

# Northbridge Elementary School

## Parent/Student Handbook



# 2009-2010

**The Northbridge Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, color, homelessness, sexual orientation, age or disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices.**

**If you would like to have any part of this handbook translated into another language  
please contact the school principal.**

NOTHBRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Cross Street  
Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588  
Telephone (508) 234-6346 \* (508) 234-8406

August, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is your copy of the Northbridge Elementary School Parent-Student Handbook for the 2009-2010 school year. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with all of the important information it contains. Also, we would like you to read and discuss with your child our School Policies. It is a requirement of the Northbridge Public Schools that parents sign that they have reviewed the Student Handbook with their child. **Please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter to your child's teacher.** Thank you for your support in complying with this request. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this request or the information in the handbook, please contact us at 508-234-6346.

Sincerely,

Jill Healy  
Principal

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I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND WILL ADHERE TO THE POLICIES  
OUTLINED IN THE NORTHBRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT  
HANDBOOK.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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**Northbridge Elementary School  
30 Cross Street  
Whitinsville, MA  
508-234-6346**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK 2009-2010**

*Jill Healy-Principal*

**WELCOME**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Northbridge Elementary School! We offer your child the beginning of many exciting and challenging learning experiences, which will lay the foundation for their future happiness and success in school. We look forward to working with you and your child. From the moment your child walks through the doors of our school, we are committed to involving you in your child's education.

As parents, you are your child's first and most influential teacher. Therefore, we count on you to form a partnership with the Northbridge Elementary School so that we can provide the best possible educational environment for your child. Your participation means a lot to us and most especially to your child.

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with our handbook. We hope it will be useful to you and will answer some of your questions. Our rules are set up for the safety of our students. We also have policies that may seem cumbersome at times, but this is all for the safety and security of your children. Your children are very valuable to us, as we know they are to you. We take great pride in taking care of and educating your children.

On behalf of the staff and administration we would like to extend an invitation to you to visit the Northbridge Elementary School, attend your child's programs, and to become an active member of our volunteer program and PTA.

We value you as parents and treasure the opportunity to help your children prepare for their future. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Sincerely,

Jill Healy  
Principal

And the  
Northbridge Elementary School Faculty

# Northbridge Elementary School

## Staff Directory

508-234-6346

<b>Administration</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone ext.</b>
Jill Healy, Principal	Office	<a href="mailto:jhealy@nps.org">jhealy@nps.org</a>	2101
Abbie Russo, Adjustment Counselor	Office	<a href="mailto:arusso@nps.org">arusso@nps.org</a>	2106
<b>Office Personnel</b>			
Donna Morreale, Secretary	Office	<a href="mailto:dmorreale@nps.org">dmorreale@nps.org</a>	2100
<b>Nurse</b>			
Michele Rokes	Office	<a href="mailto:mrokes@nps.org">mrokes@nps.org</a>	2102
<b>Bright Beginnings</b>			
Jackie O'Neil	104	<a href="mailto:joneil@nps.org">joneil@nps.org</a>	1104
Shelley Rivelli	104	<a href="mailto:srivelli@nps.org">srivelli@nps.org</a>	1104
<b>Pre-School</b>			
Talia Brown	106	<a href="mailto:tbrown@nps.org">tbrown@nps.org</a>	1106
Linda D'Amato	112	<a href="mailto:ldamato@nps.org">ldamato@nps.org</a>	1112
Pam Kuindersma	111	<a href="mailto:pkuindersma@nps.org">pkuindersma@nps.org</a>	1111
Debra Pinheiro	105	<a href="mailto:dpinheiro@nps.org">dpinheiro@nps.org</a>	1105
<b>Kindergarten</b>			
Jessica Baldwin	102	<a href="mailto:jbaldwin@nps.org">jbaldwin@nps.org</a>	1102
LuAnn Belseth	101	<a href="mailto:lbelseth@nps.org">lbelseth@nps.org</a>	1101
Julie Bouthillette	M6	<a href="mailto:jbouthillette@nps.org">jbouthillette@nps.org</a>	1406
Kelly Boyle	108	<a href="mailto:kboyle@nps.org">kboyle@nps.org</a>	1108
Eileen Gosselin	107	<a href="mailto:egosselin@nps.org">egosselin@nps.org</a>	1107
Tricia Martin	103	<a href="mailto:tmartin@nps.org">tmartin@nps.org</a>	1103
DawnMarie Mignault	M5	<a href="mailto:dmignault@nps.org">dmignault@nps.org</a>	1405
Sue Perron	109	<a href="mailto:sperron@nps.org">sperron@nps.org</a>	1109
Nicole Salmonsens	M4	<a href="mailto:nsalmonsens@nps.org">nsalmonsens@nps.org</a>	1404
Lynne Strid	110	<a href="mailto:lstrid@nps.org">lstrid@nps.org</a>	1110
<b>First Grade</b>			
Liz Abbondanza, Spec. Ed.	M2, M3	<a href="mailto:eabbondanza@nps.org">eabbondanza@nps.org</a>	3004
Kathy Averka	M3	<a href="mailto:kaverka@nps.org">kaverka@nps.org</a>	1403
Kristen Brown	202	<a href="mailto:kbrown@nps.org">kbrown@nps.org</a>	1202
Karen Demeritt	301	<a href="mailto:kdemeritt@nps.org">kdemeritt@nps.org</a>	1301

Mary Juges	205	<a href="mailto:mjuges@nps.org">mjuges@nps.org</a>	1205
Mary Landry	203	<a href="mailto:mlandry@nps.org">mlandry@nps.org</a>	1203
Erica Lariviere	M2	<a href="mailto:elariviere@nps.org">elariviere@nps.org</a>	1402
Jill Redding	201	<a href="mailto:jredding@nps.org">jredding@nps.org</a>	1201
Michelle Usenia	204	<a href="mailto:museniam@nps.org">musenia@nps.org</a>	1204
Kelle Walker	305	<a href="mailto:kwalker@nps.org">kwalker@nps.org</a>	1305
Jen Wing, Spec. Ed.	203, 204	<a href="mailto:jwing@nps.org">jwing@nps.org</a>	3003

### **Related Arts Specialists**

Jess Lachepelle-Physical Education	Gym	<a href="mailto:jlachepelle@nps.org">jlachepelle@nps.org</a>	1502
Wendy Riordan- Music	302	<a href="mailto:wriordan@nps.org">wriordan@nps.org</a>	1302
Christine Simoneau- Art	304	<a href="mailto:csimoneau@nps.org">csimoneau@nps.org</a>	1304
Michele Shorten-Technology	M1	<a href="mailto:mcooney@nps.org">mcooney@nps.org</a>	1401
Michelle Muscatell-Library	Library	<a href="mailto:mmuscatell@nps.org">mmuscatell@nps.org</a>	1125

### **Educational Specialists**

Michael Morasse, Team Chairperson grades Prek-1		<a href="mailto:mmorasse@nps.org">mmorasse@nps.org</a>	2306
Maureen Racicot, Speech and Language Pathologist		<a href="mailto:mracicot@nps.org">mracicot@nps.org</a>	1504
Melissa Shenian, Speech and Language Pathologist		<a href="mailto:msheniam@nps.org">msheniam@nps.org</a>	1501
Roberta Trombley, Reading Academic Support		<a href="mailto:rtrombley@nps.org">rtrombley@nps.org</a>	1206

### **Instructional Assistants**

Joyce Anderson	Sue Wallace	Andrea Derosiers
Annie Lund	Kelly Gallagher	Sue Susienka
Deb Ariel	Lori Susienka	Lee Hartwick
Lisa Fay	Sue Stone	Janet Cafferky
Laurie Ciras	Peg Gay	Patty Paine
Andrea Guerin	Kelly Snyder	Donna Flemming
Sue Goldstein	Dolores Lavallee	Nicole Leach
Carrie Lebel	Aimee Cleery	Michelle Smith
Collette Rae	Doreen Schott	Mary Collette
Sheryl Nicolletti		

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The Northbridge Public School System is committed to providing quality educational opportunities. We strive for excellence by enabling every student to become a caring, competent, considerate individual committed to be a responsible and productive citizen and lifelong learner.*

*The Northbridge Elementary School community believes through the shared responsibilities of home, school, and community, our school will provide all students with educational opportunities to reach their full potential within a safe and challenging environment that promotes academic excellence and educational equity.*

## PHILOSOPHY

*The Northbridge Elementary School:*

- *Is a community in which unique gifts, talents, and experiences are recognized and valued*
- *Provides leadership, personnel, curriculum, equipment, and materials to ensure the creation of a safe, positive, and productive learning environment*

*The Northbridge Elementary School Students:*

- *Experience intellectual growth by learning to communicate, solve, analyze, integrate, and create*
- *Realize social, emotional, moral, aesthetic, and physical development*
- *Will go forth with a personal sense of responsibility and citizenship, mutual respect, high self-esteem, and the quest for life-long learning*

## GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

### **School Day for Children:**

8:30 AM-2:45 PM

### **Office Hours:**

7:45 AM-3:45 PM

### **Breakfast:**

8:20 AM

## LUNCH PROGRAM

The Northbridge Elementary School provides a School Breakfast Program as well as School Lunch Program.

