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ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate example the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth.

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval annually. The number of days and/or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

1. Elementary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days and a minimum of 900 hours per school year of learning time. Structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02, will be the focus of that time. Time scheduled for school lunch, passing between classes, homeroom and recess will not count toward meeting the minimum learning time requirement.
2. Middle and High Schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days and a minimum of 990 hours per school year of learning time (as defined in 603 CMR 27.02).

For the information of staff, students, and parents, the calendar will set forth the days the Natick Schools will be in session; federal/state holidays and vacation periods; major religious holidays; staff development days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L 4:7; 15:1G; 71:1; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12
603 CMR 27.02

Cross Ref: IKB, JHA

Adopted by the Natick School Committee – February 27, 2023

LEVELED COURSES POLICY

For any class that is leveled below the 9th grade, the administration shall ensure that two sets of qualifying criteria are established. One shall be Placement Criteria, and the other shall be Override Criteria. Placement Criteria shall be used to determine the recommended placement of students. Override Criteria shall be used to authorize students and their families to override the placement recommendation in order for the student to be placed in a more accelerated or advanced level. The Override Criteria shall be set so as to allow override choices to all students for whom analysis of historical data, or in the absence of historical data the professional judgment of a task force of teachers and administrators, indicates a preponderant prospect of success at the accelerated level.

SCHOOL DAY

The length of the school day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee. To help insure the safety of all children, parents will also be notified that students will not be admitted into the school building until 20 minutes prior to the start of the official day unless bus schedules require earlier admittance.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 69:1G; 71:59
 Board of Education Regulations for School Year and Day, effective 9/1/75

ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student, each to his/her fullest potential.

The structure will consist of multiple levels (for example, Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels).

The Primary/Elementary level includes schools with kindergarten through grade four. The Middle level consists of schools for grades five, six, seven and eight. The Secondary level consists of schools with grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.

Special education services are integrated across each grade level in all schools.

The organization is designed to meet the standards established within the Common Core Standards as required by the State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education and to serve the needs of all students.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise.

The Committee expects its faculty and administration to regularly evaluate the education program and to recommend modifications of practice and changes in curriculum content as well as the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E
 603 CMR 26:05

SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS

To support the classroom activities and other instructional needs of the District, various educational services as listed shall be provided. The Support Services staff will work in cooperation with building staff and the administration of the District in (1) the coordination and the supervision of the curriculum implementation of the instructional program, and (2) support services programs.

Curricular Supervision and Coordination

Coordinating personnel for specific curricular areas shall be assigned by the administration. These coordinators shall assist in the organization, supervision, and coordination of subject material and activities in the schools.

Support Services

The designated administrator responsible for pupil services shall be responsible for all services for students who are not eligible for special education assistance, such as psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.

CROSS REF.: ACE - Nondiscrimination of the Basis of Handicap

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The School Committee will rely on the professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the school system.

The Superintendent will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach.

The Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 69:1E

BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

State law requires that schools:

. . . shall give instruction and training in orthography, reading, writing, the English language and grammar, geography, arithmetic, drawing, music, the history and Constitution of the United States, the duties of citizenship, health education, physical education and good behavior...

The law further states that American history and civics, including the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, local history and government will be taught as required subjects in the public schools.

Physical education is compulsory for all students, except that no student will be required to take part in physical education exercises if a physician certifies in writing that such exercises would be injurious to the student.

The Fundamental Skills

The business of the schools is to equip all children with the skills, tools, and attitudes that will lay the basis for learning now and in the future. This means giving highest priority to developing skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and solving numerical problems.

The first claim of the community's resources will be made for the realization of these priorities. School dollars, school talent, school time, and whatever innovation in the program is required must be concentrated on these top-ranking goals. No student should be bypassed or left out of the school's efforts to teach the fundamental skills. Schooling for basic literacy must reach all students, in all neighborhoods, and from all homes.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1,2,3; 71:13
 603 CMR 26:05

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The School Committee will attempt to provide every student with an opportunity for wholesome and enriched educational experiences. It is the Committee's belief that the following basic aims and objectives of the physical education program will contribute to this goal:

1. To aid the development of the entire student so that a well trained mind may function properly in a healthy body.
2. To encourage student participation in vigorous physical activity while in school, and to teach the skills of those activities so that they will have a carry-over value for later activities in everyday life.
3. To increase appreciation of physical fitness and its importance in regard to good health.
4. To impress upon students the importance of integrating one's mind, body and attitude in preparing to face the obligations of a complex society.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:3
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Physical Education, adopted
4/25/78, effective 9/1/78
603 CMR 26:05

OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The School Committee recognizes that students in kindergarten through grade 12 should:

1. Be afforded the opportunity to be informed about the world of work.
2. Be aware of the many vocations available to them.
3. Develop a respect for the dignity of work.
4. Be allowed the opportunity to develop an understanding regarding the technical, consumer, occupational, recreational and cultural aspects of industry and technology; they should also be afforded the opportunity to develop skills related to such aspects through creative problem solving experiences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37K; 71:38A, 38C, 38D, 38F; 74:1 et seq.
Board of Education Chapter 74 Regulations, adopted 6/28/77, effective 9/1/77
603 CMR 26.04

HEALTH EDUCATION

Good health depends upon continuous life-long attention to scientific advances and the acquisition of new knowledge.

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program as an integral part of each student's general education. Health education will be taught as a separate academic discipline in grades K through 6 and as a separate class in grade 7 and 10.

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the system's health education program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

Revised & Approved by the Natick School Committee: September 17, 2018

HEALTH EDUCATION
(Exemption Procedure)

Exemption will be granted from a specific portion of the health education curriculum on the grounds that the material taught is contrary to the religious beliefs and/or teachings of the student or the student's parent/guardian.

A request for exemption must be submitted in writing to the Principal in advance of instruction in that portion of the curriculum for which the exemption is requested. The request must state the particular conflict involved.

The Principal will confer with the teacher to determine the length of time a student will be exempt. The teacher will develop an alternative activity for which the student will receive credit.

The Principal will inform the parent/guardian of disposition of the request within a reasonable number of school days of receipt of the request.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

SEX EDUCATION NOTIFICATION

The Natick Public Schools comprehensive health education curriculum for grades K-12 was developed by our professional staff under the direction of the Director of Health and Physical Education. The overall goal of the curriculum is to promote the health and well being of our students to help them make informed decisions about themselves and others.

