



# **The Center School**

## **2019-2020 Parent and Student Handbook**

**403 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775**

**(978) 897-0290  
(978) 897-5739 fax**

## **Welcome to The Center School**

*Where...*

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

### **The Center School**

*“Preparing for tomorrow!”*

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August 2019

Dear Center School Community,

We are excited for the 2019-2020 school year! All summer our office team and custodial staff have been working on the transition from last school year. More recently, classroom teachers have been in to put the finishing touches on the learning spaces that await our students on August 29<sup>th</sup>. The hopes and dreams for the year ahead are building!

This Parent/Guardian and Student Handbook is a resource for you and your child. I hope that you find the logistical information helpful to start the year and also as a source of reference when a question should arise. The handbook can also be viewed on our website at <http://center.nrsd.net>. *If you require a hardcopy of the handbook, please contact the office and we will supply you with one.* Please complete the form included in the student packet that is distributed on the first day and return it to your child's teacher. This form acknowledges your understanding of the practices and procedures outlined in our handbook.

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

In partnership,

Ross Mulkerin  
Principal

## **School Council**

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

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

## **SPTO**

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

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

Events include the annual Halloween Dance and Party, January Science Festival, February Lip Sync, March Arts Buffet Festival, March Music Festival, and June Picnic. A bi-annual event is a school auction in April. In addition, the SPTO sponsors parent/guardian education programs, including curriculum presentations, and other valuable additions to your the education experience of our students. Volunteer support of school activities includes the ProjectPrep Service so that teachers can spend more time with students and less time doing document preparation. The SPTO also publishes the annual Stow School Directory.

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

## School Calendars

Please use the following links to access 2019-2020 School Year calendars:

### 2019-2020 School Year Calendar

[https://www.nrsd.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_1159852/Image/School%20Committee/calendar/19-20%20NRSD%20Calendar.r32719.pdf](https://www.nrsd.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1159852/Image/School%20Committee/calendar/19-20%20NRSD%20Calendar.r32719.pdf)

### 2019-2020 Six Day Cycle Calendar

[https://www.nrsd.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_1159852/Image/District/Calendars/19%2020%20Six%20Day%20Cycle%20Calendar%20071519.pdf](https://www.nrsd.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1159852/Image/District/Calendars/19%2020%20Six%20Day%20Cycle%20Calendar%20071519.pdf)

You may also access our Center School events calendar on our school home page under “Upcoming Events” <https://center.nrsd.net/>

## School Hours

### NORMAL SCHOOL HOURS:

Preschool (1/2 Day)	8:45 AM - 11:15 AM
Preschool (Full Day)	8:45 AM - 2:15 PM
Half-Day Kindergarten	8:35 AM - 12:00 PM (building opens at 8:25 AM)
Full Day K – Gr. 5	8:35 AM - 3:05 PM (building opens at 8:25 AM)

### EARLY RELEASE DAYS (9/19/19, 10/30/19, 12/13/19, 1/10/20, 2/5/20, 4/8/20, 5/29/20):

Preschool (1/2 Day)	8:45 AM - 11:15 AM
Preschool (Full Day)	8:45 AM - 11:45 AM
K (incl. Half-Day)- Gr. 5	8:35 AM - 12:15 PM (building opens at 8:25 AM)

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

## School Cancellations/Closings

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

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

**IMPORTANT:** For SchoolMessenger purposes, it is **critical** that emergency contact

information is kept up to date. This includes cell phone numbers, home and work phone numbers, and email addresses.

### **Delayed Openings**

In the event of a 2 hour delayed opening, students should not be dropped off prior to 10:25 AM. Delayed openings provide additional travel time for both students and staff and ensure the safety of both.

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

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

### **Student Drop-Off Procedure**

- Student drop-off is located in the loop from our Great Road (Route 117)
- Please form **one single line** and pull up as far as possible along the sidewalk
- **Do not pass/pull out around cars in line** as this will impede the flow of traffic and create a safety hazard for our students.
- Please be mindful and yield to students/parents using the crosswalk.