### Prices are as follows:

Breakfast - \$1.25

Lunch - \$2.50

Milk only \$ .50

The school does provide a Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch Program for those students who qualify. These forms are sent home with all students the first day of school. Please contact your child's school for the necessary forms if you feel your family becomes eligible at any time throughout the school year.

A Computerized Cash Register System is used at all Northbridge Schools. Each student has their own identification number used when making purchases. Please help your child learn his/her number as it never changes while he/she is in our school system.

Prepayment of lunch and milk is encouraged. You can pay for the week or the month. Make checks payable to the **Northbridge Food Service**. Please do not send your child to school with any glass containers.

## OPEN HOUSE

### **Kindergarten**

Kindergarten Open House is held the first day of school for kindergarten to allow students and parents to meet their teacher and see their classrooms. This Open House helps to ease the student's transition into kindergarten.

### **First Grade**

The Northbridge Elementary School holds an annual Open House the third week of September for grade one students. The Open House provides parents and teachers an opportunity to say hello as students show-off their classrooms and initial projects. It is an exciting night for students as they are the tour guides through their school. This is an enjoyable experience for children and their families.

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conferences are regularly scheduled in November for students in kindergarten and first grade. For students who are having academic difficulties, conferences are scheduled again in March. Kindergarten conferences are held in November, February, and May. Parents are always welcome to contact their child's teacher. If you have concerns, please make an appointment to speak with the teacher, nurse, or principal.

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home two times a year for children in kindergarten (a skills checklist) and four times a year for children in grade one. After reviewing the report card, please sign one copy and have your child return it to their teacher. Please note the dates on the school calendar in the "School Information" packet sent home on the first day of school.

## MID-TERM REPORTS

Mid-term reports are sent home halfway through each marking period for all students who may have academic difficulties. Please review the information with your child. If necessary, contact your child's teacher with any concerns.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

The following school policies are presented to assist you in your understanding of the general operation of the school. Your knowledge and understanding of these policies is important in helping your child make a satisfactory adjustment to the school community.

### ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

A child must be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2008, in order to enter Kindergarten for the 2009-2010 school year. Any student enrolling in Northbridge Public Schools for the first time must present a copy of his/her birth certificate and complete immunization records. Failure to produce complete immunization records will result in the student not being permitted to enroll. All children will be screened in the spring prior to entering kindergarten. The kindergarten staff and speech and language pathologists will conduct the screening.

### ATTENDANCE

The Northbridge Elementary School is committed to the principle that full attendance is an essential obligation for achieving academic success. Absenteeism impairs a student's ability to attain appropriate developmental milestones, master grade level material, and develop good study and socialization skills. The Northbridge Elementary School is committed to working cooperatively with parents, family, physicians, and if necessary, the local juvenile court to ensure that the laws governing attendance are enforced. Any parent experiencing difficulty sending their child to school on a regular basis is invited to contact the school principal or nurse to develop strategies for resolving the problem.

### ABSENT NOTIFICATION

#### Parent Obligations

**By law, parents MUST notify the school when their child is going to be absent or tardy. Parents are also required by law to furnish the school with home, work, and emergency telephone numbers where they can be contacted during the school day. Parents who do not notify the school within 30 minutes from the start of school will be contacted by a school official through Connect-Ed or through a home visit.**

ALL requests for "excused" absences MUST be accompanied by a doctor's note or similar written evidence BEFORE they will be considered. Written applications for "excused" status should be submitted on the day of the student's return and may not be considered if presented later than 7 days following the absence.

Parents MUST attend school meetings when excessive absences or tardies require that they be held.

Vacations and extended absences while school is in session usually have a negative effect on the student's performance and are discouraged. Parents seeking "excused" status during these periods must apply to school officials by providing an itinerary of the activities. "Excused" status may or may not be granted. The student will be responsible for making up all the missed schoolwork and may be given additional tasks related to the itinerary.

If a student is absent from school for any reason, she/he is required to complete all assignments and make-up work.

### UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

Parents do not have the option of keeping a student out of school for other than the excusable reasons. Even if the absence (either requested in advance or explained later) meets the approval of the parent, the school makes the final determination as to whether or not it is excusable. Chronically absent students and their parents will meet with the Principal in an attempt to improve attendance. An attendance contract may be established. (One provision of the contract may be the withdrawal of the student from one or more courses if the terms of the contract are not met.)

If a student is absent without medical excuse for fifteen (15) consecutive school days, the parents and student shall be sent written notice and shall be provided with the opportunity to meet with a designated staff person within ten (10) school days to discuss the student's status and educational opportunities that are available within the District. If the student and parents refuse or fail to participate in such a meeting, the student will be considered to have withdrawn from the Northbridge Public Schools.

### SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS

The Northbridge School Department will fully comply with and enforce Massachusetts' laws requiring court notification and action on behalf of any child between the ages of 6 and 16 with more than 7 unexcused absences in any 6-month period. All parents of students in this category will be notified in writing that a Chins (truancy) or criminal (failure to cause attendance) complaint has been made. The Principal, acting as the representative of the School Committee, shall have sole jurisdiction in determining whether an absence shall be excused. The Principal for "excused" status will consider issues of serious medical impairment, bereavement, religious holidays, or emergencies.

Parents of students with 3 or more unexcused absences or 6 or more tardies in any term may be required to attend a meeting with school officials BEFORE he/she will be allowed to return to school.

Any student unable to attend a regular school session cannot participate in any afternoon or evening school activities unless the Principal approves a written request. The Principal may also suspend other school privileges and activities if a student has accrued 3 or more unexcused absences in any given term.

Sometimes, excessive absenteeism can be an indication that abuse or neglect exists in the home. Where necessary, a referral will be made to the state Department of Social Services.

#### **OTHER GUIDELINES**

1. All students at the Northbridge Elementary School must be in class when school begins, or they will be considered tardy.
2. Students arriving more than 5 minutes after the start of school MUST report to the office for a late slip accompanied by a parent.
3. Early dismissal requests require prior written notification from a parent.

#### **Notes from Home to School**

A note to your child's teacher is required when:

- Your child will be late for school
- Your child will be dismissed early
- Your child returns to school after an illness
- Your family changes addresses and/or phone number
- Your child's transportation plans change

#### **STUDENT ARRIVAL AND PICK UP**

##### **Arrival**

- Students should not be dropped off at school before 8:20 AM.
- Please have your children cross the street where the crossing guard is stationed to insure their safety.
- Please be sure the students use the crosswalks and sidewalks.
- When driving your child(ren) to school please park in the church parking lot across the street and escort your child(ren) to the building..
- Please do not drop students off in the faculty parking lot adjacent to the building, as there are no available spaces for parent parking that will allow the parents to bring the students safely into the building.
- It is the parent's responsibility to be sure the child enters the school building safely after being dropped off.

##### **Pick-Up**

To assure that no unauthorized person takes a child, we have the following procedure:

- Children to be picked up will report to the area beyond the double doors at the North Door at 2:45.

- Teachers will be assigned to Parent Pick-Up area and line children up according to grade.
- At 2:45 parents may come to the door and take children.
- At 2:50 we will take any children not yet picked up to the office.
- We ask ALL PARENTS, whose children take a bus, walk, or are usually parent pick-up to fill in the pick-up authorization slip. All children are thereby covered for every possible situation. The teacher on duty will have the authorization slips with her. If the person taking the child is unknown to the teacher, they will be required to furnish identification.
- If the person picking up the child is not on the authorization slip or the child is usually not a parent pick-up; the child must have a parental note initialed by the office. In an emergency the office may authorize a pick-up without a parental note.
- Please park in the church parking lot across the street when picking your child up from school.

#### **TARDIES**

Promptness to school is vital for a student to develop proper work habits and to get a full day of instruction. **The instructional day begins promptly at 8:30 AM at which time students should be inside their classroom ready to learn.** If a student is late, a parent must accompany the student to the main office. Being on time to school and class is mandatory.

#### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE**

Please notify the office of any change in address or telephone number (i.e. home, work, or emergency). It is very important that we be able to reach a parent/guardian or authorized adult in case of an emergency.

#### **RESTRICTIVE DISMISSAL**

Whenever there is a restriction as to whom the student may be discharged, we must have one of the following:

- A. In case of a divorce or separation, we must have a court order indicating the person who is restricted from picking up the child.
- B. Children will only be dismissed to verified names on Emergency Cards.

**Identification will be required before the child is discharged in either situation.** If there is a change in either A or B, the school must be notified in writing of this change. Appropriate personnel will be informed.



### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds before their regular dismissal time without prior written approval from their parent/guardian. If you would like your child to leave for a medical or dental appointment, please send a note with your child to the office before school. In addition we're asking parents to come to the office to sign out their child. Students will not be dismissed directly from their classroom. If you wish another parent to pick up your child for an early dismissal, his/her name must be registered on the student's Emergency Card and proper identification will be required.