Sex education is part of the health education curriculum in grades 5-9 and 10. It includes topics such as puberty, dating, relationships and communication skills, pregnancy, pregnancy options, birth control, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and prevention of sexual abuse. Sexuality topics may also be included in other disciplines such as Family Living, Child Development, Biology, and Human Anatomy and Physiology. The instructional materials used in the courses include curriculum packages and videos, guest speakers, and assemblies. The curriculum and materials used may be reviewed by calling the Principal of your child's school or the Director of Health and Physical Education. During the courses and units, students will be able to ask questions which will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected and no one will be asked to answer a question or reveal personal information that would cause the student to become embarrassed. Material will be presented in a balanced, factual way that makes it clear that people may have strong religious and moral beliefs about various issues and that those beliefs must be respected.

Under Massachusetts's law and School Committee policy, a parent or guardian may exempt your child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. To receive an exemption for your child, simply send a letter to your child's Principal requesting an exemption for your child. No student who is exempted from this portion of the curriculum will be penalized. We may provide an alternative assignment to students who are exempted.

Revised and approved by the Natick School Committee: September 17, 2018

TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The policy, and any standards and rules enforcing the policy, shall be prescribed by the school committee in conjunction with the superintendent.

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents in accordance with state law. Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1;71:96

CROSS REFS: GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy
JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)

The goals of this school system's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of Chapter 71B and the Massachusetts General Laws (known as Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972) and state regulations will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three through 21 who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance from all sources.

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)
 Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)
 Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through
 7/1/81
 603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students that will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the District shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all resident students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes.

LEGAL REF.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Parents/guardians' request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal.
2. The Special Education Director or designee shall contact the parent/guardian(s) for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents/guardians' request.
3. When a parent/guardian requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Special Education Director or designee will seek approval from the Director of Special Education and the building principal before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.
4. The Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).
5. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
6. If the observer is not the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must sign a release for the individual to observe.
7. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
8. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents/guardians can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.
9. The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.
10. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.
11. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting. .

LEGAL REF.: MGL 71B:3
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

CROSS REF.: KI, Visitors to Schools

NOTE: The following quotes from the DESE Advisory are important points of understanding to the implementation of this policy.

"School districts and parents have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue."

"The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:

- the safety of children in the program during the observation;
- the integrity of the program during the observation;
- and children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program."

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION
(Title 1)

Title 1 funds shall be used to provide educational services that are in addition to the regular services provided for District students. By adoption of this policy, the School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.

LEGAL REF.: Title 1, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidance.

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through home language surveys that identify a primary home language other than English (PHLOTE), observations, intake assessments, and recommendations of parents, teachers and other persons. Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

The District shall certify to the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. (language instruction for limited English proficient and
immigrant students contained in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)
42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
603 CMR 14.00

HOME/HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION

A Natick public school student, who, due to documented medical reasons, is confined to home or a hospital for fourteen (14) school days or more during the school year, is entitled to receive home/hospital educational services as described under 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c). Students with chronic illnesses who have recurring home/hospital stays of less than 14 consecutive school days, when such recurrences have added up to or are expected to add up to more than 14 school days in a school year, are also eligible for home or hospital educational services if they are requested and the medical need is documented by the physician. In this context, "Natick public school student" means a student who is enrolled in the Natick school district or a charter school, or a student who is being educated with public funds in an educational collaborative or an approved private day or residential special education school.

Once the student's personal physician determines that a student's medical condition will require either hospitalization or home care for not less than 14 school days, the physician must notify the school district responsible for the student in order to begin the home/hospital instruction process. The student's physician must complete a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education form 28R/3 (or equivalent signed statement) and submit it to the student's building principal or other appropriate program administrator. At a minimum, the physician's signed notice must include information regarding:

- The date the student was admitted to a hospital or was confined to home;
- The medical reason(s) for the confinement;
- The expected duration of the confinement; and
- Medical needs of the student that should be considered in planning the home or hospital education services

Revised and approved by the Natick School Committee: October 28, 2019

HOME SCHOOLING

Massachusetts General Law requires the Natick School Committee to determine that a Homeschooling program meets with minimum standards established for the public schools in Massachusetts prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student between the ages of 6 and 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures will be followed in accordance with the law:

- A. Before removing a student from the Natick Public Schools, the parent/guardian must submit written notification of the establishment of the home-based program to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction at least 14 days before the program is established.
- B. The parent/guardian must resubmit notification of the continuation of a home-based program on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.
- C. The parent/guardian must complete an attendance form provided by Natick delineating the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the home-based program.

The Superintendent or designee will notify parents to produce documentation required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Assistant Superintendent in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

- A. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
- B. The competency of the parents to teach the children.
- C. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children, and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents.
- D. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student being educated in a home-based program in Natick may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent or designee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles

Natick Public Schools

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Some children have great difficulty coping with the conventional school program and as a result will drop out of school. Some children require more support and direct supervision than is reasonably available in conventional school settings. And, some children, along with a highly structured academic experience, require a special focus on life skills and an appropriate vocational involvement.

The School Committee will provide alternative education programs where these needs have been identified, where establishment of such programs is feasible, and where the proposed programs fall within the function normally associated with the public school system.

These alternative educational programs will seek to provide an appropriate academic, social, and vocational experience to aid these young people either to reenter the regular school system, move into another educational setting, or prepare them for successful employment.

LEGAL REFS.:

M.G.L. 71:37I; 71:37J

Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8 of Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities and Magnet Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75

SUMMER PROGRAMS

The Natick Public Schools will sponsor a summer program providing opportunities for enrichment and remedial instruction for students in grades 1 through 8, and for remedial instruction at the high school level. The Director(s) of the Natick Summer School, in consultation with the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, will establish the curriculum and reflect the alignment of the Massachusetts Frameworks, whenever possible, and the needs of the students.