### **Student Pick-Up Procedure**

#### Kindergarten-5th Grade:

- Students will be brought outside in a line by staff members on duty. Parents should pull into the loop as far along the sidewalk as possible and follow the prompting of staff members to pull forward. Staff members will load children into the first 5 cars along the curb, while assisting with the opening/closing of doors as needed.
- **Students may not enter a car without a staff member acknowledging the parent/guardian.**
- Please do not call for your child(ren) to leave the pick-up line.
- Cars will remain in single file and pull-up accordingly as far as possible. If there is confusion regarding a student's dismissal that is not in the pick-up line, parents will be directed to park in the parking lot and come to the main office. Since bus dismissal is simultaneous to pick-up dismissal, we will do our best to accommodate. To facilitate the process please know your student's bus number and teacher name.
- Any remaining students will be brought to the main office.

#### Preschool:

- Teachers stand inside the playground fence that is closest to the front door and farthest from rte.117 and in front of the front door to the school. (Children and families may not enter the playground at the entrance closest to 117 during drop off.)

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

### **School Bus Transportation**

- Bus routes with approximate pick-up and drop-off times are published on the district website ([https://www.nrsd.net/Departments/finance\\_bids-proposal\\_requests/transportation/busroutes](https://www.nrsd.net/Departments/finance_bids-proposal_requests/transportation/busroutes)) and in the Stow Independent during the month of August.
- The purpose of our bus service is to provide safe and reliable transportation to and from our students' homes. Bus conduct is related to school conduct and our standards are equal in both places. **The Bus Driver is in a position of authority and has an enormous responsibility. He or she needs to get our children to school and back home safely every day.**
- The District will provide transportation to students residing within the Nashoba Regional School District, from the student's home address to the student's designated district school.
- The District will provide student transportation from child care locations to school in the morning, and to child care locations from school in the afternoon, whenever it is within reason to provide such services, and providing the child care location falls within the district and student's school boundary.
- There will be no changes made to any student's bus schedule without the prior approval of the local school office. Should special circumstances occur which require a change in a student's schedule; parents/guardians will be responsible for contacting the local school office in advance to arrange for this accommodation.
- The District will not provide transportation for individual or one-time "play-dates", private lessons/activities, or for nonschool related events without the permission of the school administration. Parents'/guardians' notes sent to school, stating permission for this purpose, to allow a student to take an alternate bus or change pick-up/drop-off location **will not** be acceptable.
- The District may provide transportation to and/or from school sponsored athletic events and other activities, at the discretion of the school district, and when it is within reason to provide such services.
- Please refer to the district website for further guidelines regarding transportation

### **Parking**

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

- Parents and visitors should use the Visitor Parking Lot off of Great Road.
- The Hartley Road parking lot is for staff members, but can be used for events when the main parking lot is full.
- During events, visitors may also park on Hartley Road on the sidewalk side.



- If the parking lot at Saint Isadore's Church is available for special events, the school will notify visitors if the lots is available at the time of the event. Otherwise, please do not use this lot.

### **School Lunch**

The school lunch program is offered daily. Children may pre-purchase a hot or cold lunch and/or milk. The [school lunch menu can be found online](#) or in the main lobby of the school. Directions on pre-purchasing a lunch can be found on our home web page. Of course, children are welcome to bring their own lunch from home. Milk or juice may be pre-purchased also. The cost for lunch and milk is printed on the monthly menus. In our cafeteria we offer separate seating for students with allergy needs, including nut-free and gluten-free tables. Any student is welcome to sit at one of these tables provided their food meets necessary criteria to maintain the safety of students with allergies.

### **Snack**

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

### **Food in School Protocols**

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

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

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

- Food and gum are not to be consumed on the school bus.
- Trading or sharing of food by students is not allowed.

