

HAWTHORNE BROOK

MIDDLE SCHOOL

STAFF HANDBOOK

2015/2016

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Hawthorne Brook Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender identity, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability. Individuals have equal access to admission to school, courses, extracurricular activities, and employment opportunities, and will not be excluded for reasons of marriage and pregnancy.

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Mission Statement

Hawthorne Brook Middle School embraces the mission statement of the North Middlesex Regional School District:

To develop an interactive and inclusive learning community dedicated to preparing young adolescents for productive citizenship in a global society.

Philosophy

Our responsibility as a school community is to encourage all students to be lifelong learners, skilled thinkers, effective communicators, responsible leaders, and positive role models.

The focus of our educational programs is to develop critical thinking skills and to instill the desire to achieve excellence in every endeavor. The need to educate the whole child is also recognized. To this end, a program in the unified arts is offered as well as co-curricular and extra curricular activities.

We recognize the diversity of talents and abilities of students. We understand that the curriculum, educational strategies, and classroom activities must develop the strengths and remediate the weaknesses of each student. We acknowledge that every child must first sense emotional and physical security before new academic and social risks will be taken. We offer opportunities to grow regardless of age or ability, and we recognize the need to accommodate a wide variety of individual learning styles. We also understand the fact that the development of the young adolescent comes about in uneven and sporadic stages.

In our classrooms, in our corridors, and on our playing fields we provide our students the opportunities to enhance their skills and we encourage the attitudes of exemplary citizenship.

Core Values

Our core values exhibit the synthesis of both the mission and vision statements.

We believe that respect is the basic requirement for whatever community we hope to achieve –

- Respect for the truth, which is honesty
- Respect for difference, which is the essence of diversity
- Respect for one's self, which is the foundation of our human dignity
- Respect for each other's person and property which is a matter of law
- And a respect for the rules and the authority that governs us, which creates our community

Vision Statement

Our vision statement is inspired by the beliefs and expectations set forth by the National Middle School Association and guided by the principles of the "Carnegie Report"¹.

- Students are the focus and are supported to achieve at high levels.
- Students are expected to be responsible, organized and the agents of their own learning.
- The school is organized into small learning communities where teachers know their students well.
- Curriculum is challenging, differentiated and based on the state frameworks.
- Best teaching practices are agreed upon by the staff and are based on research done on effective middle school instruction.
- Teams of teachers meet regularly to discuss the curriculum and students in their charge.
- A policy of shared decision-making rather than top down decision-making is adopted.
- Partnerships with parents and community agencies are in place to better serve the needs of our students.
- A variety of assessments is on going and serves not only to gauge success but also provide direction for school improvement.
- Students are given opportunities in after school activities that enrich their lives and experiences.

¹ In 1989, The Carnegie Corporation of New York issued "Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century," a landmark report which recognized the need to strengthen the academic core of middle schools and establish caring, supportive environments which value adolescents.

Introduction

The purpose of the handbook is to acquaint all personnel with information and procedures that will be utilized at HBMS. We are proud of our school and want to continue the tradition of providing students with the best possible educational programs. Questions, concerns, or comments should be directed to the principal.

Accidents

If an accident occurs, where an injury is involved, the student should be escorted to the nurse's office and reported *immediately* to the nurse and the office. An accident report should be filled out and turned in by the end of the school day.

Activities

All staff members are welcomed and encouraged to participate in school activities such as P.T.O., sports, plays, and school council.

Assemblies

All students and teachers will attend assemblies unless excused by the office. Teachers will accompany their classes to the auditorium and remain with them during the assembly.

Seating for the auditorium will be assigned and the following procedure will be observed:

- Students will be courteous and quiet on their way to and from the auditorium.
- All books, pencils, rulers, etc., are to be left in the classroom unless needed.
- Students are to be quiet and attentive during the assembly.
- At the completion of the assembly, the students will leave the auditorium, according to directions, and return to the appropriate classroom.
- Remind students of proper behavior for assemblies.

Attendance Procedure

If a teacher is going to be absent from school, the following procedure should be followed:

Sickness/Emergency: Teachers will email the school at HAdmin@nmrsd.org

If email is not an option, teachers should call the school (978) 597-6914, between 6:00am and 6:30am. A substitute folder should be available with clear alternate plans and all necessary paperwork for a sub.

Personal/Professional Day: Teachers should complete the necessary form and submit it to the secretary. Teachers will leave plans for the excused day.