### **CONNECT-ED**

Through an automated system you will receive a message from the Superintendent of Schools on your home phone number notifying you of various events/information. If you wish to have this message sent to a different phone number other than your home, please notify the Northbridge Early Childhood Center's office with the change in information.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL DUE TO WEATHER**

In case of an early dismissal due to weather, it is imperative that arrangements be made for the care of your children should you happen to be absent from your home. Be sure that your children are thoroughly familiar with these arrangements and know where they should go if they are dismissed from school early because of an emergency. Early planning is the best preventive measure.

It is the policy of the Northbridge Public Schools to activate the Connect-Ed system to alert parents of unplanned early dismissals. Announcements of early school closings will also be made on WBZ-TV Channel 4 and radio stations WSRS, WTAG, and WBZ-1030.

### **CHANGES IN TRANSPORTATION**

If someone other than those who normally come for a student are to pick him/her up, parents should **CALL, VISIT, OR WRITE THE SCHOOL** and notify the staff of the change. No student will be allowed to change his/her normal going home procedure unless the parent/guardian notifies the school in advance. Your child's safety and security are of primary importance.

### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR DELAYS**

School Closings, delayed starting time or early dismissal will only be announced by the Connect-Ed system and on the following Radio Stations WSRS, WTAG, WBZ-1030 and WBZ-TV Channel 4. No announcement will be made from the school. **Please do not call the school for this information**, as these decisions are not made on an individual school basis. If school is closed for the day or dismissed early, all school related activities are canceled.

### **REGISTRATION**

When registering a new student, please bring a copy of the child's birth certificate, most recent immunization record, proof of residency, and if coming from another Massachusetts school system, the transfer form.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

Please notify the school as soon as you know the date of your child's withdrawal so that the records can be processed and sent to the receiving school.

### **Annual Notification To Students And Parents On Student Records/Internet Disclosure**

*In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Education Student Record Regulations, the Northbridge Public School District shall:*

1. Take all reasonable precautions to preserve the confidentiality of a student's records.
2. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon request of the parent or legal guardian.
3. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon his or her request provided that the student is fourteen (14) years of age or older or upon entering the ninth grade.
4. Disseminate, to parents and students, State Regulations on Student Records and this policy annually.

### **Regulations:**

The State Board of Education has adopted Regulations pertaining to Student Records that are designed to ensure parents' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records.

The regulations apply to all information kept by a school committee on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is

kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school system about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extra-curricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons. The temporary record is destroyed seven years after the student leaves the school system.

**The following is a summary of major parent and student rights regarding their student records:**

*Inspection of Record* - A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least fourteen (14) years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student within ten (10) days of the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. In the event the parent/student requests copies of a student record, the District may charge the parents/student for said copies at the District rate.

*Confidentiality of Record* - With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

*Amendment of Record* - The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information of the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

*Destruction of Records* - The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.

*Transfer of Records*: It is the practice of the Northbridge Public Schools to forward the student record of any student who transfers to another public school district upon request of the receiving district.

*Non-Custodial Parents*: Unless there is a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent (parent without physical custody of the student) of any public school student has the right, subject to certain procedures, to receive information regarding the student's achievements, involvement, behavior, etc. A non-custodial parent who wishes to have this information shall submit a written request annually to the child's school principal. Upon receipt of such a request, the principal shall send written notification to the custodial parent by certified and first class mail that the records and information will be provided to the non-custodial parent in twenty-one (21) calendar days unless the custodial parent provides documentation of the non-custodial parent's ineligibility to access such information. In all cases where school records are provided to a non-custodial parent, the electronic and postal address and other contact information for the custodial parent shall be removed from the records provided. Any such records provided to the non-custodial parent shall be marked to indicate that they may not be used to enroll the student in another school. Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school will notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent. M.G.L. c.71, §34H, 603 CMR 23.07.

*Third Party Access*: Authorized school personnel, to include: (a) school administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the school committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the school committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity; (b) administrative office staff and clerical personnel, employed by the school committee or under a school committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record; and (c) the Evaluation Team which evaluates a student, shall have access to the student record of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties. The consent of the parent or eligible student shall not be necessary.

*As required by federal law, the District is required to release the names, addresses and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request for*

*recruitment and scholarship purposes without prior consent. In addition, the District **may release** the following information about a student without prior consent: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, post-high school plans and directory information such as homeroom assignments. However, in all instances, parents and eligible students have a right to request that this information not be released without prior consent by notifying their school building office in writing by the end of September of each school year.*

In reference to the Internet, use of a student's name, photo or samples of their work on the Internet or District web page must be in accordance with the Northbridge Public Schools Student Internet Policy and Regulations, which requires prior written parental approval. School principals shall provide appropriate authorization and release to be executed by parent/guardian prior to release, publication or posting of such information.

*A parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) in the United States Department of Education (202) 260-3887. If you have any questions regarding this notice, or would like more information and/or a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Education Student Record Regulations, please contact the building principal.*

#### **NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

Massachusetts' law affects the ability and procedure for non-custodial parents to access student records. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 34H requires that, since they do not have physical custody of their child, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.

Upon the Principal's receipt of the request from a non-custodial parent for student records, Northbridge Early Childhood Center must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail of the following:

- The student record information shall be provided to the non-custodial parent after (21) days, unless the custodial parent submits to the Principal documentation of a court order prohibiting contact with the child or the distribution of the information

OR

- Documentation of a temporary or permanent order issued for the protection of the custodial

parent and child from abuse by the requesting parent.

The school must delete the electronic and postal address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

#### **STUDENT SERVICES**

##### **Child Find**

The Northbridge Public School District is required to identify all children, ages three years to twenty-one years, who reside within the District, have not yet graduated from high school, and who are in need of special education and related services. Any child suspected of having a disability and believed to be in need of special education and related services may be referred to Cathy Stanton, Director of Pupil Services, Northbridge Public School District, 87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, MA 01588 (508-234-8156 X204)

##### **Information Regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The Northbridge Public School District will identify, evaluate and provide an appropriate public education to students who are handicapped within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Further information may be obtained from your school's principal or Cathy Stanton the District's Section 504 Coordinator (508-234-8156).

##### **DISTRICT-WIDE CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN**

In accordance with M.G.L. c.71, §38Q1/2 and 603 CMR 28.03(3), the Northbridge Public Schools has developed and adopted a district-wide curriculum accommodation plan to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education environment. Responsibility for implementation of this curriculum accommodation plan in each school building is the responsibility of the building principal. For more information regarding the specific services that may be available, please contact the principal or school adjustment counselor.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

Under General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A for purposes of reporting child abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services. Under MGL119, Sec. 51A, a school staff member who has reasonable cause to believe that a student under the age of 18 is suffering physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian, school staff member or other caretaker must immediately report the abuse or neglect either directly to the Department of Social Services (DSS) or to the person designated by the school to accept those reports, who then promptly reports to DSS.

The Principal and/or Superintendent will report to local police certain forms of harassment and conduct that may constitute a crime. The Principal and/or Superintendent may report physical injury, destruction of public property, potential hate crimes and other acts of a serious criminal nature to local police for investigation.

### **Special Education**

Special Education services are provided for children with disabilities as outlined in State and Federal laws. Currently there are eight inclusion classrooms (4 per grade level). Inclusion classrooms are designed to allow students with identified disabilities to learn along side their non-disabled peers. Also, we have an Intensive Special Needs classroom at the Early Childhood Center.

The Northbridge Elementary School provides speech, language and hearing services under the direction of a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP). The SLP directs speech and language screening, diagnostic testing, and therapy strategies. He/she also conducts individual or group therapy classes.

The Northbridge Elementary School provides occupational therapy services under the direction of an occupational therapist. The occupational therapist directs occupational therapy screening, diagnostic testing, and therapy strategies. He/she also conducts individual or group therapy sessions. Physical therapy is also provided as needed under contracted services.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **School Information Packet**

On the first day of school each Elementary School student will receive a packet containing the following information:

- Computer Acceptable Use Policy
- Parent pick-up authorization form
- Permission to have your students' picture taken for website
- School menu
- School calendar
- Emergency card

- Free and reduced lunch form
- PTA membership form

Please help us by filling out the required forms, and return them to the Northbridge Elementary School as soon as possible.

### **Principal Newsletters**

A monthly Principal's Newsletter will be sent home with your child. Class and grade level newsletters are also sent throughout the year with information about special events in the classroom. A positive, supportive home/school team helps build a strong foundation for a solid education. Communication is one of the building blocks.

### **Classroom Newsletters**

Teachers send home periodic newsletters to highlight special classroom happenings and student work. These newsletters are an important way to stay connected to what is happening in your child's classroom.

### **Website**

The Northbridge Elementary School has a website @ [www.nps.org/](http://www.nps.org/). The website has general school information and policies.

### **Phone System**

The Northbridge Elementary School has a phone system that allows parents to contact teacher voicemail directly. Teachers will check messages on a daily basis.

When calling your child in absent, you may contact the school at any time. The phone system utilizes an absentee message system. To access the voice mail, dial 508 234-6346 and press 3.

### **Notification to Parents of Teacher Qualifications**

The Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, the Northbridge Public Schools will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.

- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

The Northbridge Public Schools is committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for your child's teacher, please contact the school Principal at **508-234-6346**.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Parents and visitors are welcomed and encouraged to visit our school. All visitors must report to the school office, sign in upon entering the building, and pick up a visitor's badge. The visitor's pass must be visible throughout the duration of the visit. Parents must sign out and return the pass at the end of the visit.

