responsibility for their behavior. We believe that teaching students to obey rules to avoid punishment is far less effective than helping students to develop the ability to make reasoned ethical judgments that lead to making good choices.

Behavior management practices at NHCS rely upon our meaningful connections and strong relationships with students. When misbehavior does occur, teachers are expected to respond in a consistent and respectful fashion. Responses to behaviors vary according to infractions. When conflict or harm occurs, we recognize that ALL parties involved have resulting needs. Attending to the needs of both those who were harmed as well as those who caused the harm is an important step towards identifying what must happen. Restoration and/or consequences that help to change behaviors are utilized and are determined based on the nature and frequency of the infraction along with the needs and well-being of the entire school community.

The Code of Conduct applies to the behavior of students while they are in school, on school grounds (before school, at recess, and after school), at school-sponsored activities, and on their way to and from school (on the school bus, at the bus stop, or on the MBTA.)

## Community Expectations

All NHCS students are expected to adhere to the following Community Expectations at all times:

- Make Good Choices
- Make Things Better, Not Worse
- Respect Yourself, Others, and the Community

## Banned Items

Personal electronics (mp3 players, phones, video games, tablets, etc.) may never be used during school hours or in the school building except with specific authorization from a teacher. Students are discouraged from bringing these items to school. Students in K1-4 are required to hand all electronic devices to their homeroom teacher at the beginning of each day for safe keeping. Devices will be returned to students at the end of each day. Electronic devices that are not handed to their homeroom teachers will be confiscated and parents will be contacted and asked to come to school to pick up the device. Students are responsible for turning off and locking up these items during the school day. NHCS unfortunately cannot be

responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items. Items brought to school without permission from the Principal may also be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian.

Toys of any kind are not allowed. Candy, soda, and gum are not allowed on school grounds, at the park, or on field trips, except during special events approved in advance by the classroom teacher. These items may also be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian.

**Alcohol and Drugs:** Possession, use, or selling of any drugs, including tobacco, alcohol, controlled substances, or the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medication is strictly prohibited. Student use or possession of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco is a violation of both federal and state laws. Students who are found in possession of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco are subject to suspension or possible expulsion. Teachers are instructed to immediately report any possible alcohol or drug related behavior to the Principal. If a student appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be searched, questioned and subject to a consequence.

**Weapons:** In accordance with the federal Gun-Free Schools Act, NHCS does not allow weapons of any kind on school grounds at any time. Possession or use of any item reasonably perceived as a weapon is grounds for immediate suspension or possible expulsion.

## Cell Phone Policy

We understand that many of our students have cell phones, and parents rely on these phones for safety in commuting to and from school. We also understand that most cell phones have features that can assist in learning. However, cell phones can distract from learning and contribute to cyber-bullying. **If a parent needs to reach their child during the school day, they should do so by calling the front office at 617-825-0703.** Parents should not expect students to check their phones during the school day. Students are not allowed to use school phones unless they have permission from a staff member.

- Students must turn cell phones off upon entering the building.
- This means that even if a student is dismissed from their last class, they may not actually use their cell phone until they are out of the building.
- This also means that phone use during recess and field trips is not permitted.

**In grades 8-11**, each scholar is assigned their own locking case at the beginning of the year. Each morning they will turn their phone off and lock it in the case. They will keep the case with them all day and will unlock it at dismissal. Scholars are responsible for keeping their case with them and bringing it back in the morning. Lost or damaged cases will cost \$25 to replace. If a scholar is seen using a phone after the first bell, the consequence is an automatic 4-hour Saturday detention. Chronic abuse of this policy may result in additional consequences.

**In grades 5-7**, the consequence for use of cell phones in the building is an automatic behavior detention. If a phone is determined to be on, but is not actually being used by a student (such as hearing a phone ring in someone's backpack), it will result in two sign-ins. However, the student must turn the phone off in the presence of the teacher who determined it was on. If the student refuses to turn the phone off, this will result in an automatic behavior detention.