A. Fees:

1. Nominal tuition fees for resident and nonresident pupils will be charged, and changes in those fees will be subject to School Committee approval, with the exception of programs funded by the Federal government and/or other outside agencies.
2. The summer school program will make every effort to provide opportunities for financial assistance; however, the summer school is self-supporting.
3. The Natick Summer School Director(s) will have the right to cancel announced summer courses for insufficient enrollment and refund any fees involved. They will also have the right to dismiss a student for disciplinary reasons with no refund of fees; however, any student who has been dismissed from summer school will have the right to due process as outlined in the Student Handbook for each grade level.
4. There will be no refunds issued after the first week of classes unless there are extenuating circumstances such as a death or district school closures.

B. Credits:

1. Remedial/make-up courses for middle and high school students will provide opportunities for students to qualify for promotion and/or credit in areas and subjects where previous work has not met promotional and/or credit standards. Courses taken for improvement of grades or original credit at summer school will have the grades and credits recorded on the Permanent Record Card, but the grades and credits will not be used in determination of Student Grade Point Average (GPA).
2. Teachers for credit courses will be certified and will be sought from among current staff members, whenever possible.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, physical disabilities, gender identity, or sexual preference.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.
7. They must follow the standards established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:48; 71:49; 71:50

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

Religion -- Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.

Ideologies -- Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.

Profanity/obscenity -- Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee is encouraged through the School Committee to establish a review committee to assist in the process to determine the textbooks that best meet the curriculum guidelines of the District. The review committee should include teachers who will use the texts and other staff members as found desirable. Students and parents will be encouraged to serve.

Principles that apply generally to the selection of instructional materials and library materials shall apply to textbooks. Additionally, basic textbooks and textbook support materials shall be chosen:

- To advance the educational objectives of the school system and particular objectives of the course program;
- To contribute toward continuity, integration, and articulation of the curriculum; and
- To establish a general framework for the particular course or program.

Because the instructional purposes of textbooks, as stated above, are of such importance, particular care shall be taken in their selection as to content.

Although many points must be examined, the School Committee directs the staff to be mindful of the following considerations:

- The needs of all learners must be provided for.
- Attention should be given to gender roles depicted in the materials.
- The textbook and textbook support materials should lead the student and teacher beyond the textbook into a wide variety of other materials and educational experiences.
- If the textbook deals with problems and issues of our times, it should present and encourage examination of varied points of view.
- Because textbooks are selected for several years' use, special attention also shall be given their physical characteristics, durability, format and price.

LEGAL REFS.: 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50
 603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee recognizes that knowledge is changing and expanding and that it may be necessary to use various types of supplementary materials in addition to the basic and fundamental textbooks.

For the purpose of this policy, supplementary materials shall be defined as any instructional materials other than textbooks including, but not limited to, books, periodicals, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, slides, filmstrips, films, records, audiotapes, and suitable technological applications which relate directly to the adopted curriculum.

The School Committee believes that teachers and administrators should have a large role in selection and recommendation of supplementary materials. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of learning aids, provided the expense incurred in purchasing these aids remains within the limits of the budget.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from all personnel--teachers, coordinators, and administrators. Students will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the building Principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection. Complaints about library books will be handled in line with Committee policy on complaints about instructional materials.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The primary objective of the library/media center is to implement its resources to enrich and to support the educational program of the school.

Definition of Library Resources

Library resources are those materials, both print and non-print, found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs. Print items include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, microfiche or microfilm. Non-print items include films, disc records, filmstrips, slides, prints, audiotapes, videotapes, compact discs, and computer software.

Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

The criteria for selection of library resources in the District are:

- Needs of the individual student
Based on knowledge of students
Based on requests of parents and students
- Needs of the individual school
Based on knowledge of the curriculum of the school
Based on requests from the professional staff
- Provision of a wide range of materials on many levels of difficulty with a diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.
- Provision of materials of high artistic quality.
- Provision of materials with superior format.
- Reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids are consulted as guides.

In accordance with the District's policy of providing instructional materials on opposing sides of controversial issues, it should be noted that neither the media centers nor the District serve as advocates for the ideas expressed in any materials, nor does the presence of any material indicate automatic endorsement of the ideas expressed therein.

Disclosure of Information/Privacy of Circulation Records

Circulation records shall not be made available to anyone except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized by law.

Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

The continuous review of library/media center materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and active collection. As new materials are selected and added, some older materials are withdrawn. The responsibility for determining which materials are to be withdrawn rests with the professional staff.

Among the reasons for withdrawing an item are the following:

- Curricular changes have rendered superfluous some materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used but no longer in demand.
- Some materials contain factual material that is no longer accurate nor current.
- Some materials intended for recreational reading have become dated or unattractive and are no longer in demand. (Some such books, which are deemed “standards” or “classics”, will be retained even though they rarely circulate).
- Some materials have become worn out, damaged or physically deteriorated and have lost utility and/or appeal.
- Some materials have been superseded by newer items, which present the same information, but in superior format.

Withdrawn library/media center materials are processed in one or more of the following ways:

- Made available to be used as resource or supplementary material by teachers.
- Offered to other media centers in the District, as it is possible that a material, which lacks utility in one building, may have some usefulness in another.
- Contributed to appropriate charitable or educational agencies.
- Discarded, when warranted.

Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient or expedient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or likely to be disapproved by segments of the community. Materials are not to be proscribed or removed because of actual or potential partisan or doctrinal disapproval, nor because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Organizations, institutions, and individuals at times develop materials that are offered to schools free or inexpensively. As a general rule, sponsored materials present a particular point of view, and extreme care must be exercised in evaluating and using them. The responsibility for using sponsored materials, including online resources, rests with the certified staff member who recommends its use. In any questionable instance, the Superintendent or designee should be informed and shall decide whether its use is in the best interests of the students.

Sponsored materials must meet the same basic selection criteria as any other learning material, as well as the following special criteria.

Any expression of a point of view should be clearly identified.

Any advertising that appears on or with any material should be in good taste and unobtrusive.

The source of all material should be clearly identifiable.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Access to Electronic Media

The Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner.

Safety Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to electronic media. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer use, ethical use of electronic media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, e-mail, and other District technological resources), and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of networks for prohibited or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages, or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web;
- Safety and security of minors when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct or electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them.

The District shall provide public notice via handbooks and the internet of, its Internet safety measures.

Permission/Agreement Form

A written parental request shall be required prior to the student being granted independent access to electronic media involving District technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Superintendent with a written request.