The Northbridge Public Schools was required as of February 25, 2003 to obtain criminal record checks on all prospective volunteers, and on existing volunteers periodically, but not less than every three years. (Massachusetts General Law C6, 38R)

To this end, the District has available in all school offices, CORI forms for you to fill out and sign that will authorize the District to submit to the Criminal History Systems Board a request for a CORI report. Please know that the information obtained from the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board is held strictly confidential and is kept in a locked file cabinet in the Director of Administrative Services' office. In addition, the reports will only be reviewed by the Superintendent or the Director of Administrative Services.

Questions/concerns regarding this matter may be directed to:

Melissa Walker (or designee/successor)  
 Director of Administrative services  
 Northbridge Public School District  
 87 Linwood Avenue  
 Whitinsville, MA 01588  
 508-234-8516 X 209

### **HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **NPTA**

The Northbridge Parent Teacher Association is a group of parents, teachers, and administrators dedicated to the enrichment of the educational experience of our children at Northbridge Elementary School and W.E. Balmer Elementary

School. Each year we sponsor programming designed to both fundraise and promote family involvement. The key to our success is parent participation. All students and their families benefit from the Northbridge PTA. The association provides enrichment programs that support the extension of the curriculum.

Please join us! We meet the first Tuesday of the month on a rotating basis between Northbridge Elementary School and W.E. Balmer Elementary School. To find out more about your PTA or ways you can help, contact Jen Wolf, [jenwolf@charter.net](mailto:jenwolf@charter.net) PTA President, or your school representatives Lisa Ducharme and Carol Stearns. The PTA also sends out a monthly newsletter, or you can go directly to our website [www.northbridgepta.org](http://www.northbridgepta.org).

**Northbridge PTA—every child, one voice. We need you to make a difference.**

### **Special Education Parent/Guardian Advisory Council (PAC)**

The PAC is a State mandated Parent/guardian Advisory Council whose goal is to give parents/guardians the opportunity to participate in educational programming in a more informed way. The PAC acts, as a support group for parent/guardian who wishes to discuss special needs issues. The PAC will assist in providing information about the availability of special education services, procedures to obtain these services and the right and responsibilities of parent/guardian under State and Federal special education laws. Membership is open to parent/guardian of children with or without special needs, educators, human service agency representatives, school committee members, and any caring member of the community. Regular monthly meetings are held which are announced on Cable TV and can be found advertised in the local newspaper. The PAC follows the Open Meeting Law; all meetings are posted at the Town Hall. Parent/guardian Advisory Council (PAC), P.O. Box 15, Whitinsville, MA 01588.

### **School Council**

The School Council was created to meet the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 53 (also known as the Education Reform Act of 1993).

School Council membership consists of the Principal, parent/guardian, teachers, students and community representatives. Application for membership may be obtained by contacting the Principal's office. School Council members are appointed at the start of school during the year in which they will serve. The primary responsibilities

of the School Council are to assist and advise the Principal in the following areas:

- Adopting educational goals for the school
- Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
- Reviewing the school's handbook
- Reviewing the school's annual budget
- Formulating a school improvement plan

All School Council meetings are subject to the Open Meeting Laws and all interested parties may attend.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Personal property other than items needed to complete homework and assignments should not be brought to school without specific permission from the teacher or principal. This includes but is not limited to toys, games, and headsets of any kind, and excessive amounts of money. Students violating this procedure will have the item taken away and returned at the end of the day. In the case of money or valuables, parents will be notified to pick up the items. Animals may only be brought to school with permission from the teacher and must be in an appropriate cage or container.

The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items. All personal items should be clearly labeled with the student's name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, mittens, lunch boxes, and backpacks.

Personal playground equipment such as balls, jump ropes, mitts etc., may be brought to school under the following conditions:

- Equipment must be approved by the teacher for school use
- Equipment must be placed in the classroom
- All personal equipment must be clearly marked in permanent ink with the child's name
- The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged equipment

### **LOST AND FOUND**

All clothing, lunch boxes, and backpacks found at school are placed in the lost and found on the stage area in the cafeteria. Money, jewelry, and any other articles of value are turned into the office.

### **FIELD TRIPS/PERMISSION SLIPS**

The Northbridge Elementary School recognizes that first hand learning experiences provided by field trips are a most effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the school to encourage field trips as part of and directly related to the total school program and curriculum.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed to screen, approve,

and evaluate trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants.

The school will establish regulations to ensure that:

- All students have written parental permission for trips
- All trips are properly supervised
- All safety precautions are observed
- All trips contribute substantially to the educational program

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37N, if field trips involve late night or overnight travel, the following must be met:

#### **A. Trip Approval Process:**

1. Advance approval by the School Committee will be required for any student trip involving late night or overnight travel (in concurrence with IJOA, **Policy Relating Field Trips**).

2. The approval process will be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.

3. Overnight trips must offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips must be appropriate for the grade level and must meet Time on Learning Requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

4. Teachers and other school staff will be prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process applies only to school-sanctioned trips; trips will not be approved that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

5. Policies and procedures for trip approval will take into account all logistical details involving security arrangements, emergency management and communications protocols, transportation, accommodations, itinerary, fundraising required of students, the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs, and recommendation of the principal.

#### **B. Transportation**

1. The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should generally be avoided. Should the use of vans be necessary for overnight travel, prior written authorization from the Superintendent and subsequent approval by the School Committee must be obtained. Such trips should generally use commercial motor coaches. No student drivers will be allowed at any time.

2. Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel will involve pre-trip checks for companies, drivers, and vehicles. Companies must have liability insurance on drivers.

3. School officials will ensure that the selected carrier is licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The District should not contract with any carrier that has an FMCSA safety rating of “conditional” or “unsatisfactory”.

4. The contract with the carrier must prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the District to allow for verification of the subcontractor’s qualifications.

### **C. Trip Scheduling**

1. Overnight accommodations will be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Hiring independent security is recommended when appropriate.

2. Field trips during school time must meet the Massachusetts Department of Education Time on Learning requirements.

3. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. Student vehicular (bus and auto) travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 AM will not be allowed unless relief drivers are provided.

4. If substantially all members of a class are participating in a field trip, the school will provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

### **D. Fundraising**

1. The amount of time to be devoted to fund raising should be reasonable and commensurate with students’ obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.

2. Group fund raising activities are preferred.

### **E. Student Supervision**

1. Students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones, taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI/criminal record check. Faculty and staff of the school along with parents of students will serve as chaperones.

2. A chaperone must always be present whenever students are on the bus.

3. All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form. Such forms shall include eligibility requirements and appropriate

authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.

4. When away from school, all school rules will apply to the trip. Infringement of rules may result in a student’s immediate expulsion from the trip. In such cases, parents will be financially responsible for transportation home.

### **HOMEWORK POLICY**

We believe homework is important because it is a valuable aid in helping students make the most of their experience in school. We give homework because it is useful in reinforcing what has been learned in class, preparing students for upcoming lessons, extending and generalizing concepts, teaching responsibility and helping students develop positive study habits. Each teacher will communicate to the student and parent his/her individual homework policy. **Request for homework the day the student is absent must be made by 10:00 am by calling the school in order to receive it at dismissal time.**

### **HOMEWORK AND PARENTS**

Your parental role is important.

Be sure that:

- You set a homework time consistently each day--after school, after supper, or any workable time
- Create a quiet place with the necessary tools--paper, pencil, etc.
- Make sure that the child understands what the teacher expects for the assignment
- Be around to help out, but do not “hover” over the child
- Set some time parameters; e.g. “Start your math. I’ll check in on you in 15 minutes.”
- When necessary, you may have to stay with your child for support and direction but not direct involvement with the content of the assignment

The teacher’s role in homework is:

- Inform parents as to what is expected in an assignment
- Inform parents as to when homework will be assigned
- Inform parents as to their role (An explanation should go home early in the year.)
- Keep homework from being a burden

## SUMMARY OF COMPUTER POLICIES

The use of computers and the Internet in the Northbridge Public Schools is a privilege, not a right, and failure to follow guidelines will result in loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or legal prosecution. Everyone must report any violations of the computer policies. Computer resources must be used for legal, ethical, appropriate, educational purposes.

All computer resources at the schools are the property of the Northbridge Public Schools. No unauthorized technology may be used. Only software that is purchased by the District may be installed on any school computer or network. The District reserves the right to examine and remove the content of files to insure compliance with these guidelines, and the right to delete a student's files after the end of a school year or when a student leaves the District.