## **Student Rules**

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

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

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

### **Code of Conduct**

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

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

### **Consequences and Discipline**

When there is a violation of school rules and/or safety, a teacher and/or an administrator may impose a consequences that may include a loss of privilege or discipline that may include in-school or out-of-school suspension. Everyone in our school buildings must feel safe at school. For school rule violations of a very serious nature, such as those involving a threat to the safety of others, property damage, great interpersonal disrespect, or refusal to follow reasonable adult directions, a child’s parent/guardian may be called immediately to remove the child from school. A child may be placed on an in-school suspension or sent home and additional consequences may be imposed when behavior is threatening or found to be dangerous, destructive or severely disruptive. All such decisions are the sole responsibility of the Principal, Assistant Principal (or the discretion of the Building Administrator’s designee). *(See also “Discipline-Vandalism” and “Possession of a Dangerous Weapon/Physical Aggression Toward School Personnel or Other Students” and “NRSD Positive Climate/Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy” in Appendix)*

These consequences apply for infractions that occur anywhere in the school buildings,

on the playground, on a school related trip, at the bus stop, on the way to or from school, and on school busses.

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

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

### **Bullying**

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

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

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

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

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

Bullying is legally defined "as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act

or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.”

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

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

See Appendix File JKG p.40 for additional information/policies regarding disciplining students with special needs.

### **School Bus Rules**

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

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

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

Students should:

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

Students cannot:

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

## **School Safety**

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

## **Visitors/Guests**

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

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

## **Volunteers**

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

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

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

## **Student Records**

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

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

## **Right to Review**

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

## **Requests for Access**

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

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

## **Deleting or Adding Information**

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

Copies of Regulations

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

## **Student Record Transfers**

When a family leaves the community for another place of residence, a transfer card will be issued and a release form must be signed by the parent/guardian to permit the transfer of records to the new school. Student records will be sent via the US Postal Service to the new attending school. Duplicated copies of pertinent information from the student records will be made available to parents/guardians for hand delivering to the new school upon request. Please give a minimum of 48 hours notice to help meet your needs. Parents/guardians of students transferring into our schools are asked to contact

the main office of the appropriate school to get instructions on information that is needed to enter.



## **School Health Office**

### **School Nurse**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teachers may plan celebrations in which food is consumed; however, each student is responsible for bringing his/her own food to the event. If held in the classroom, teachers are responsible for ensuring tables and chairs are cleaned and that students wash their hands. Such events must be communicated in advance to all parents, administration and school nurse.

### **Immunizations**

A compulsory school immunization law has been in effect in Massachusetts since 1967. The law currently requires students to be vaccinated against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, varicella, haemophilus, and influenza type B (H16). Massachusetts immunizations specify minimum immunization requirements for enrollment in school. These regulations are revised periodically to

incorporate any changes in the requirements. The law and regulations provide for exclusion of students from school if immunizations are not up to date, but permit exemptions for medical and religious reasons.

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

### **Medication Administration**

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

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

### **Health Screenings**

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

## **Attendance**

### **Residency**

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

### **Daily Attendance**

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

Our attendance protocols are governed by Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.), specifically Chapters 76, Sections 1, 2, and 4 and the Nashoba Regional School District policies (JE and JE-R).

### [NRSD Attendance Policies](#)

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

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

### **Excused Absences**

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

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

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

### **Unexcused Absences**

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

### **Tardiness**

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

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

### **Dismissals**

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

Dismissal before the end of school day should be for important matters only. The parent/guardian **must report** to the office and sign out his/her child. If parents know they will be picking up their children, they should send in a note stating what time they will be dismissed. Students who are dismissed before 11:00 AM on a full day, or before 9:45 AM on an early release day, are considered absent due to dismissal. Participation in any after school activity for students under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the school administration.

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

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

### **Registration or Withdrawal**

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

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

## **Home-School Communication**

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

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

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

## **Report Cards**

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

## **Homework**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## **Frequently Asked About Topics**

### **Extended Learning**

An Extended Day program is offered at The Center School daily and on early release days. Before-school care is offered as well. Contact Reina Rago, Extended Day Coordinator, (978-779-0539, Ext. 3042), for more information.