**In grades K1-4**, students are required to hand their cell phones to their homeroom teacher at the

beginning of each day for safe keeping. Cell phones will be returned to students at the end of each day. Cell phones that are not handed to their homeroom teachers will be confiscated and parents will be contacted and asked to come to school to pick up the phone. Student cell phone use during the school day is not permitted. For students on the bus: cell phones are also turned off on the morning bus. Students who need to contact parents on the afternoon bus may do so. All other use of cell phones on the bus is prohibited.

It's important to note that "phone use" includes but is not limited to the following: making/receiving calls, taking photos, recording or playing videos, texting, using the Internet, reading an e-book, listening to music, emailing, playing games, using apps.

## Technology Acceptable Use Policy

NHCS dedicates significant resources toward providing and maintaining up-to-date equipment and resources for its students and teachers. The use of school technology is a privilege. Misuse, of any kind, is not tolerated and may result in loss of privileges and disciplinary action.

NHCS provides Chromebooks to all students in grades 2 and up, and iPads available in grades K1-1. In order to meet the requirements of the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), all internet activity on the device is filtered and can be monitored by NHCS. The filtering of internet activity on the assigned device occurs whether in use at school or off school grounds. NHCS reserves the right to monitor activity and inspect the device at any time. All information stored on the device is subject to disclosure under the state public records laws and regulations, except for information that may be exempt from disclosure under a specific statute. The NHCS code of conduct applies to all activity conducted on this device, whether at school or off school grounds.

- Students may not attempt to modify the appearance or operation of any technology equipment. This includes, but is not limited to: commands, copying or installing software (unless directed to do so), setting passcode lock, or copying files of any type. Each device should remain in its original or teacher-set configuration.
- Students may not tamper with or vandalize hardware, software, or data.
- Students may only use their NHCS email accounts for school use, not personal email.
- Use of electronic communication to harass, frighten, or bully others will not be tolerated. Any incidents should be immediately reported to a staff member.
- With teacher permission, students may use personal devices for educational purposes only. Any device used on school premises must follow all NHCS teacher guidelines.
- Students may use personal or school-supplied headphones only when given permission.
- Students will use only the applications, software and programs required to complete assignments/projects and only those that have been approved by the assigning teacher.
- Failure to stay "on task" may result in loss of technology privileges and/or disciplinary action.
- Students should not use personal or school equipment to play online or video games without permission from instructing teacher.
- Students may not have food or drink near any technology at NHCS.
- Students may use the Internet only when authorized, and they must abide by the conditions of the instructing teacher. A student using the Internet may visit only teacher-approved sites.
- Students should not email or share any websites, apps or media without teacher approval.
- Unauthorized online access, including "hacking" and other unlawful activities, is prohibited.

- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors is prohibited.
- It is each student's responsibility to check their assigned devices before and after use and to report any problems to their teacher immediately.

Families may be financially responsible for the repair or replacement of stolen or abused hardware, software, or other related materials.

## Academic Honesty

It is expected that all work completed by NHCS students is their own. Academic dishonesty, or cheating, is unacceptable and consequences may include receiving a zero on the work involved, a parent meeting with the relevant Principal, detention, or suspension. These consequences are contingent on the circumstances and age of the student. Some examples of academic dishonesty include:

- Looking at notes or books during a closed book test or quiz.
- Showing work to another student or looking at another student's work during a test or quiz without a teacher's permission.
- Copying another student's classwork or homework or allowing another student to copy classwork or homework without a teacher's permission.
- Using the thoughts or words of another author (from a book, the Internet, or any other source) without properly attributing them.

## Care of Books/Replacement

Students are expected to treat all school materials with respect. In many classes, students will be issued at least one text or workbook and often borrow reading books from the class library. Students need permission to borrow books and materials, and they should be returned in the same condition as they were borrowed. These books are costly and important to student learning. Students will be expected to replace lost or damaged materials or pay a fee. Parents are held responsible for payments due to lost or damaged books.