Employee Use

Employees shall use electronic mail only for purposes directly related to work-related activities.

Employees shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless they have been given authorization to do so. (Authorization is not required each time the electronic media is accessed in performance of one's duties.) Each employee is responsible for the security of his/her own password.

Community Use

On recommendation of the Superintendent or designee, the Committee shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. Upon request to the Principal or designee, community members may have access to the Internet and other electronic information sources and programs available through the District's technology system, provided they attend any required training and abide by the rules of usage established by the Superintendent or designee.

Disregard of Rules

Individuals who refuse to sign required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, or other computing and telecommunications technologies.

Responsibility for Damages

Individuals shall reimburse the Committee for repair or replacement of District property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.

Responding to Concerns

School officials shall apply the same criterion of educational suitability used to review other educational resources when questions arise concerning access to specific databases or other electronic media.

Audit of Use

Users with network access shall not utilize District resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process to determine whether the District's education technology is being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The process shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing technology that blocks or filters Internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or, with respect to computers with Internet access by minors, harmful to minors;

2. Maintaining and securing a usage log; and
3. Monitoring online activities of minors.

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

CROSS REFS: IJNDB, Responsible Use Policy – Technology

STUDENT RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

Student Responsible Use Guidelines

I understand that the use of technology is a privilege for which I am responsible. When using any NPS Online and Digital Technologies (ODT); I will always be a good digital citizen. I acknowledge that I understand the following:

I am responsible for being prepared for learning.

- ☐ If issued a school computer, I will arrive at school each day with my computer, a fully charged computer battery, and my charger.
- ☐ I will report any breakage or technical issues to the Technology Services Department (Technology) when they occur and I will be provided a loaner if appropriate and available.
- ☐ While in class, I will free myself of personal distractions and only use technology when instructed by my teacher.

I am responsible for practicing positive Digital Citizenship.

- ☐ I will practice positive Digital Citizenship, including appropriate behavior and contributions on websites, social media, discussion boards, media sharing sites, and all other electronic communications, including new technology.
- ☐ I will be honest and respectful in all digital communication.
- ☐ I understand that what I do and post online must not disrupt school activities or compromise school safety and security.
- ☐ I will not spam NPS email lists, which includes creating or forwarding chain letters or pyramid schemes of any type.
- ☐ I will not gamble using the NPS network.
- ☐ While on school premises, I will not knowingly and willfully use any devices or tools (cell phones, hotspots, VPNs) to bypass the NPS network in order to gain access to the internet.
- ☐ I will use NPS technology to access only approved educational content whether on school premises or off.
- ☐ If I find internet content with educational value that is blocked, I will follow the process to request access to those sites:

- 1. Ask a faculty member to submit the unblock request to a Principal/Dean via email.*
- 2. Next, the Principal/Dean must review the site and either approve or deny the request.*
- 3. If the site is approved for unblocking, the Principal/Dean informs Technology [via email](#).*
- 4. Technology will unblock the site and inform the requester via email once it's available.*

- ☐ At the high school, I will only install software from Managed Software Center (MSC) unless otherwise approved. I will follow the process to request an application be added to MSC:

1. *Submit a request to Technology [via email](#).*
2. *Next, Technology reviews the application request.*
3. *If the application is approved to be added to MSC, Technology will add it and inform the requester via email once it's available.*

I am responsible for keeping personal information private.

- ☐ I will not share personal information about myself or others including, but not limited to, student ID number, names, home addresses, telephone numbers, birthdates, or visuals such as pictures, videos, and drawings.
- ☐ I will use caution when corresponding with people known only over the internet. ☐ I will be aware of privacy settings on websites that I visit.
- ☐ I will be aware that it is my responsibility to check the data privacy agreement of any software tool or website that asks me to set up my own personal account before providing any personally identifiable information.
- ☐ I am aware the school district will take responsibility for verifying the data privacy agreement of any third party system in which the school district creates my student account.
- ☐ I will abide by all laws, this Responsible Use Policy, and all district data privacy and security policies.

I am responsible for my passwords and my actions when using school-issued accounts.

- ☐ I will not share any school or district usernames and passwords with anyone. ☐ I will not access the account information of others.
- ☐ I will log out of unattended equipment and accounts in order to maintain privacy and security.

I am responsible for my verbal, written, and artistic expression.

- ☐ I will use school appropriate language in all electronic communications including but not limited to email, social media posts, audio recordings, video conferencing, and artistic works.
- ☐ I am responsible for treating others with respect and dignity, including, but not limited to their work.
- ☐ I will not send and/or distribute hateful, discriminatory, illicit, or harassing digital communications or any communication that constitutes a criminal offense. ☐ I understand that bullying in any form, including cyberbullying, is unacceptable. ☐ I will ensure that I am properly using and citing copyrighted software and materials. ☐ I will not download illegally obtained music, software, apps, and other works. ☐ I understand all NPS trademarks, logos and symbols are for school district use only. Please refer to http://www.natickps.org/contact/communications/district_logos for approval directions.

I am responsible for taking all reasonable care with the NPS network and NPS equipment.

- ☐ I understand that all school-issued technology is the property of NPS.
- ☐ I understand that the school district may inspect, audit, and confiscate any NPS device at any point in time.
- ☐ I understand that vandalism in any form including stickers is prohibited. (If I want to personalize my device I will purchase a cover.)
- ☐ I will report to a Principal/Dean any known or suspected acts of vandalism.
 - ☐ I will respect my and others' use and access to the NPS network and NPS equipment.
- ☐ I understand bringing in a personally owned home computer for school use is not allowed.
- ☐ I will ensure that my actions protect NPS technology.
- ☐ I understand that I should not tamper with, or attempt to bypass any of the controls in place (i.e., reinstall the operating system, modify the software image or disassemble the computer).

I am responsible for the data I create and for protecting it.

- ☐ I understand the school district provides me with a Google account to save and store all my data and files.
- ☐ I understand that I will not have access to my school email and data after graduation or after leaving the district.

Note: Students should think about this before applying to colleges and providing contact info.

Note: To download your data prior to leaving school, students may use [Google Takeout](#). ☐ I understand it is my responsibility to save any data or files that I create. I understand I should not save or store personal data or files on any device.
- ☐ I understand that the school district may reimage any computer at any time to maintain the equipment in good working order.