Cafeteria

- No running.
- All food should be eaten only in the cafeteria.
- Students are to clean up after themselves. Tables are to be left clean, trays returned to disposal area, and all papers and rubbish placed in the barrels.
- After lunch, teachers should maintain a hall presence as students return to class.
- Students are not to leave the cafeteria until the tables and floor are cleaned.
- Notify the cafeteria manager as soon as possible if classes will not be attending lunch because of field trips.

Child Abuse

Any teacher having reason to suspect that a child is being abused should immediately report the situation to the principal. Teachers are legally responsible for reporting suspect cases.

Policy: The Reporting Protocol of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Massachusetts Child Abuse and Neglect Statute, Chapter 119, Section 51A states that any school employee “who, in his/her professional capacity shall have a reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him/her including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition... shall notify the person in charge of such institution, school, or facility... whereupon such person in charge shall then become responsible to make the report in the manner required by this section to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Any such person so required to make such oral and written reports who fails to do so shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.”

To comply with the law, and to give system-wide support to all staff members in fulfilling their roles as mandated reporter, a system-wide Child Protection In-house Team will be established in each building. It is the policy of the North Middlesex Regional School District, that any teacher or other mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, shall report to their team. This Child Protection In-house Team shall include the principal, the school nurse, the guidance counselor, the "mandated reporter" and any other appropriate designee for the particular school and shall be known as the "In-house Team."

It is the responsibility of the In-house Team to evaluate and transmit all reports of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In addition, the reports shall be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools. It is clearly understood that all information at all levels regarding these reports is strictly confidential, and that at no time is the name of the "reporter" released, (unless required by the courts). It is a "team" report.

It is not the responsibility of the school official or employee to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, only that the individual has reasonable cause for concern. Mandated school personnel who report with reasonable cause are presumed to be acting in good faith and are immune from any civil or criminal liability.

The aim of the mandated reporting law in Massachusetts is to protect the child, to identify, report, investigate, and intervene in a case where there is suspected neglect or abuse by the child's caretaker. It is, therefore, important to recognize the need to help both the child and the family, and because of the sustained contact with school-age children, school employees are in an excellent position to provide for this intervention, treatment, and protection.

Immunity for Civil or Criminal Liability

No persons who have reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from a reportable condition and who in good faith report to the Department of Children and Families or the "Child Protection In-house Team" shall be liable in any civil or criminal action by reason of such report.

Definition of Terms (From State regulations)

"Abuse" means the non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker, which causes or creates a substantial risk of harm or threat of harm to a child's well-being.

"Caretaker" means a child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for a child's health or welfare, whether in the same home as the child, a relative's home, a foster home, or any other residential setting. (This includes any other person responsible for a child's health or welfare).

“Child” means a person who has not reached his or her eighteenth birthday.

“Neglect” means failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision or other essential care.

“Reasonable Cause” means a basis for judgment that rests on specific facts, either directly observed or obtained from reliable sources, and that supports a belief that a particular event probably took place or a particular condition probably exists.

“Reportable Condition” means a serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect, or the commission of any act by a caretaker with a child, which constitutes a sexual offense under the criminal laws of the Commonwealth, or the physical dependence of a child upon an addictive drug at birth.

“Serious Emotional Injury” means an extreme pathological emotional condition such as a severe state of anxiety, depression or withdrawal.

“Serious Physical Injury” means

- (a) death
- (b) fracture of a bone, a subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling, impairment of any organ, severe burn, extensive skin bruising, non-trivial bleeding, and any other such non-trivial injury including malnutrition.

“Failure to Thrive” means the condition of a child in which his/her height, weight, or motor development falls substantially below the normal minimum height, weight or motor development for other children of that child’s age, without any apparent organic cause, and the child’s caretaker refuses to accept treatment for the condition.

“Mandated Reporter” means any member of the staff of the North Middlesex School District.

Definition of Abuse and Neglect

ABUSE: Although definitions of child abuse vary, all include the following elements:

1. Physical abuse: Non-accidental injury or injuries which may include beatings, burns, human bites, strangulation and other violence against the child.
2. Emotional abuse: Excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable parental behavior that places demands on the child to perform above his/her capabilities. Among these are verbal attacks, humiliation and degradation of the child, and chronic rejection of the child.
3. Sexual abuse: Exploitation of the child for another person's sexual gratification. This includes inappropriate touch, such as fondling, as well as overt sexual acts.

NEGLECT: Is the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life – food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, and medical care.

Possible Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

Signs of physical abuse may include the following:

Bruises Cuts, Strap Marks, Burns, Fractures, Bite Marks, Other physical complaints (limping, pain, discomfort)

Signs of neglect may include the following

Lack of supervision, Excessive tardiness or absences, Inadequate nutrition, Lack of medical or dental care, Excessive fatigue, Lack of adequate shelter, Inappropriate or inadequate clothing.