Surge protectors shall be used with all electrical equipment; anti-virus software shall be used whenever a file is copied between disks; the use of floppy disks shall be minimized. Equipment will be powered off and covered when left unused for more than 24 hours. Data files saved to the network shall be backed up regularly and automatically. Everyone is responsible for making backup copies of his or her data files that are not stored on the network. Faculty and staff may limit the use of external media (CDs, pen drives, etc.) and may scan any student media at any time for viruses. No one shall:

- Share any account and/or password or attempt to use anyone else's account and/or password.
- Attempt to access, tamper with, or damage anyone else's account or files.
- Install or download software or any other files, including screensavers of programs like screensavers or programs like "weatherbug", without the prior permission of the Technology Director.
- Create or send abusive, threatening, inappropriate, repetitive, or clearly unwanted messages.
- Create, copy, download or access files or websites containing any profanity, obscenity, or other inappropriate or harmful materials.
- Physically open up any computer, printer, or other technology that appears broken or jammed.
- Access or change any network operating software or system configuration files, including the desktop, icons, and colors.
- Delete any software, without the prior consent of technology staff.
- Knowingly introduce a virus, spy-war, ad-ware or similar threat.

- Disconnect or move any technology, without the prior consent of the technology staff.
- Use network resources, including scanners, and telephone lines, without appropriate permissions.
- Print without appropriate permissions.
- Engage in any illegal, commercial, or active political activities.
- Disclose personal information on the Internet such as last name, age, sex, school, address, or phone number.

Middle school and High School students may be assigned accounts to access the Internet directly. Students in grades 3-5 may only be given accounts to access the pre-approved Internet websites. Access to inappropriate websites will be restricted to the extent possible by using filtering software. Anyone found repeatedly or intentionally visiting objectionable, problematic, or inappropriate sites will have his or her Internet privileges revoked.

## HEALTH INFORMATION

**The following are health requirements for students attending Northbridge Public Schools:**

1. No student may enter school unless **immunizations**, according to Massachusetts State Law, are up-to-date. To ensure continued attendance in school, immunizations must be kept up-to-date.
2. A **lead test** is now required for school entry.
3. **Physical Exams** are required for entrance into school.
4. **Vision and Hearing** screenings are done periodically by the schools.
5. **Emergency cards** sent home at the beginning of each school year should be filled out completely and returned immediately. Phone numbers and addresses should be kept up-to-date. Be sure to list **two (2) people in town** who **have agreed** to be contacted if you are not available. Please keep your child's teacher and the nurse informed of any medical problems.

### Health Services

Students who become ill or injured will be directed to the school nurses for assessment, evaluation, treatment and/or referral. If the nurse is not available, students are to report to the office. Students are not to leave the building without authorization. Parents will be notified when a child must be sent home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the person indicated on the Emergency Card will be called. It is imperative that the Emergency Card be completed annually and updated as necessary.



### **Physical Examinations**

Massachusetts requires that a physical examination by a health care provider be on file with the nurse for kindergarten entry and every four years thereafter (grades 4 and 8). Students entering the District without records or recent physical must have a physical examination within the 1<sup>st</sup> year. A physical exam is also required within 13 months prior to tryouts for competitive athletics or cheer leading.

### **Mandated Screening Programs**

Students in grades K, 1, 4, 6-8, and 9 are weighed and measured and students in grades K, 5, 7 and 10 are tested for vision and hearing. Students in grades 5-8 and 9 receive an annual postural screening for scoliosis. The school nurse does the screening with assistance from the Physical Education Staff. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

### **Contagious Conditions**

Parents are requested to report any incidence of contagious disease or condition to the school nurse. This includes incidence of head lice and scabies. When these conditions are identified, the student will be sent home. Return to school is permitted following treatment and verification by the school nurse that the student is free of disease, lice, nits or mites.

### **Immunizations**

All students must be compliant with immunizations required by Massachusetts regulations (102 CMR 7.09 and 105 CMR 220.00) and established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The only exemptions are for documented religious or medical reasons.

### **Medication Administration**

Medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be by written order of the provider with written permission from the parent/guardian before the nurse may administer medication. Medication must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian or other designated responsible adult in the original container with the label intact. Students are not to transport medication to and from school. However, in the case of self-medicating students, students may transport and self-administer upon completion of a written agreement between the parent and the nurse.

### **Physical Restraint**

The Northbridge Public Schools recognizes that on occasion physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members from serious, imminent physical harm. Physical restraint is defined as the use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall only

be used in emergency situations, in the judgment of the school staff member, when other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. The Northbridge Public Schools complies with the requirements of Massachusetts regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools, 630 CMR 46.00.

### **A. Training**

To ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint:

- All staff will receive training regarding the District's restraint policy and will be reviewed annually and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment, which will include the following:
  - The District's restraint policy;
  - Interventions, which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors;
  - Types of restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when an extended restraint is used;
  - Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
- Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.
- Designated staff members shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in depth training in the use of physical restraint. Those designated staff members will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

### **B. Administration of Physical Restraint**

- Physical restraint may only be used in the following circumstances:
  - When non-physical interventions would be ineffective; and
  - The student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others.
- Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:

- As a means of punishment; or
  - As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm. However, in the judgment of the staff member, if the property destruction or the refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive might escalate into, or could itself lead to serious, imminent harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.
  - Only school personnel who have received required training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraints on students with, wherever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint.
  - The training requirements shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
  - Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
  - A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation, subject to the safety requirements set forth in this policy. A staff member who has received in-depth training as specified in this policy may only administer floor prone restraints, and when in the judgment of the trained staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others.
  - Physical restraint shall be discontinued, as soon as possible, when it is determined that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to self or others. (If, due to unusual circumstances, a restraint continue for more than twenty minutes, it shall be considered an "extended restraint" for purposes of the reporting requirements.)
  - Additional safety requirements:
    - A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration, during the restraint.
    - If at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
    - Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
  - At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, a school administrator or other appropriate school staff shall:
    - Review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;
    - Review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and
    - Consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students and staff members who witnessed the incident.
- C. Reporting**
- Staff shall report the use of physical restraint to the school principal after administration of a physical restraint that results in injury to a student or staff member; or lasts longer than five (5) minutes. The following reporting procedure will be followed:
    - The staff member shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible and shall provide a written report no later than the next school working day.
    - The written report shall be provided to the Principal or designee. The Principal shall prepare the report if the Principal administered the restraint.

- The Principal or designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department of Education, upon request.
  - The Principal shall send a copy of the report to the Superintendent at the Central Office.
  - The Principal or designee shall verbally inform the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school days following the use of such restraint. If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language. The written report shall include:
    - Names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint.
    - A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to de-escalate the situation; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
    - A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
    - For extended restraints (a restraint lasting twenty (20) minutes or longer), the written report shall describe the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts and the justification for administering the extended restraint.
  - Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student.
  - Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter.
  - When a restraint has resulted in a serious injury to a student or program staff member or when an extended restraint has been administered, the program shall provide a copy of the written report to the Department of Education within five (5) school days of the administration of the restraint. The program shall also provide the Department with a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint.
- D. Special Circumstances**
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may voluntarily waive the reporting requirements as stated above for restraints that do not result in serious injury to the student or to a staff member and do not constitute extended restraint.
  - The Northbridge Public Schools may seek such individual waiver for students with IEPs who present a high risk of frequent, dangerous behavior that may require the frequent use of restraint. Even where such a waiver is provided, the except that the limitations on chemical, mechanical, and seclusion restraint and the training requirements set forth in 603 CMR 46.00 shall continue to apply.
  - The Northbridge Public Schools shall not require parental consent to such a waiver as a condition of admission or provision of services.
  - Parent(s)/guardian(s) may withdraw consent to such waiver at any time without penalty.

- Extended restraints and restraint that result in serious injury to a student or staff member must be reported as described above, regardless of any individual waiver.
- The following documentation regarding individual waiver of reporting requirements will be maintained on-site in the student's file and will be made available for inspection to the Department of Education upon request:
- Informed written consent of parent(s)/guardian(s) to the waiver, which shall specify those reporting requirements listed above that the parent(s)/guardian(s) agrees to waive; and
- Specific information regarding when and how the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed regarding the administration of all restraints to the individual student.
- Nothing herein shall be construed to allow a program or classroom to receive an exemption or waiver from any of the requirements of this policy on behalf of all of the students enrolled in a particular program or classroom.

#### **E. Receiving/Investigating Complaints**

Any student, or parent(s)/guardian(s) on said student's behalf, who believes he or she has been inappropriately restrained by an employee of the Northbridge Public Schools should follow the procedure outlined in the **Policy Relating to Complaints About District Personnel**.

This policy shall be reviewed annually, provide to school staff, and shall be included in student handbooks. (M.G.L. chapter 69, section 1B, and chapter 71, section 37G; Massachusetts Department of Education Regulation 603 CMR 46.00 Physical Restraint)

#### **SAFE SCHOOL GUIDELINES**

Safety of students is of critical importance to the school. All staff members are familiar with the school's Critical Incident Plan. In addition our school site has security procedures, which are implemented as needed. Parents interested in seeing district or school procedures are welcome to review them in the school office.

#### **Fire Drills**

For the safety of everyone, the school practices fire drills frequently during the school year. At the beginning of the school year you will receive special directions. You will also find instructions

posted in each classroom. When the fire alarm sounds, teachers will guide students to exit the building quickly and orderly. Attendance will be taken. If a student is not present during the attendance procedures, and is not absent from school, disciplinary action may follow.

#### **BUS PRIVILEGES/ TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Students are entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the public schools when such transportation conforms with applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws. *Transportation will be provided to and from the student's residential neighborhood or to and from the same daycare facility only (MGL Ch71, Section 7A).* Transportation is provided for Kindergarten – Gr. 4 students who live more than 1/2 mile from school.