There will be consequences for Irresponsible Use.

Misuse of NPS Online Digital Technologies (ODT) may result in restricted access. Failure to uphold the responsibilities listed above is misuse. Such misuse may also lead to disciplinary and/or legal action against students including suspension, expulsion, or criminal prosecution by government authorities. The district will tailor any disciplinary action to the specific issues related to each violation.

Disciplinary action may also be taken when a student intentionally directs at the school online speech that is understood by school officials to threaten, harass and intimidate a staff member or fellow student, even when such online action originated, and was disseminated, off-campus without the use of school resources.

Students are welcome to take and post pictures online in their uniforms and/or with the school logo, recognizing that those images should display appropriate decorum and not conduct unbecoming of the team/school. Disciplinary action may also be taken if students post pictures online in their uniforms and/or with the school logo, that display conduct unbecoming of the team/school and/or that disrupts the operation of the school.

Disclaimer

NPS makes no guarantees about the quality of the services provided and is not liable for any claims, losses, damages, costs, or other obligations arising from use of the network or district accounts.

NPS also denies any liability for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through user access. Any statement accessible online is understood to be the author's individual point of view and not that of the district, its affiliates, or employees. Students under the age of 18 should only access NPS network accounts outside of school if a parent or legal guardian supervises their usage at all times. The student's parent or guardian is responsible for monitoring the minor's use outside of school. A great resource to help parents manage technology use is Common Sense Media (<https://www.commonsensemedia.org>)

Revised and approved by the Natick School Committee on June 17, 2019

STUDENT DATA PRIVACY POLICY

I. OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the Natick Public Schools in the development and implementation of this Data Privacy Policy ("DPP"), is to be transparent with the community about the information we collect, how we use information, how we share information, how we protect information, how to contact us with questions, concerns or to report potential violations, and to comply with our obligations under all federal, state and local laws.

II. PURPOSE:

The purpose of the DPP is to better: (a) understand what is "personally identifiable information" ("PII"), and the laws and requirements that govern its protection; (b) be aware of the types of data we collect, how we use it, and when not to use it; (c) understanding third parties are required to be fully vetted by the school district before given access to any student data; (d) and establish a process for asking questions or reporting any violations of this policy.

For purposes of this DPP, "personally identifiable information" ("PII") for students is defined as any information that is not directly listed as directory information and whereby a "reasonable person in the school community" who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances could identify the student. It includes direct identifiers (such as a student's or other family member's name, or student id number) and indirect identifiers (such as a student's date of birth, place of birth, or mother's maiden name). It includes all information, including recording and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified,

Protecting students' PII is to comply with our obligations under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") at 20 U.S.C. 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99, Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA"), 15 U.S.C. 6501-6502; Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment ("PPRA") 20 U.S.C. 1232h; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et. seq. and several Massachusetts student privacy laws, including Massachusetts student record regulations, 603 C.M.R. 23.00, Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Sections 34D to 34H and 603 CMR 28.00.

III. INFORMATION WE COLLECT:

We collect various types of information provided by families of students, including, but not limited to:

Information Required for Student Enrollment

We collect various personal information for each student that enrolls in the Natick Public Schools. This information includes but is not limited to:

- Biographical Information
- Parent/Legal Guardian Information
- Custodial Agreements
- Previous School Information (if any)
- Demographic Information
- Health & Medical Information
- Family Financial Information - if applying for financial assistance

Information Created once a Student is Enrolled in School

- Student ID Number
- Student Email Address
- Assessments, Grades / Transcripts
- Attendance Records
- Discipline Records
- Student Schedules
- Exams, Papers, Assignments, etc.
- Advising Records
- Individual Education Plans ("IEP") & 504s
- Transportation Information
- Bank or Credit Card Information - POS or to pay any fees

Other Information that is Collected

Student Web Searches: A content filter is in place on the school network that tracks and blocks a student's attempts to access inappropriate content and websites visited. The content filter overwrites this information every 7 days.

Student Email: All student email, using their school-issued email address, is archived. This information is collected in the event it is needed to investigate a student conduct issue or Student related concern. All investigations follow a protocol of approval or if required by local or federal laws. Archived information is purged annually, over the summer, for students no longer enrolled in the district.

Video Surveillance: This is used in or around a school to ensure a safe environment for our students, faculty & staff and to aid in any investigation or incident reported at a school. Video footage is retained for up to 30 days then overwritten unless preserved for any current investigation or incident.

Tracking of School-Owned Devices: All school-owned devices have location tracking enabled so the device can be found if reported lost or stolen, needs to be audited, or requires a software update to perform at the level needed. Location is limited to the last known location.

IV. HOW WE USE INFORMATION:

We use the information provided by families and the data students create to provide the best possible educational opportunities for all of our students. This may include:

- Providing personalized educational services to help students achieve greater learning outcomes.
- Communicating with you, which may be to respond to inquiries or events happening at school.
- Providing you with information, including communications of interest based on email lists, text lists, or other electronic communications you joined.
- Improving, delivering, maintaining and protecting the learning environment we have created for our students, faculty & staff.
- Ensuring the safety, security, and integrity of all of our schools and the educational services we provide.
- Family financial information may be collected and used to determine the eligibility of local, state or federal financial assistance programs.
- Bank or credit card information may be collected by third-party vendors we partner with to provide school lunches or processing payment of fees.

V. HOW WE SHARE INFORMATION:

We share PII with school administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the school committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement with the school district, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity. Any such personnel who are not employed directly by the school committee shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.

We share PII with administrative office staff and clerical personnel, including operators of data processing, who are either employed by the district or are employed under a service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record.

We work with third-party vendors to deliver many of our educational programs and services that support our schools. We require all vendors that store, manage or have access to our student information to sign a Data Privacy Agreement (“DPA”). If a vendor will not sign the DPA, the District will seek parent/guardian consent for the information to be shared with a vendor and

provide the vendor’s privacy policy to the parents/guardians. The goal of this DPA is to ensure all third parties:

- Follow all local and federal laws protecting students’ rights for data privacy - FERPA, CIPA, COPPA, and PPRA and state law.
- Ensure the school district retains ownership of all student data regardless of where the data resides.
- Provide the school district notification of a data breach, if one should occur, within a specific time frame.
- Not resell or use student information for any other purpose than the service it was intended for.
- Provide the school district the right to audit the vendor for compliance.
- Ensure industry best practices are being followed with respect to data privacy and data security.