### **Party Invitations**

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

### **Deliveries to Students**

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

### **Balloons**

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

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

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

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

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

### **Hats**

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

### **Illnesses and Schoolwork**

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

### **Room Parent Guidelines**

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

1. The classroom teacher will solicit and choose room representatives based on interest and availability.

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

### **Lost and Found**

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

### **Phone Calls Home**

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

### **Recess Proper Dress**

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

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

### **School Functions**

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

(0.5) of the school day to be considered present for the day. Students on suspension (internal or external) are not allowed to participate in any after school activities on that day.

### **Selling and Trading**

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

### **Toys and Games**

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

### **Vacations and School Work**

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

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

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

**APPENDIX**

**NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

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

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

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

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

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

**THE CENTER SCHOOL BUILDING COORDINATORS TITLE IX**

**978-897-0290**

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

# Nashoba Regional School District

## STUDENT DRESS CODE

It is commonly accepted that student behavior and the school environment are strongly influenced by the dress and appearance of students. Students should maintain a clean and neat appearance, and their clothing should be in good taste at all times.

The following list of inappropriate attire includes, but is not limited to the following:

- any article of clothing that does not cover or reveals underwear,
- clothes that reveal the midriff or buttock,
- underwear worn as outer wear,
- tops that are low cut and/or with straps less than 2 inches in width,
- chains worn as jewelry or on pants,
- articles, which display drug, alcohol, or tobacco logos or depict the use of same.

Shorts and skirts should be at least at the level of the fingertips when a student stands with arms fully extended. Words, drawings, or symbols considered to be disruptive to the educational process or school activities are not permitted on any article of clothing, bags, back-packs, etc.

Hats may be worn at the discretion of the teacher and the principal. ***(Hats are not allowed indoors at The Center School w/out prior approval of the administration.)*** Footwear must be worn at all times. Any item of clothing that is substantially or materially disruptive to the activities of the school will be considered to be inappropriate.

The parents/guardians of students who are not appropriately dressed will be contacted and asked to bring an acceptable change of clothing to school.

Repeated violations will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken for those who do not follow the dress code policy as interpreted by each school building administration.

**NRSD Policy File: IJNDB**

### **INTERNET POLICY**

#### **USE OF NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCES**

The Nashoba Regional School District recognizes the value and importance of network information sources and related technologies for a well-rounded education. The District supports access of students and staff within appropriate bounds.

The District makes telecommunications, electronic information sources, and networked services available for the enhancement of learning and teaching within various curricula. The District expects the staff to blend thoughtful use of these educational avenues throughout the school experience and provide guidance and instruction to all students in the appropriate use of these resources.

The District realizes the positive and constructive use of these resources; it also recognizes the potential for possible misuse. Therefore, individual users must take full responsibility for their own actions. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise, for their actions. The District reserves the right to access, audit, and review usage. Use shall be governed by administrative regulations, procedures, user guidelines and user agreements. Information stored or transmitted on NRSD computer systems is the property of NRSD and may be reviewed by the District at any time.

In order to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), this document will serve as Nashoba Regional School District's Internet Safety Policy. Nashoba Regional School District has a content filter in place that blocks and filters Internet sites that are obscene, contain pornography, or contain any material deemed to be inappropriate or harmful to minors as defined by CIPA [Pub.L.No.106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

Nashoba Regional School District includes in its curriculum Internet safety. The curriculum includes teaching students about appropriate and safe online behavior, including intellectual property, personal safety, and cyber-bullying awareness and response. To the extent practical, staff supervises and monitors appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy.

The district takes cyber-bullying seriously and appropriate action will be taken to protect students and staff from any form of cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, and includes the distribution of electronic communications or the posting of electronic material that may be accessed by one or more persons.

Bullying is defined as the repeated use of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students directed at another student that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to his or her property;
- placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment at school for the bullied student;
- infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

## **Nashoba Regional School District**

FILE: IJNDB

Ethical participation in academic interactive web resources and electronic forms of communication is expected of all students and staff. Any text, voice or image that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is also inappropriate in all uses of interactive web resources and any electronic communications. This includes, but is not limited to, profanity, racist, sexist or other threatening or

discriminatory remarks. Students should promptly inform a staff member if any messages received or material reviewed is inappropriate.