## Hallway Behavior

When walking through the halls, all students should be calm, quiet and respectful of nearby classrooms. Students should keep their hands to themselves and be careful to not disturb student work on the walls or personal items stored in lockers and cubbies. Running or using loud voices is not acceptable. Students are required to have a Hallway or Bathroom Pass in order to enter the hallways unaccompanied. Students should not loiter in the hallways or enter other classrooms without permission.

## Buying and Selling

NHCS students may not buy or sell goods or services to/from other students on school grounds or at school events unless given advance permission from their teacher or advisor. Teachers may give permission for students to do so if the buying and selling occurs outside of class time, if the items being sold are not distracting or inappropriate for school, and if the proceeds are being donated to public charities or school causes. In no event shall items be sold for students' personal profit.

## **Stealing and Vandalism**

NHCS students are expected to be respectful of both NHCS property and other students' property. Students who steal or damage the property of others may be subject to disciplinary proceedings, including suspension and restitution. All valuable items should be left at home. If there is a reason to bring a valuable item to school, students must lock the item in their locker. Lower School students are required to turn valuable items into their teacher for safekeeping. NHCS assumes no responsibility for personal items brought to school that are stolen or damaged.

If a student is found to be responsible for damaged or stolen school property, the family of the student may be asked to compensate the school for damages. Failure to pay for these items could result in revoking of field trip privileges and withholding of diplomas upon graduation, in accordance with the "Payment of School Fees" section of this handbook.

## **Fighting**

NHCS strives to create a safe community for all students. Any manner of fighting or rough behavior is unacceptable and grounds for suspension. Fighting is a mutual altercation involving two or more students. All participating students may be suspended.

## **Respect**

NHCS students are expected to be respectful to all members of the community. Demonstrating respect includes the following: tone of voice, language, gestures and following directions. Further, students must adhere to the school rules. Failure to do so may result in a trip to the office, detentions, or suspensions (depending on the frequency and severity of the offense).

## **Hazing**

Hazing is any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or any other person. Students who organize or participate in hazing may be subject to suspension. Student witnesses must report hazing to a teacher or principal. NHCS students are annually advised of the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing law and reminded that hazing is punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

## **Behavioral Consequences**

Teachers will administer logical consequences when appropriate. For instance, if a student is

running in the hallway they may be asked to go back and walk. If a student litters in the room they may be asked to pick up trash around the classroom. Classroom teachers and principals will decide on appropriate consequences for students who do not follow the Code of Conduct. They will notify parents about serious or repeated infractions. If students do not improve their behavior, they can be removed from the classroom community or suspended. The student will meet with the appropriate Principal or the Dean of Student Culture in collaboration with parents.

## **Approach to Student Behavior (Grades K1 – 4)**

We view the K1 to 4 years as a learning time not only for academics but for behavior. Teachers recognize students for positive contributions to the class with verbal praise and class tokens. Teachers use redirection and logical consequences to modify behavior prior to giving warnings. Redirections are an opportunity for students to think about their behavior and make a better choice. An accumulation of warnings will result in a partial or complete loss of preferred activity time. Students who willfully fail to adhere to basic expectations will receive warnings. Examples include being disruptive or refusing to engage in classwork.

Students are sent to the Dean of Student Culture for repeated or major offenses. Major offenses include fighting, disrespect to a teacher, and destruction of property. The Dean of Student Culture will process with the student, record the incident and contact families.

## **Merits/Demerits (Grades 5 – 7) and Legend Points (Grades 8 – 12)**

Teachers give merits or Legend Points for positive behavior such as helping another student; picking up a piece of trash, holding a door, etc. Students can redeem these at the reward stores held a few times during the year. Teachers will attempt to use warnings and logical consequences to modify behavior prior to giving demerits. Students may receive demerits or lose Legend Points for willfully and repeatedly failing to adhere to basic expectations. Examples include being rude, disruptive, and disrespectful.