VI. HOW WE PROTECT INFORMATION:

The Natick Public Schools takes data privacy very seriously. Ensuring student data is protected is not a one-time event but part of our ongoing efforts of implementing best practices throughout the district.

Data privacy, however, isn't possible without having the proper controls in place to ensure data security, along with raising awareness among all faculty, staff, students, parents, vendors, and members of the community we serve. Below are steps the district has taken to ensure both data privacy and data security so students’ private information remains protected:

- The Natick Public Schools transitioned from Acceptance Use Policies to [Responsible Use Policies](#) for our students, faculty, and staff. In these policies are specifics guidelines for digital citizenship, data privacy, and data security.
- Natick Public Schools has been working with the [Massachusetts Student Privacy Alliance](#) (“MSPA”), [The Education Cooperative](#) (“TEC”), and our legal counsel to develop a standardized [DPA](#) for all vendors that store any student information with PII. TEC

- represents a number of school districts across Massachusetts concerned with student data privacy. Utilizing TEC's partnership with other school districts puts us in a stronger position when negotiating contract terms than going it alone and sends vendors a strong message that data privacy is an important issue we need to work on together to solve.
 - [View a current list of executed vendor DPAs.](#)
- The Natick Public Schools has implemented an internal vetting process, so all new vendors get on-boarded only after a data privacy agreement is agreed to and fully executed. If a vendor will not sign the DPA, the District will seek parent/guardian
- consent for the information to be shared with a vendor and provide the vendor's privacy policy to the parents/guardians.
- The Natick Public Schools has a "Written Information Security Policy" ("WISP") and has adopted and conducted a self-assessment of the [Critical Security Control framework developed by the Center for Internet Security](#). These are ongoing efforts to ensure the implementation of best practices within all of our schools regarding data security.
- The school district is also implementing [COSN's Trusted Learning Environment](#) framework. This framework gets students, teachers, administrators and the entire community involved in our data privacy and data security initiative. The goal is not to earn COSN's seal of approval, but to raise awareness of the ongoing need for data privacy and data security, and change our behavior so data privacy and data security are a consideration in everything we do.

VII. DATA PRIVACY TEAM:

Our Data Privacy Team acts as stewards in all data privacy and protection decisions and consists of the following positions:

Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning & Innovation
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Director of Technology
Director of Digital Learning
Director of Finance
Director of Human Resources
Director of Communications

Emailing dataprivacy@natickps.org will send a message to the entire Data Privacy Team. Please do so with any questions, concerns, complaints, or to report a data privacy or security issue. Any disputes concerning the processing of the PII will be responded to within three (3) weeks.

All updates regarding data privacy and security are located on our website at http://www.natickps.org/about/data_privacy

Adopted and approved by the Natick School Committee on June 17, 2019
Natick Public Schools

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION POLICY OF THE
NATICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1. Responsible Use Policy is enforced within this policy

This policy is adopted in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the School District's Responsible Use Policy, which governs use of the school district's technological resources.

2. General Concerns

Staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise.

The Natick Public Schools recognizes the proliferation and usefulness of online conversation between employees and students and/or their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social media sites, there exists a risk that, without care and planning, the lines between one's professional life and personal life will be blurred. If an employee "friend requests" a student on Facebook, follows a student's "Twitter" account, regularly engage in email "chat" with a student, exchanges text messages with students or engages in other electronic communication, the school district is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activity may disrupt the learning environment by undermining the educator's authority to maintain discipline, encourage inappropriate behaviors, including but not limited to cyber-bullying, and compromise the educator's ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

3. Public Records Law

Staff must use only school-based resources and accounts to communicate with students in order to comply with public records law.

Any online communication using one's own personal resources, as opposed to school district resources, compromises the employee's, as well as the school district's, ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth's public records laws [M.G.L. c. 66, § 10\(b\)](#). The law requires public employees who send, receive or maintain records in their capacity as public employees, to retain, disclose and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law. This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication. When public employees communicate through school-based resources, such as staff email or school sponsored web pages, such records are retained and archived through the school's information technology department. If, however, an employee communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained, and the burden then falls on the employee to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians.

4. Expectations of Staff

With these concerns in mind, the Natick Public Schools has instituted this Social Media Policy, and announces its expectations for staff members' use of social networks and other electronic or technologically based communication systems.

1. **Professionalism** The Natick Public Schools expects employees to keep the line between their professional and personal life clearly drawn at all times. Employees are expected to use care and forethought to be sure that these lines never become blurred. No matter what medium of communication an employee selects, he/she should adhere to appropriate teacher/student boundaries. School employees are role models for students, not friends.

2. **Only district-provided instructional communication tools** should be used to communicate with students. This includes social media add-ins within testing, creative apps, or Web 2.0 tools. Interaction in online tools is viewed and treated in the same way as interaction in any educational realm. There should be no privately funded or private free tools that have a social media aspect that staff use that isn't controlled by the school system.

3. **Privacy Settings** Before establishing any social media account, for personal or professional use, staff should familiarize themselves with the site's functions and activate the appropriate privacy features of any platform they choose to use.

For example, Facebook requires account holders to take deliberate steps to "privatize" the information they place online. Employees are expected to educate themselves about these features of Facebook, or any other social networking site selected. Employees will be held responsible, in the event that information intended to be "private" becomes "public" due to their own ignorance of the features of the social network they have decided to use or their failure to properly use such features. Here's how to set appropriate Facebook privacy settings.

4. **Expectation of Privacy** Employees must know that any information shared privately with a recipient could be re-distributed by such recipient, without the employee's knowledge or consent. The same principles applied to in-person communication should be applied to online conversation: use discretion, and do not place trust in individuals who have not proven themselves trustworthy. Understand that, in essence, nothing posted online is ever truly "private."

5. **Student Privacy Rights** At all times, and in the use of any form of communication, Natick Public School employees must always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of all employees to have their personal and medical information kept confidential. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that unreasonably exposes such information to retrieval by those third parties. Be aware that even with the most stringent privacy settings, photo tagging and other tools may make personal information regarding students publicly available.