All personal or school-owned technology and electronic devices shall be monitored. All technology and electronic devices should be used primarily for academic purposes during official school hours. Use of the network, technology and electronic devices shall be permitted only upon submission of signed agreement forms by both parents/guardians and students. Some networks may require an additional agreement by users; i.e. outlining standards for behavior and communication. User accounts shall be limited, suspended, or revoked if these resources are misused.

The following are not permitted:

1. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
2. Using obscene language
3. Harassing, insulting or attacking others
4. Unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" and other unlawful activities by minors online
5. Trespassing in others' electronic files or plagiarizing others' work as their own
6. Violating copyright laws
7. Revealing identifying information such as first and last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs, unless approved by a teacher for the purpose of meeting course requirements.
8. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of person identification information regarding minors
9. Sharing a password or using others' accounts and passwords
10. Intentionally wasting limited resources (i.e. excessive printing, downloading or online streaming)
11. Employing the network for commercial or other non-academic purpose
12. Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks

Publication of information shall be in accordance with the Nashoba Regional School District Publication of Personal Information Policy.

Ref: E-Rate Primer Central, 2009  
Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)  
M.G.L.; Chapter 71, Section

## DISCIPLINE - VANDALISM

**Vandalism** {def.} - *The willful or malicious defacement or destruction of public or private property.*

School buildings and grounds are built and maintained with taxes levied on the community's taxpayers. It is in the best interests of students as well as taxpayers to protect that important investment.

Anyone found willfully or maliciously defacing or destroying school property through vandalism or arson, or who creates a safety hazard to other people on school property as a result of the above actions, may be referred to law enforcement authorities. All citizens, students, school employees and police

officials are urged to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism and the name(s) of person(s) believed to be responsible.

Anyone found defacing or damaging school property will be responsible for its repair or replacement; police will be notified if necessary. It is the intention of the Nashoba Regional School district to seek damages as permitted by law from anyone, including students and/or their parents or guardians, who vandalize school property.

1. Students and other individuals who are caught vandalizing school property may receive any or all of the following consequences, as appropriate:
2. expectation to repair, replace and otherwise make restitution for any property damaged as a result of his/her actions
3. referral to law enforcement authorities
4. additional consequences as determined by the principal or his/her designee
5. suspension or expulsion from school

#### **POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON/PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TOWARD SCHOOL PERSONNEL OR OTHER STUDENTS**

*The following provisions are enacted for handbook inclusion through the 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Act:*

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 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. Please see policy #JIC and JICH.

b) Any student who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher, teacher's aide, tutor or other educational staff/volunteer or student 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.

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

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the Superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local Chief of Police, the Department of Social Services,



the Office of Student Services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local School Committee. Said Superintendent, police chief, and representative from the Department of Social Services, together with a representative from the Office of Student Services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program: provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the Board of Education. Upon completion of counseling sessions, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

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

*See: Discipline-Vandalism in the Appendix*

*See: Policy JKFA "Right to Notice and Hearing for Suspension or Expulsion" in the Appendix*

#### **File: JKFA**

#### **RIGHT TO NOTICE AND HEARING FOR SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION**

The Nashoba Regional School District shall ensure every student due process under the law regarding disciplinary actions. Upon determination that a disciplinary action is required that would result in a student being suspended or expelled, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. Temporary Disposition - The student shall remain in school and under supervision of school authorities on the day of the suspension until the end of the school day or until the parent, guardian, or his/her designee takes physical custody of the student.
2. Notification of Students – Upon completion of the investigation written notification will be provided to the student and mailed to the parent/guardian of the student explaining the charges against the student, the reasons for the charges, the disciplinary action proposed, and the student's rights to a hearing(M.G.L. 71:37H).
3. Opportunity for a Hearing – Upon notification of the suspension, a student has the opportunity for a hearing with the principal if charged with any of the following: found on school premises, or at school –sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or charged with assault of a school employee. At this hearing, he/she shall receive the following:
  - a. oral notice of charges against him/her
  - b. an explanation of the basis for the accusation, and
  - c. the opportunity to present his/her defense.