## **Trips to Office (Grades 5 – 12)**

Students are sent to the office if they have lost all chances in the class through accumulated demerits, or for a major offense. Demerits do not carry over from one class to another. We work with students to reset every day with the opportunity to make better choices. Major offenses include swearing, peer insults, disrespect to a teacher, etc. When a student is sent to the office the incident is recorded on a student process sheet, which includes asking the student what he/she did, what led to the behavior, and what he/she could do next time. The parent is then notified about the trip to the office. If a student receives four trips to the office in one week the result is detention until 5:30. For some larger infractions, students may receive an automatic detention. The detention may occur on any day, including the day of the infraction. Failure to report to a behavior detention will result in a suspension. If the student receives 8 or more trips to the office in a week will result in “Out-of-the-Community” (“OOC”).

## **Suspensions**

Suspension means removal from regular classroom activities for longer than one half of one school day. Extracurricular and after-school activities are not considered regular classroom activities.

Additional procedures and rights apply when a student is suspended for more than ten days in one school year. For more information about Massachusetts state law and regulations on suspensions in schools, please see M.G.L. ch. 71, sec. 37H, 37H½ and 37H¾, and 603 CMR 53.00. A copy of NHCS' full suspension policy and procedures is available upon request.

Suspensions primarily occur due to one particularly egregious act such as fighting, vandalism, extreme rudeness or foul language. When a student receives a suspension the parents are notified directly over the phone. The suspension is usually served the following day. For more egregious actions or patterns of behavior the number of suspension days increases. In-school suspensions can be granted at the request of the parent or the school administration. The suspended student will have a re-entry meeting the following morning with an administrator and the parent. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if the student is ready to re-enter the community and has learned from the experience and is willing to change their behavior. Sometimes a student is given an "Out-of-the-Community" ("OOC") rather than a suspension. An OOC is less severe: it can last for a shorter period of time and the event is not recorded on the student's report card. However, whenever a student is removed for more than half a day from regular classroom activities, the incident and discipline is reported to the Department of Education as a suspension.

We make every effort to avoid suspension as a consequence in Early Childhood (K1 -2). In the event that a suspension is unavoidable for serious violations of the Code of Conduct, suspensions may be in or out of school. If a student is given an out of school suspension, a parent or guardian must meet with the Principal on the day that the child is scheduled to return to school (unless other arrangements have been made).

## Expulsions (all grades)

Expulsion means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½. A student may be expelled from school for the following offenses:

- Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and/or heroin.
- Any student who assaults a Principal, other administrator, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games.
- Any student upon whom a felony criminal complaint or felony delinquency complaint is issued, or who is convicted of a felony, or who is adjudicated guilty or admits guilt in court with respect to a felony or felony delinquency; in this case, the Principal must determine that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

A full copy of NHCS' expulsion policy and procedures is available upon request. Any student who is being considered for expulsion shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing;

provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal. After said hearing, the Principal may, in his or her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel the student.

Any student who has been expelled from NHCS pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Chief Schools Officer. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Chief Schools Officer of his or her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Chief Schools Officer. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

## **Educational Services**

Students serving an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school.

Students who are expelled or on long-term suspension have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide Education Service Plan.

## **Procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who are subject to long-term suspension or expulsion hearings are entitled to additional procedural safeguards beyond the rights outlined above. These additional safeguards are:

- Functional behavior assessment
- Behavior intervention plan
- Manifestation determination
- Procedural safeguards notice

NHCS will, with parental participation, conduct a functional behavioral assessment, develop and implement a behavior intervention plan, and conduct a manifestation determination, all of which will be taken into account during the hearing.



# **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Regular meetings of the NHCS Board of Trustees occur on weekdays throughout the year.

All meetings of the Board of Trustees are open to the public (with the exception of executive sessions) consistent with the Open Meeting Law. Full meeting notices with agendas for each upcoming meeting will be posted at the NHCS website as they are available. Reasonable notice will be given of additional or emergency meetings.

## **Board Members**

Christy Strawbridge, Chair

Susan Donahue, Vice Chair

Eric Riak, Treasurer

Nick Azrack

Alicia Cooney

Cassandra Cumberlander

JennyBess Dulac

Abrigal Forrester

Patrece Joseph

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Maggie Siegel

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