6. **Use of School-Based Communication Resources** Employees are expected to communicate with students and parents on educational matters only, and only through school-based resources, such as school-provided email or web portal accounts. Staff should inform their immediate supervisor whenever they are considering a new use of social media or digital communication in the classroom, and the tool will pass through the innovation team and central office vetting and funding procedures. Passwords, usernames and access codes for work-related social media accounts must be shared, in writing, with the employee's immediate supervisor.

7. **Employee Free Speech** This policy is not intended to infringe upon an employee's right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of job duties. However, when speaking via social networking sites or tools on matters *concerning their own job*, employees are considered to be speaking as an employee, not as a citizen, and restrictions may be placed upon their freedom to express themselves. Restrictions are intended to preserve student confidentiality, maintain one's status as an employee who should command and receive the respect of students and parents, be able to maintain order and discipline in the classroom, and remain objective with respect to students.

If a staff member is communicating online as an employee of the district, they must be aware that readers will assume they "speak for the school district." Therefore, all online communications, whether the employee is actually acting on behalf of the district, or creating the appearance of doing so, must be professional at all times and reflect positively on the Natick Public Schools.

8. **Appropriate Communication with Students** Employees should not use home telephones, personal cell phones, personal email accounts or personal Facebook accounts to communicate with students. All personal and work phones, tablets and computers should be password protected.

All staff communications with students are within the jurisdiction of the school district to monitor, as they arise out of one's position as an employee. Any conduct, whether online or not, that reflects poorly upon the school district or consists of inappropriate behavior on the part of an employee, may result in discipline up to and including discharge. Even if they are not using a school telephone or computer to engage in contact with a student, employees must be aware that it is not outside of the school district's authority to take appropriate disciplinary action if necessary. If behavior is inappropriate, undermines the adult's authority to instruct or maintain control and discipline with students, compromises their objectivity, harms students, or puts their safety in jeopardy, the school district reserves the right to impose discipline for such behavior. Employees may also face individual liability for inappropriate online communications with students and/or parents and guardians, and may also be exposing the district to vicarious liability in certain instances.

At the same time, the district recognizes that, in limited cases, use of cell phone text messages or cell phone calls or emails outside of regular school hours may be reasonably necessary. For example, in connection with school sponsored events for which employees serve as duly appointed advisors, they may need to convey messages in a timely manner to students and may not have access to school-based email accounts, school-provided telephones or school-based web pages. In such very limited circumstances, the district expects that employees will make reasonable use of their own cell phones to convey time-sensitive information *in group messages only*.

Educators may use a non-personal Twitter account to communicate class information to students. Coaches may use a non personal Twitter account to send team information to athletes and their parents. Educators and coaches should not follow students on Twitter.

All contact and messages by coaches with team members shall be sent to *all* team members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the athletic director and the school principal.

9. **Online Use of NPS Logo** In the use of a Facebook account or other social networking site, employees may not, without express permission from the superintendent of schools, use the school's logo, likeness or any school photographs or other property that belongs to the school.

10. **Application of this policy.** All online, electronic or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change, it is not possible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications. Social Media, defined as any electronic tool that allows for social, interactive and connective learning, includes but is not limited to:

- Video and photo sharing (YouTube, SlideShare, Flickr, SnapChat, Instagram)
- Social Networking (Facebook, Ning, MySpace)
- Blog, Wiki, Micro-Blog, Podcasting (Twitter, tumblr, WordPress, Blogger, SoundCloud, iTunes)
- Instant Messaging (Google Chat, AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, Facebook Messenger)
- Texting
- Web Conferencing (Skype, FaceTime)

11. **Responsibility for Accounts** Class Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts or other electronic tools must be monitored by the adult sponsoring the activity for proper online etiquette including (but not limited to) the absence of cyberbullying, appropriate language and image use, adherence to academic purpose and US copyright laws.

Use of public social networks for formal or informal school business through "official" team or academic accounts will be the responsibility of the adult in charge of that team, class or organization. All use of these networks will be strictly limited to appropriate and relevant communications for that team or activity.

12. **Power relationships** between adults and minors have the potential for misinterpretation, especially online, or the potential for sharing protected information. Employees are expected to exercise extreme caution with power balance, whether real or perceived.

Approved by the Natick School Committee: May 9, 2016

Sources:

MASS, MASC, Ball State University, Intel, Brebeuf Jesuit, University of Michigan, Casa Grande Elementary School District, Mashable.com, Madison Metropolitan School District.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

1. All school sponsored trips must have prior approval.
 - a. **Day Field Trips:** School sponsored one day trips must have prior written approval of the school's Principal.
 - b. **Field Trips Involving Overnight Stay:** School sponsored trips involving overnight stay must have prior written approval of the school's Principal and the Superintendent of Schools or his/her Designee. Student who wishes to participate in such a trip shall provide evidence satisfactory to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her Designee that the student is covered by health insurance.
 - c. **Field Trips Involving Travel Out-of-State or Out-of-Country:** School sponsored trips, which include travel out-of-state or out-of-country must be approved in advance in writing by the school's Principal. Upon approval by the Principal, the field trip proposal, all supporting data, and the recommendation of the Principal shall be forwarded to the Superintendent for review, evaluation and approval. The Superintendent will then forward the packet to the Natick School Committee for their review, evaluation, and final approval/rejection.
2. School sponsored field trips should be planned so as to fulfill predetermined educational objectives and must support the curriculum. A follow-up instructional lesson should be planned upon return. In order to achieve maximum educational results there must be observable instructional relationships between the experiences gained from a field trip and a student's work in the classroom.
3. Field trips are a privilege enjoyed by the students who fulfill their responsibilities regarding attendance, grades, and behavior. Based on this, when deemed appropriate, the school Principal may withhold a student's privilege to participate in the field trip.
4. Principals are required to assign an appropriate adult(s) for supervisory purposes, and such additional adults as deemed necessary. The assigned supervisory adult will carry a cellular telephone to be used for emergency purposes as well as signed permission forms for all students participating. Principals should keep in mind the age, number, and composition of the students participating, as well as the destination, mode of travel, and activities involved in the field trip when assigning adult supervision.
5. Children should not be deprived for monetary purposes from participating in class or course based field trips within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This provision does not include out-of-country or out-of-state travel that may be offered through our schools. Such trips are at the sole expense of the student and her/his family.