The hearing shall take place before a suspension begins, unless the student's presence at the school or in the classroom is considered dangerous or substantially disruptive to the academic process. If immediate suspension is necessary, the hearing must follow as soon as possible.

4. Expulsion: As is provided by law, a hearing must occur prior to the expulsion. An expulsion may not occur without first giving the student and his/her parent or guardian an opportunity to be heard. Once the expulsion has occurred, it shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted according to the statutes.

5. Appeals - The student shall have the right to appeal the decision of a principal to the Superintendent of Schools. The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her appeal no later than ten day calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The Superintendent shall hold an appeal hearing with the student in accordance with the state law. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. Such decision shall be the final disciplinary action within the school community.

6. Civil and Criminal Offenses - In serious cases requiring legal action students may be remanded to the custody of the police. Parents/guardians will be notified of this decision as stated herein. Upon the issuance of the criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony conviction, the student shall be given due process according to M.G.L. 71:37 or 71:37H ½. Under this law, if the principal has deemed that the presence of the student would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, the principal may suspend the student. The student may appeal this decision to the Superintendent of Schools, but shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the disciplinary action. Such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent of Schools.

NOTE: Under this law, the student shall notify Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the disciplinary action.

First Reading: July 8, 1999

Adopted: August 19, 1999

Amended: May 5, 2005

## **Policy File: JKG**

### **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and related regulations provide eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. A brief overview of these rights is provided below.

In general, special education students may be excluded from their programs, just as any other student can be, for up to ten school days per year. However, when a special education student is excluded from his/her program for more than ten school days in a school year, the student's special education Team must develop a functional behavioral assessment plan. In many instances, the Team may also be required to determine whether the student's behavior was related to his/her disability (a "manifestation determination").

If the Team determines the behavior was not related to the student's disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion. However, if the Team determines that the behavior was related to the disability, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons or drugs) until the Team develops and the parent/guardian(s) consent(s) to a new IEP.

In the event a student possesses, uses, sells or solicits a controlled substance or possesses a weapon at school or a school function, a school may place a student in an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a student in an appropriate interim setting for up to 45 days upon determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

When a parent/guardian disagrees with the Teams decision on the "manifestation determination" or with a decision regarding placement, the parent/guardian has a right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Additional information regarding procedural protections for special education students can be obtained from the Director of Special Education, who can be reached at the Nashoba Regional School District Offices.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. c71B,603 CMR28: Special Education  
I.D.E.A.

First Reading: July 8, 1999  
Adopted: August 19, 1999  
Revised: July 23, 2003

**Policy File: JLG**  
**POLICY ON HEALTH and WELLNESS**

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

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

Furthermore, it is our expectation that specific actions will take into account the health needs and well being of all children without discrimination or isolation of any child. It is the School Committee's belief that education and open informative communication are vital for the creation of an environment with reduced risks for all students and their families. In order to assist children to assume more individual

responsibility for maintaining their safety as they grow, it is the policy of the School Committee that the guidelines reflect student development as children advance from the primary grades through secondary school.

First Reading: August 26, 2004  
Adopted: September 9, 2004

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

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

### **I. Definitions:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E. The Compliance Coordinator conducts the hearing.

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

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

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

I. The Superintendent conducts a hearing.

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

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

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

M. The Compliance Coordinator conducts hearing.

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

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

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

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

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

File: EEAE

### **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM**

The safety and welfare of student riders will be the first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Safety precautions will include the following:

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.
2. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for using seat belts, however, there will be no expectation that they are used.
3. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.
4. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
5. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 90:7b as amended by Ch. 246 Acts of 1986  
M.G.L. 90:1 et seq.; 713:2; 713:7L  
Highway Safety Program Standard No. 17

CROSS REF.: EB, Safety Program

Adopted: April 26, 2001

Draft Edit: February 9, 2005

## **School Ceremonies and Observances**

**File: IMD**

We live in a pluralistic society founded on principles of justice, liberty, equality and religious freedom. Our society is firmly rooted in a clear separation between government and the religious beliefs and practices of its citizens. Knowledge and understanding of these many and varied beliefs and practices can greatly enhance an individual's life and strengthen the society as a whole.