Transportation by bus to and from school is a privilege for pupils who qualify by the Rules and Regulations of the Northbridge School Committee and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The school bus is an extension of the school itself, and the rules regarding behavior are the same as in school. It shall be understood that the right of the pupil to use transportation to and from school is a qualified right dependent on good behavior. Bus rules advise students to:

- Walk on the side facing traffic to and from the bus stop on roads and highways where there are no sidewalks.
- Be on time at the pick-up point. We recommend that students be at the bus stop 5 minutes before pick-up time. Dogs must be restrained at home when buses are expected.
- In crossing the highway after leaving the bus, cross only after the driver signals that it is safe to cross.
- Pass in front of the bus, and look both ways before crossing the street.
- Keep all items out of the aisle. Keep the bus neat, and do not mark, cut, or break any part of the bus.
- Do not throw anything in the bus or out the windows. Do not put hands, arms, or other parts of your body out of the windows or rear exit door from the bus at any time.
- Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Be respectful to the bus driver. He/she has a very important job to do and needs your help. The driver's ears and eyes need to be focused on the road in order to drive to and from school. Do not shout or make other noises that might distract the bus driver. Do not talk to the bus driver while the bus is moving, but report any emergencies to him/her at once.

- No student shall ride home on a bus to which he/she is not assigned. The school principal or assistant principal may deprive students from riding the bus for a length a time if the student violates these rules. In all cases the principal or the assistant principal must make a report to the parents and transportation supervisor.

For any alleged violation of the previously stated rules, the bus driver will notify the principal.

### **CONSEQUENCES**

- On the first offense the principal will notify the parents.
- On the second offense the offender may be suspended from the bus for a maximum of three school days at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee based on the severity of the offense.
- On the third offense the offender will be suspended from the bus for a minimum of 5 school days, or a maximum of a school year at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee.
- Repeated offenses may result in suspension of bus privileges for a period of up to the remainder of the school year.
- In case of serious offenses affecting the safety of the school bus and its occupants, the offender may lose his/her school bus privileges for a maximum of a school year (180 school days).

No suspension takes effect until a letter is sent home and/or a parent conference is held. If a parent wishes an appeal, the principal will arrange a meeting with the parent, the bus contractor, and the bus driver to discuss the problem.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Pupils are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will contribute to the best interest of the Northbridge Elementary School. We believe that no student has the right to keep a teacher from teaching or a student from learning. We believe each student has a right to be respected and learn in a safe environment. The Early Childhood Center's discipline plan focuses on a positive learning environment based on fairness and consistency.

The following are some examples of student behavior that violates school policy when they occur at school or during school activities. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. Students may be disciplined for any of the following:

1. The possession, transmission, and/or use of matches, lighters, tobacco, drugs, alcohol, pocketknives or dangerous weapons.
2. Insolence, disrespect, or insubordination.

3. The use of inappropriate language, behavior or profanity.
4. Fighting.
5. Inappropriate displays of affection.
6. Leaving a classroom without permission.
7. Class tardiness and truancy.
8. Vandalizing, damaging or stealing school or private property.
9. Threatening, intimidating, or causing bodily harm to any person.
10. Chewing gum.
11. Throwing food in cafeteria.
12. Littering school grounds, lavatory or halls.
13. Wearing hats in school.
14. Violating rules of conduct as established by the teacher.
15. Inappropriate dress of accessories which are rude, vulgar, unsafe, illegal, advertise drugs, alcohol and/or cigarettes or disruptive to the educational process.
16. The possession and use of aerosol cans or spray bottles.

### **PLAYGROUND RULES**

1. Refrain from physical contact games such as tackle football, "keep-away-the-ball," "camel" (or any other type of piggyback game), play fighting, wrestling, karate, or kung fu. Ball games on the blacktop are limited to kickball, four square, and basketball.
2. Play only on the blacktop and grassy areas.
3. Abide by all game and equipment use rules.
4. Use the climbing equipment only during recesses and lunch recess.
5. Respect and respond to all teachers, supervisors, or staff members on the playground.
6. Freeze and cease all activity and talking when the lunch aide signals the end of the recess period. Children should then go to their classroom line.

### **GOAL OF DISCIPLINE**

The goal of discipline is to change negative behavior to positive behavior rather than to punish students. Therefore, the least punitive consequence that will lead to behavior change will be given first. If the behavior does not change, a stronger consequence will be given. If a student's behavior is dangerous to himself/herself or to others, the student may be suspended.

### **POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES**

Students unable to behave in a responsible manner may be given one or more of the following consequences:

- Student conference
- Loss of a related privilege
- Time out
- Principal conference

- Parent contact
- Parent conference
- Individual student contract
- Suspension from school
- Police Notification
- Expulsion

## **INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES**

### **Search and Seizure**

Searches and seizures of student property will be conducted, for probable cause, to preserve order in the school, and/or to protect the safety of any member of the school community. An administrator only, with a witness will carry out search and seizure procedures. When violations of the law are suspected, police officials will be advised and may be asked by the administrators to assist.

### **Inappropriate Items**

Items such as skateboards, cell phones, beepers, computer games, cassette tapes/compact discs, ipods, radios, cameras, trading cards, baseball bats, toys, laser pointers, etc. are not necessary to the instructional program and therefore should be left at home. If these items or others not essential to the educational process are brought to school, they will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian at the end of the school semester.

## **DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS**

### **Short Term Disciplinary Sanctions:**

Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less, the student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond. In the event that the principal determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

### **Long Term Disciplinary Sanctions:**

Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parents(s)/guardian(s) will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, the principal will issue a written decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long-term exclusion from school. Where the student is excluded in accordance with the M.G.L.c. 71 § 37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent of schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L.c.71 § 37

H1/2, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the school committee in accordance with M.G.L.c.76 §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L.c. 76 § 17, M.G.L.c. 71 § 37H, M.G.L.c. 71 § 37 H1/2.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students who have identified as students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or who the school has reason to believe might be eligible for special education services are entitled to additional procedural protections when a disciplinary exclusion is considered. Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that would result in a change in placement, a Team will meet to determine whether the student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. If the Team determines that the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the Team shall review any existing behavior plan or, if no such behavior plan exists, conduct a functional behavioral assessment. In many cases, a student with a disability will be entitled to services identified by the student's Team as necessary to provide the student with a free appropriate public education during periods of disciplinary exclusion exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. For additional information regarding the rights of students with disabilities in the context of school discipline please contact the Northbridge Public Schools' Director of Special Education or the building principal.

## **DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity as defined under 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school day in a given year. The following

additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities.

- 1) The IEP for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.
- 2) Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change of placement", building administrators, the parents(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
- 3) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP or 504 Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan, or where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
- 4) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for the conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parents(s)/guardian(s) consent to, a new placement or unless the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The

student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

- 5) If a student with a disability possesses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in a appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

#### **SERVICE AND ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to help them make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized instruction, or placement in a special classroom. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or teachers may refer students they are concerned about to the Special Education Department. Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Following receipt of the parent(s)/guardian(s)' consent, an evaluation will be conducted and a TEAM meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

In some cases, the evaluation Team determines that a student with a disability may require only individual accommodations as opposed to specialized instruction and/or related services. Such students are then referred for an evaluation of their eligibility for an individual accommodation plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students may also be referred for an evaluation of their eligibility under Section 504 even where they have not been referred for a special education evaluation.

For more information regarding the services available to students with disabilities please contact your school principal or team chairperson.

**Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

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

1. Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE): political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following: any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
3. Inspect, upon request and before administration or use: protected information surveys of students; instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum. These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Northbridge Public Schools will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The District will also

directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

Specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement include: the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution; the administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by DOE; and any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

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

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901  
**Northbridge Public Schools**  
**Policy Prohibiting Discrimination**

The Northbridge Public School District prohibits discrimination on the basis of the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, homelessness, or disability, in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies. The Northbridge Public Schools complies with all applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts General Laws, c.151B, c.151C, c.71, c.76 and c.71B.

The School District, in complying with applicable state and federal laws, notifies you of this Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and informs you that the harassment/grievance coordinator for compliance at the building level is the school principal.

At the District level, the ADA, Section 504 (employment activities), Title VI and Title IX (race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, and sexual orientation) Coordinator is:

Melissa Walker (or designee/successor)  
Director of Administrative Services



Northbridge Public School District  
87 Linwood Avenue  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
508-234-8516 X 201

At the District level, the Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) Coordinator is:

Cathy Stanton (or designee/successor)  
Director of Pupil Services  
Northbridge Public School District  
87 Linwood Avenue  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
508-234-8516 X 204

Also found in this handbook is a Grievance Procedure. The purpose of this grievance procedure is to allow any citizen to be heard and recorded regarding any complaints or violations of this policy.

### **POLICY ON HARASSMENT**

Harassment on the basis of race, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability is illegal and will not be tolerated. In addition, anyone who retaliates against an individual who has brought a complaint of harassment to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

Individuals, who believe they are the subject of harassment or who have witnessed the harassment of another person in school, should inform the school principal, guidance counselor or teacher. Complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the school district's obligation under law. The policy of harassment is on file at the office.