6. Principals are responsible for making arrangements for transportation for field trips through the school-based-liaison to the bus company, including requests for wheelchair vehicles if needed.
7. The attached field trip permission form is required of all students as a field trip prerequisite. At the conclusion of the field trip, these forms must be kept on file at the school where the trip originated. Given the information contained on these forms, these files are to be kept in a confidential manner.
8. Employees and students participating in non-school sponsored excursions or field trips do so voluntarily and without liability to the school system and at the sole risk of the participating student or employee. Announcements or notices for such trips should not bear the name or imprimatur of the Natick Public Schools, any school within the Natick Public Schools or the Town of Natick. Classroom or school time may not be used to promote such trips. Notices of such trips may not be posted at the school.
9. Spectator buses, arranged for special activities such as athletic events, are not school sponsored. Tickets are purchased on an individual basis, and receipts are submitted directly to the vendor concerned. Participation is entirely voluntary and without liability to the Natick Public schools.

File: IJOB

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS

Human resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints. Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who respect diversity in thinking and varying views and who are not attempting to inappropriately influence points of view. No person who has not completed a Background Check or CORI shall be left alone with students.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, Background Checks

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators. No person who has not completed a Background Check or CORI shall be left alone with students.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, Background Checks

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents. The School Committee also believes that all progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly reported with the proper maintenance of confidentiality.

A report depicting the student's progress will be issued periodically following an evaluation by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel.

In addition to the periodic reports, parents will be notified when a student's performance requires special notification.

Grading and promotion will be based on improvement, achievement, capability of the student, and the professional judgment of the teacher and Principal.

Major changes in the reporting system shall be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation by teachers, principals, parents, and the office governing teaching and learning, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

CROSS REFS.: IKE, Promotion and Retention of Students

Adopted by the Natick School Committee - December 5, 2022

HOMEWORK POLICY

The Natick Public School System believes that homework contributes to the understanding of the curriculum and reinforces learning. Homework is a meaningful extension of daily classroom activities.

Homework provides for practice of skills and application of principles based upon work begun in the classroom. It enriches school experiences and promotes a permanent interest in learning. It stimulates individual initiative, personal responsibility, and self-direction.

Due to the differences in age levels, learning styles, and modes of instruction in the elementary and secondary schools, homework expectations will necessarily differ. Guidelines for homework will be published in the student handbooks.

No homework will be due during the observance of any major religious holiday, including the day following such religious observance.

Such holidays shall be outlined in the Natick Public Schools calendar as voted by the Natick School Committee.

CROSS REF.: IC/ICA; JHA

Adopted by the Natick School Committee - February 27, 2023

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to obtain a Natick High School Diploma, all students need to meet the minimum requirements published in the Natick High School Handbook.

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The School Committee considers comprehensive and objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to be of primary importance. The Superintendent will provide for the translation of the stated instructional goals into objectives and for appraisal of their implementation in order to:

1. Determine educational needs and provide information for planning.
2. Indicate instructional strengths and weaknesses.
3. Check on the suitability of programs in terms of community requirements.
4. Show the relationship between achievement and the system's stated goals.
5. Provide data for public information.

Elements of this evaluation process may include:

1. Testing programs such as nationally standardized general achievement tests, nationally standardized tests in specific subject areas, and tests administered by other agencies.
2. Study of school achievement records.
3. Study of students' high school and drop-out records.
4. Use of outside services, participation in regional research studies, contracted evaluation services; evaluation services at cost to the school system must be approved in advance by the School Committee.
5. Teacher and parent evaluation of student behavior.
6. State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education specialists and services.
7. Evaluation by the regional accrediting association.
8. Evaluation by other agencies.

An evaluation of the curriculum and its effectiveness will be made periodically and reported to the Committee by the Superintendent.

DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

In addition to the state assessment program, a district program of testing for assessment/evaluation will be coordinated throughout the school district through the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (which oversees curriculum instruction and assessment) will be responsible for scheduling, disseminating, and collecting tests and for reporting and interpreting all group test results.

Other measurements of educational achievement, such as National Merit Scholarship Examinations, will be arranged and/or administered through the Guidance Department.

Adopted by the Natick School Committee - December 5, 2022

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

An important goal of the schools is to help prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues. To ensure that these issues can be examined in an atmosphere as free from emotion and prejudice as the times permit, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools. These goals will align with our district goals of Equity, Social Emotional Learning and belonging while teaching civic dispositions.

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.
2. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.
3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.
4. Teachers must ensure that the reasoned arguments of all sides of an issue are given equal presentation and emphasis in classroom discussions.
5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).
6. In all cases teachers must obtain from the appropriate Principal permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least 48 hours before the scheduled time of presentation.

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

Student groups may request permission to conduct forums on controversial issues in the schools. The Principal may grant such requests under the following conditions:

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.

2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal will appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group consisting of at least two parents and two faculty members.
3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

No permission will be granted to non-school groups or individuals to make presentations on controversial issues in the schools during school hours. Requests for after-school or evening use will be processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on community use of school facilities.

No permission will be granted to outsiders for distribution of literature on controversial issues to students in general or to class groups.

A Principal may grant an outside group or individual permission to post one notice of a public meeting for discussion of issues if the language of that notice conforms to the standards that prevail in the community. The Principal will determine the appropriate bulletin board for such notices.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted by the Natick School Committee - December 5, 2022

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

ANIMALS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

No animal shall be brought onto school property without prior permission of the building Principal, unless such animal is considered a service animal (See Policy IMGA)

The School District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

The Principal, in consultation with the School Nurse, shall review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

Educational Program

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have their health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2023

Revised and Approved by the Natick School Committee: December 4, 2023

SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

The School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a "service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability." The regulations further state that "a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability."

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as "seeing eye dogs" or "guide dogs;"
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments;
- assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately upon notification by the School Principal.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Building Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such a plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff and will include the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

LEGAL REF.: 28 CFR, Part 35

SOURCE: MASC 2023

Revised and Approved by the Natick School Committee: December 4, 2023