Our schools offer students a unique opportunity to discuss and learn about religions in our country and throughout the world. In this way, the schools teach mutual understanding, sensitivity, and respect for the beliefs and traditions of all persons.

The schools also recognize that the expression of each student's traditions and beliefs, whether religious or secular, through student art, music, writing, and discourse, is a part of the open, positive, and inclusive environment, which the schools seek to foster. However, the schools shall not participate in the teaching or recognition of any religion in such a way as to endorse or deprecate any particular religious dogma, and the schools shall likewise respect the fact that some individuals' beliefs do not include religious observances.

The policy governs all school-sponsored activities and programs. It is the responsibility of teachers and school administrators to notify outside speakers and performers of the District's policy and guidelines.

## ***Curriculum***

As one aspect of a well-rounded education, it is important to include teaching about the role religion plays in history, culture, and the arts. When instruction about religion and religious holidays is included in the District's curriculum, the goals shall include appreciation and respect for religious differences and religious liberty.

In determining all course content and curriculum, care and sensitivity shall be shown for the religious or non-religious beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of the students. Special attention shall be given to the developmental difference between elementary and secondary students. However, the decision to include or exclude material from the curriculum must be based on secular, not religious, reasons. Materials should not be added or deleted only because someone's religious or non religious sensibilities may be offended.

### ***Student Assignments and Religion***

Students may express their religious beliefs in the form of reports, homework, and artwork. Teachers may not reject or correct submissions simply because they include a religious symbol or address religious themes. Likewise, teachers may not require students to include religious views in their assignments or require them to modify or remove religious views, if germane. These assignments should be judged by ordinary academic standards.

### ***Excused Absences from Classroom Discussion and Activities***

Some holidays considered by many people to be secular are viewed by others as having religious overtones. Recognizing the importance of religious liberty and freedom of conscience, school administrators and teachers will either allow students to be excused from classroom celebrations related to such holidays, or offer alternative activities. Parent/guardian are responsible for notifying school officials in advance and arranging for make-up work within a reasonable time period to allow accommodations to be made.

### ***Excused Absences from School Attendance***

The rights of parent/guardian to excuse their children from school attendance for the purposes of religious observance is understood; such an absence shall be recognized as an excused absence, without a penalty on District academic and attendance records. Parent/guardian are responsible for notifying school officials in writing a reasonable time in advance of their child's absence. This may be done with a letter detailing a student's anticipated absences for religious observances for the entire year. All students are required to make up work covered and assignments made during their excused absence from school. Any student who is unable to complete a homework assignment due to religious observance shall arrange with the teacher an alternate time for completion of the work without loss of credit.

Parent/guardian may also excuse their children from participation in any athletic practice or competition for the purpose of religious holiday observance. Such an absence will incur no penalty on future participation on an athletic team not any other penalty. Parent/guardian are responsible for notifying coaches in writing a reasonable time in advance of their child's absence from a practice or game.

At the beginning of the school year, the Superintendent shall make available to teachers and parent/guardian a calendar listing major religious holidays for the District. The Administration and staff shall attempt to avoid scheduling examinations, assemblies, field trips, graduation exercises, and other unique and unrepeatable educational events on those days. Teachers shall also take these religious holidays into consideration when making homework assignments.

### ***Holiday Celebrations and Religious Symbols***

Religious holidays may be noted or recognized in the schools, but they may not be celebrated. Seasonal parties are appropriate insofar as the curriculum allows, but they may not be used as celebrations of any religious holiday.