#### ***Promoting Civil Rights And Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination And Hate Crimes***

The Northbridge Public Schools is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination and hate crimes. The District will not tolerate unlawful or disruptive behaviors at school or school-related events. The District will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, bullying, discrimination and hate crimes and will take prompt, effective action to end such behaviors including, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement agencies.

The District prohibits all forms of harassment, bullying, discrimination and hate crimes related or unrelated to race, color, religion, national origin,

ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. The District will not tolerate retaliation against those taking action consistent with this Policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, regardless of how they are expressed, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary or other corrective actions.

#### **Harassment:**

Harassment is oral, written, graphic, electronic, or physical conduct on school property or at school-related activities relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's programs or activities by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational or work environment.

For purposes of this policy, harassment shall also mean conduct that, if it persists, will likely create such a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. A single incident may, depending upon its severity, create a hostile environment.

#### **Bullying:**

Bullying is defined as a form of aggression involving a power imbalance between the bully and victim, where the bully has perceived or actual physical, social and/or psychological power over his/her target(s). Although bullying generally involves a pattern of conduct directed at a victim, depending on the severity of the incident, a single instance of such misconduct may constitute a violation of this Policy.

#### **Student and Staff Responsibilities:**

All students and staff members, as members of the school community, are responsible for complying with this policy and ensuring that he/she does not harass, bully, discriminate or perpetuate a hate crime against another person on school grounds or at a school-related activity. Further, each student and staff member is responsible to make sure that he/she does not retaliate against any person who reports or files a complaint, or who helps someone report or file a complaint, or for cooperating in the investigation of a report of complaint.

#### **Reporting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination, or Hate Crimes**

Students can report any case of harassment, bullying, discrimination or hate crimes to any adult in the school who is then responsible to inform the building principal or designee. The school principal

or designee is responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations at the school level.

Any member of the school community who is informed of, or believes, that harassment, bullying, discrimination, retaliation or a hate crime has occurred or may have occurred at school or in a school-related activity must promptly report the incidents to the building principal or designee. In situations where a student or other person is uncomfortable reporting the incident directly to a designated official, s/he may report it to a trusted school employee who must promptly inform a designated official.

## **DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

### **Statement of Definition**

Students, employees and/or third parties have the right to file a complaint/grievance about an alleged violation of the Northbridge School Committee's Policy Prohibiting Discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies. Students, employees and/or third parties who wish to file a grievance/complaint regarding discrimination / harassment in educational services or employment may do so in accordance with this Grievance Procedure.

### **Prohibition on Retaliation**

Retaliation in any form, including threats, intimidation, reprisal or harassment, towards any person who makes a sexual harassment complaint, or who assists in or participates in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing is strictly prohibited. If retaliation occurs, it may be considered grounds for dismissal of staff, or removal from the educational setting for a student, who perpetrates a retaliatory act or causes or encourages retaliatory acts.

### **False Reports**

False claims of discrimination/harassment can cause permanent damage to the victim of such claims and must therefore be treated as a very serious matter. A false claim may be considered grounds for dismissal of staff, or discipline including removal from the educational setting for a student, who makes a false claim.

### **Ensuring Safety During Investigation**

The Principal or designee will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.

### **Confidentiality**

Reports and complaints of discrimination/harassment will be kept as confidential as possible consistent with the rights of all parties.

### **Consequences**

Any student or employee found to have discriminated against or harassed a member of the school community will be subject to disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to, termination of employment or exclusion from school (in accordance with procedures relating to the disciplinary exclusion of students).

### **Informal Complaint Resolution**

If the principal/superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may, with the consent of the complainant, use the informal resolution procedure. The informal procedure simply attempts to resolve the situation and can be done in many ways. Examples are:

- The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have a conversation between you and the respondent where you can tell the respondent that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
- The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have you write a letter to the respondent saying that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
- The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have separate conversations with you and the respondent

Examples of possible resolutions are as follows:

- Verbal statements of apology;
- Letters of apology;
- Assurances that the offensive behavior will end;
- Disciplinary action.

The informal procedure will be completed within five (5) school days from the date the principal/superintendent receives the complaint. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee will notify you, your parent/guardian, and the respondent of the results of the informal procedure. Resolution of the situation may or may not occur as a result of the informal procedure. If all the parties involved in this informal procedure feel that a resolution has been achieved, this discussion will remain confidential and no further action will be taken. If any of the parties feel that resolution has not been achieved, the following formal procedure will be used.

### **Formal Complaint/ Grievance Procedure Level #1**

If a student, employee of third party believes that she/he: (1) has been subjected to or witnessed harassment or discrimination; or (2) has been

subjected to or witnessed retaliation against an individual associated with a complaint of harassment/discrimination, the student, employee or third party shall report the incident promptly to a teacher, counselor or building administrator. The teacher, counselor or administrator shall thereafter refer the complainant to the building principal.

A complaint of harassment / discrimination shall be filed in writing with the building grievance/ harassment coordinator (principal or designee). The building grievance/ harassment coordinator shall meet with complainant to obtain all relevant information regarding the complaint including the names of witnesses and any documentary evidence, conduct an investigation, and respond to the complainant in writing within ten (10) school working days. Copies of the written response to the complainant will be provided to the Superintendent and the appropriate District-wide grievance officer. Where appropriate, immediate action may be taken by the building grievance/ harassment coordinator to prevent recurrence of any harassment and to correct its discriminatory effect(s) on the complainant.

### **Level #2**

If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved at Level #1, the complainant may, within ten (10) school working days of receiving the decision rendered at Level #1, file a grievance with the Administrator of Special Education (for discrimination/harassment on the basis of disability) or the Director of Operations (for all other forms of discrimination/harassment), who shall meet with the complainant, conduct further investigation (where appropriate) and shall provide a written response to the aggrieved party within ten (10) school working days. Where appropriate, immediate action may be taken by the District-wide grievance officer to prevent recurrence of any harassment/discrimination and to correct its discriminatory effect(s) on the complainant.

### **Level #3**

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved at Level #2, the complainant may file a written appeal to the Superintendent of the Northbridge Public Schools. The Superintendent will meet with the complainant, conduct further investigation (where appropriate), and will provide a written response to the aggrieved party within ten (10) school days. The Superintendent's decision on the complainant's appeal shall constitute the District's final decision with regard to the complainant's grievance.

### **Extension of Time lines**

Investigative deadlines may be extended under extenuating circumstances such as illness or if necessary to fully and adequately complete the investigation. Complainants shall be provided with notice of any extension of timelines set forth in the

District's Harassment/Discrimination Grievance Procedures.

### **Other State and Federal Agencies**

At any stage in this complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the Regional Office for Civil Rights, 33 Arch Street, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02110-1491 (617) 289-, or with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601, Boston, MA 02108 (617-994-6000), or with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148 (781-338-3300). For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a written Request for Hearing with the Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education Appeals, 350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148 (781-338-3300).

**All information in this notice complies with Massachusetts Student Records Regulations and The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Northbridge School Policies**

### **Sexual Harassment**

It is the policy of the Northbridge School Committee to provide an educational environment free of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or communications constituting sexual harassment as defined by this policy and law. Sexual harassment violates the policies of the district and also violates federal and state law, specifically Title IX and Massachusetts General Laws, C. 151C.

It will be a violation of this policy for any student to be sexually harassed by or to sexually harass another student, any employee or volunteer or other person connected with the District through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. Retaliation against a student for filing a complaint, under this policy or for assisting in an investigation of sexual harassment is in violation of this policy.

### **DEFINITION:**

The legal definition of sexual harassment is: Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's success as a student;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of educational decisions affecting such individual(s); or

3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include the following types of activities, but is not limited to these examples:

- Touching (arm, breast, buttocks, shoulders, etc.)
- Verbal comments (about parts of the body, what type of sex the victim would "be good at," clothing, looks, etc.)
- Starting and repeating sexual rumors
- Sexual or "dirty" jokes
- Cartoons, pictures, and pornography
- Using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti, or to play sexually offensive computer games
- Gestures
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following
- Conversations that are too personal
- "Rating" an individual – for example, on a scale from 1 to 10
- Obscene t-shirts, hats, or pins
- Showing inappropriate videos and other materials during class
- Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
- Massaging the neck, massaging the shoulders
- Touching oneself sexually in front of others
- Graffiti
- Making kissing sounds or smacking sounds, licking the lips suggestively
- Howling, catcalls, whistles
- Repeatedly asking someone out when he/she is not interested
- Pulling down someone's pants or forcibly removing other articles of clothing
- Facial expressions (winking, kissing, etc.)
- "Slam books" (lists of students' names with derogatory sexual comments written about them by other students)

#### **Complaint Procedure:**

If you feel that someone has sexually harassed or is sexually harassing you, you should file a complaint by following the steps outlined below:

1. Speak or send a note to any employee of the school district whom you trust, (i.e., nurse, psychologist/counselor, teacher, principal, assistant principal, superintendent, etc.). You can also speak to your parents who can then notify the superintendent, principal or assistant principal. Remember that the complaint procedure does not

start until school/district personnel receive the complaint.