Religious holidays provide opportunities for educating students about history and cultures, as well as traditions of particular religious groups within a pluralistic society. Presentation of materials dealing with religious holidays must be accurate, informed, and descriptive. The focus should be on the origins,



history, and generally agreed upon meanings of the holidays. Teachers must be aware of the diversity of religious beliefs in their classroom and in the District at large and be particularly sensitive to the rights of religious minorities as well as those who hold no religious belief.

The use of religious symbols, provided they are used only as an example of cultural and religious heritage, is permitted as a teaching aid or resource. These symbols shall be displayed only for the length of time that the instructional activity requires. Any non-instructional display of religious symbols of any kind by the District is prohibited. Religious symbols include, but are not limited to, any object or objects of worship, crosses, crucifixes, Islamic crescents, nativity scenes, Christmas trees, Menorahs, and Stars of David.

### ***Music Program***

At all levels, the study of religious music as part of a music appreciation course, as a musical experience, or as part of a study of various lands and cultures is to be encouraged. Musical programs shall not be religious in nature or celebrations of a religious holiday; however, seasonal programs may include religious music. An example of an acceptable program is a winter concert that includes Hanukkah and Christmas music or a program of holiday music from around the world, including music from religious and non-religious holidays.

Teachers must be aware of the significance of certain music during religious holiday seasons. They should attempt to choose music, which enable every child to feel included in some way. They must be especially sensitive to the feelings of students who may not wish to participate for religious reasons.

### ***Prayer at School Events and Baccalaureate Ceremonies***

School officials may not mandate or organize prayer at graduation or any other school sponsored event, including athletic events, or organize a religious baccalaureate ceremony.

### ***Student Religious Clubs Meeting on School Property***

On the high school level, religious clubs that are exclusively organized by, led by, and made up of students may meet on school property subject to the guidelines set out in the District's policy on the use of school facilities. Teachers and other school employees may not initiate or direct such meetings but may be present as non-participating monitors. Other adults may be invited to speak at a meeting of such a group but may not act as advisors or leaders of the group.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05  
403 US 602, 1971 (Lemon vs Kurtzman)

First Reading: 10/9/97 Approved  
Adopted 10/23/97

The Nashoba Regional School District observes the establishment clause of the first amendment of the Constitution which guarantees both the separation of church and state and also the right of an individual to free speech. The School Committee understands that there can be a tension between these two parts of the first amendment. The schools must also respect the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In addition, we recognize that in our communities there are diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and social traditions which should be understood through educational practice. We shall recognize and honor our differences, not ignore them. Students and staff will be encouraged to appreciate and accept ethnic and religious diversity. We shall be respectful of the beliefs and practices of others.

**Instructional Practices:**

1) Teachers will be sensitive and knowledgeable about the diversity of religious beliefs of students in their classes. Instructional practices will balance religious beliefs so that all students will feel included; no student will be asked to participate in class activities associated with religion if unwilling, or if a parent/guardian expresses unwillingness.

2) The school system calendar will indicate religious holidays affecting a significant proportion of our population. The school system will indicate holidays that will have an impact upon student participation in school activities. <sup>1</sup>

3) Students will be accommodated if they request of the teacher that they be excused from participating in activities involving religion and/or if they are unable to participate in regular activities due to religious observances. Written parent/guardian permission should accompany such student requests.

4) Students' observance of a religious holiday may have an impact on their ability to prepare work for the school day. Students and parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers in advance regarding any and all planned excused absences. Students will not be expected to complete daily homework assigned the evening before, or the day of the religious holiday. Assignments and tests should be made up in a time span that is reasonable to both students and teachers. Typically for every day of a religious holiday there should be an opportunity for at least one makeup day. In addition, teachers will make every effort to plan for tests, quizzes or the introduction of major new concepts and/or applications with the possibility of student observance of the religious holidays. Long-term assignments, however, may be due the day before or the day after the religious holiday.

Adopted: March, 2005

Updated: March, 2007

<sup>1</sup> This will begin with the 2005-2006 calendar. A revised 2004-2005 will show the holidays.