2. Within two school days of receipt of the verbal complaint, the employee will notify the principal/superintendent, and your parent/guardian will be notified of the pending complaint. Where appropriate, the Principal/designee will propose and discuss with you/your parents informal resolution of your complaint.

3. If you have not or do not want to put the complaint in writing, the employee will do so. This should be done no later than two (2) school days after you have talked, or given the note, to the employee. The complaint has to be put in writing to make sure that the employee fully and correctly understands the issue(s). A copy of the complaint, in writing, will be reviewed with you and your parent/guardian to ensure accuracy, before it is shared with the subject of the complaint.

4. The employee will refer the written complaint to the principal/superintendent. All complaints of sexual harassment will be investigated and responded to in accordance with the District's Harassment/Discrimination Complaint Procedure as set forth in this Handbook.

#### Other Resources:

Individuals also have the right to seek a remedy from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990, and/or the Regional Office of Civil Rights for the United States Department of Education, 33 Arch Street, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02110-1491 (617) 289-011190.

#### Retaliation:

No one may retaliate against you for filing a complaint. Further, no one may retaliate against any student, employee, or any other person because they provided information or helped in the investigation. If any person feels that he/she has been subjected to retaliation, he/she should file a complaint with the principal/superintendent.

#### Considerations To Remember:

- A. A man/boy, as well as a woman/girl, may be the victim of sexual harassment, and a woman/girl, as well as a man/boy, may be the harasser.
- B. The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser.
- C. The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The victim may also be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is

directed toward another person. For example, inappropriate attempts at humor or the sexual harassment of one girl (or boy) may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another girl (or boy) or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's educational performance.

**Alcohol, Drugs, Weapons, Assaults On School Personnel**  
**(Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Sec. 37H)**

We recognize the complex and serious problem of drug and alcohol abuse in today's society. We continue to support a proactive approach to these concerns by providing both short and long-term interventions. These programs are designed to educate and increase awareness amongst our students, parent/guardian and community.

The goal of this policy is to send a strong message to students and the community that we will not tolerate drugs and alcohol in our high school, on school grounds or at any related school sponsored events. This is intended to send a clear message of reassurance to the vast majority of our students who are focused on their education: we foster, value, and are committed to a safe, positive learning environment.

Any substance abuse violation will be treated as a serious violation of school rules and Massachusetts law. The following information is stated in the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, and Section 37 H.M.G.L. c. 71 §37H

A. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a gun or a knife, or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94 C, including but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

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

C. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her

discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

D. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have 10 days from the date of the expulsion to notify the Superintendent of this appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

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

Any student who is in violation will be subject to the following disciplinary actions: If a student is found in possession of alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia or if a determination is made that the student is under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, or prescription/over the counter medication the following actions will be taken:

- Out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) school days pending a formal disciplinary hearing
- Notification made to the parent/guardian
- Notification made to police
- Make other referrals as appropriate
- Schedule an expulsion hearing with the Principal

If a student is found on school premises or at a school-sponsored event in possession of a dangerous weapon, the following disciplinary actions will be taken:

- Out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) school days pending a formal disciplinary hearing
- Notification made to the parent/guardian
- Notification made to police
- Make other referrals as appropriate
- Schedule an expulsion hearing with the Principal

If a student assaults school personnel on school property or at a school-sponsored event, the following disciplinary actions will be taken:

- Out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) school days pending a formal disciplinary hearing
- Notification made to the parent/guardian
- Notification made to police
- Make other referrals as appropriate
- Schedule an expulsion hearing with the Principal

### **Chapter 71 §37H1/2 –Felony Charges**

M.G.L. c. 71 §37H1/2 provides as follows:

1. Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal or Headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said Principal or Headmaster if said Principal or Headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within (3) three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal or Headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.
2. Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the Principal or Headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such Principal or

headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal or Headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

### **Violations**

Where a violation of the Policy has been reported by a third party, and an alleged victim fails to cooperate with the investigation, or denies the incident occurred, disciplinary and corrective action may be precluded or limited, depending upon circumstances and availability of information from other sources.

### **Discipline**

If a student has been found in violation of this policy, the District will impose disciplinary measures and/or corrective action to end and prevent further occurrences of the complained of action(s). The District will take into account harm suffered by the victim(s) as well as any damage to school or District property. The nature of any action taken must comply with District and school disciplinary policies. Any disciplinary or corrective action shall conform to the due process requirements of federal and state law. Action concerning students may include a written warning; classroom or school transfer; suspension (short- or long-term); exclusion from school-

sponsored functions, after-school programs and/or extra-curricular activities; limited or denied access to parts or areas of the building; exclusion, expulsion or discharge from school; adult supervision on school premises; parent conferences; an apology to the victim; awareness training; empathy development awareness programs; counseling or any other action authorized by and consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or school disciplinary code. The District complies with federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to the discipline of students with disabilities.

Individuals also have the right to seek a remedy from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 (617) 727-3990, the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148 (781) 338-3300 and or the Regional office of Civil Rights for the United States Department of Education, 222 John W. McCormack Building, Boston, MA 02109, (617) 223-9662.

\*\*Information from Attorney General Thomas Reilly's Safe Schools Initiative Sample Policy for Promoting Civil Rights and Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination and Hate Crimes, June 24, 2005, was used in drafting this document.

#### **Sex Education -- Parent/Guardian Notification**

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Northbridge School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parent/guardian of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

The Northbridge School Committee supports the right of parents or guardians to exempt their children from any portion of the curriculum which involves reference to human sexual education or human sexuality issues. Northbridge schools will notify parents regarding the presentation of curricula that involves these issues.

Parents or guardians shall have the flexibility to exempt their children from any portion of the said curriculum through written notification to the school principal. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. In the event of such an exemption, a substitute assignment may be provided.

To the extent practical, the Northbridge Public Schools shall make program instruction materials for said curricula reasonably accessible to parents, guardians and others for inspection and review.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

#### **The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)**

##### **Annual Notification Letter**

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) 40 CFR 763 requires all schools from Pre-K to Grade 12 to conduct inspections to determine if they contain asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM). If they do contain these materials, the ACBM must be categorized according to the type of material, its location, current damage, and its potential for future damage. Also, a detailed Asbestos Management Plan must be developed. The Management Plan details the inspection findings, and outlines the response actions the School Board intends to implement.

To accomplish these goals, the School District now has on file at the school and at the Department of Health the approved Asbestos Management Plan for the school facility. The provisions of the plan are being implemented in a timely and on-going fashion. It is our Board's desire to provide a safe and healthy facility for all students, employees and visitors.

The purpose of this letter is to satisfy the requirements of AHERA for written notice of the availability of the Management Plan for review. Should you desire, please contact the Northbridge Public Schools Central Office for further details.

Since the last written notice, we have removed Asbestos tile at the Northbridge Elementary school. RI Analytical's EAM Division performed the 3-year re-inspection in June 2007 and the 6-month surveillance was performed in November 2007 as required by the AHERA regulations.

## **TELEPHONE DIRECTORY**

### **Northbridge Public Schools**

Northbridge Elementary School  
(Grades Pre-K-1)  
Principal, Jill Healy  
30 Cross Street  
508-234-6346/508-234-8406

W.E. Balmer School (Grades 2-4)  
Principal, John Zywiec  
Assistant Principal, Donald Incutto  
21 Crescent Street  
508-234-8161

Northbridge Middle School (Grades 5-8)  
Principal, Jill Carroll  
171 Linwood Ave.  
508-234-8718

Northbridge Senior High School (Gr. 9-12)  
Principal, Michael Gauthier  
427 Linwood Avenue  
508-234-6221

Superintendent of Schools  
Susan Gorky  
87 Linwood Avenue  
508-234-8156 Ext. 200

Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Nancy Spitulnik  
87 Linwood Ave  
508 234-8156

Director of Pupil Services  
Cathy Stanton  
87 Linwood Avenue  
508-234-8701 Ext. 204

### **Important Telephone Numbers**

Police .... 508-234-6211  
Fire... 508-234-2111  
Ambulance... 508-234-2111  
Poison Control... 800-682-9211

### **Town of Northbridge**

Selectman/Town Manager  
508-234-2095  
Town Clerk  
508-234-2001  
Treasurer/Collector  
508-234-5432  
Board of Registrar  
508-234-2001  
United States Post Office  
800-275-8777  
Whitinsville Library  
508-234-2151  
Whitinsville Community Center  
508-234-8184

### **Social Services**

Beginning Bridges Community Partnership  
508-234-1291  
Catholic Charities  
508-234-3800  
Crisis Center  
508-791-6562  
Dept. of Social Services  
508-234-1000  
Dept. of Transitional Assistance  
508-767-3100  
FCP- Family Continuity Program  
508-234-4181  
First Call Referral  
508-755-1233  
Food Pantry  
508-234-4599  
Parental Stress Line  
800-632-8188  
Social Security  
800-772-1213  
WIC-On Wheels  
508-641-4829

### **Health Services**

Whitinsville Urgent Care  
508-234-6311  
  
Northbridge Free Medical Care Program,  
Northbridge High School  
427 Linwood Ave.  
508-234-9356