Behavior indicators that may accompany any of the above:

Unusually aggressive or destructive

Withdrawn and passive

Excessively fearful

Regressive habits, such as bedwetting or thumb sucking

Fear of touch

Reluctance to undress and expose body parts

Conflicting or unrealistic explanations about injuries

CAUTION: Any of the above behaviors may be a result of causes other than abuse or neglect.

Procedures

When there is a reasonable cause the mandated reporter, in good faith, must do the following:

1. The mandated reporter who has knowledge or suspicion of this reasonable cause shall choose either of the following:
 - a. Immediately report his/her suspicions to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at (978) 345-2101, and then inform the Child Protection In-house Team.
 - b. Inform the Team first, and together decide who will make the call to DCF.

An oral report shall be made to DCF and within forty-eight hours after the oral contact, a report in writing shall be sent (Form 51-A).

2. The Child Protection In-house Team will inform the Superintendent that the oral report has been made to DCF. (A copy of 51A form will be forwarded to the Supt.)

3. It is important to remember that DCF may choose NOT to conduct an investigation. It is our policy that reports made by employees of the North Middlesex Regional School District will be anonymous.
4. The reports of each In-house Team will be kept in a separate file by the Guidance Counselor for as long as the child is a student in the district. It is not to be part of the child's academic records/cum folder.
5. After reporting a case to DCF, the School Adjustment Counselor shall monitor the outcome of the report.

Also, when appropriate, the Child Protection In-house Team should be informed of the status of the case and/or its handling by DCF.

It is recommended that all information will be strictly confidential.

6. Once the report has been made to the Child Protection In-House Team no child will be put under further emotional stress or risk by being questioned by any member of the team or school personnel. (See attached Do's and Don'ts)
7. Each Team shall be responsible for providing appropriate in –service training/update in their school about issues of child abuse and/or neglect.

Guidelines for Responding When Students Reveal Direct Experience with Abuse or Neglect*

Teacher's Role: Educators are not responsible to be the investigator, prosecutor, judge, or therapist. The educator's primary role in the event of disclosure is to be a support and a resource person. Remember, the job of a mandated reporter is to report, not to prove. The goal of reporting is to access help.

Guidelines: (Do's and Don'ts)

Do's

Believe... It is likely that someone who is in an abusive situation will disclose at an "inappropriate" time, e.g. when being disciplined, which is a set-up for him/her not to be believed. It is also likely that the person will not have all the details straight, or tell the entire story, and therefore is discounted or not believed. However, it is very unlikely that a person will make up an abuse experience. Sexual abuse, child abuse, and battering are often very embarrassing and difficult to talk about, and it is possible that the one who speaks up will face unfair judgments

and accusations. Therefore, if a person wants to “get back at someone, “ accusing them of sexual abuse is not an easy or likely way to do that.

Affirm ... Instead of assuming the person understands that it is good she/he told about the abuse, verbally acknowledge the importance of talking about it and getting help.

Support... Even if someone was tricked or manipulated into doing something they “should have known better than to do,” the abuse is not their fault; the tricks and manipulations are part of the abuse and victimization process. Reinforce that a person who has been victimized was forced, tricked or manipulated and therefore, is not to blame.

Empower... An abused person often feels helpless and powerless. By affirming and supporting her/his feelings, listening to her/his concerns, fears and needs, and educating her/him as to all the resources that are available and her/his ability to no longer be a victim.

Refer ... Just like the student tells the teacher in order to get help, the teacher needs to tell the appropriate resources.

*Adapted in part from Illusion Theater of Minneapolis

Don'ts

1. Don't dismiss or challenge the child's truthfulness. Ask: “Can you tell me more about that?” or “That sounds upsetting (or worrisome or troubling) – I'm glad you're letting me know about this so I can get you and your family some help.” Take the matter seriously. Children do not fabricate abuse.
2. Don't condemn the alleged offender. No matter how horrific it appears, children have complicated loyalty ties to family members and/or guilt responses to the abusive situation. When a child hears that Mr. X is a bad guy, he or she may internalize that they too, are bad for having participated in bad activities with Mr. X.
3. Don't promise a child that you won't tell anyone, especially if you are obligated by law or policy. Some children may attempt to convince you to join in on the family secret. This renders you ineffective and powerless in the eyes of both the child and the family. It is best not to collude with their wish to deny or cover over the abuse.

Side with the part of the child that wants and needs help. It is your job to get help, not to assist with sealing over. Remember, it may be an untenable bind for the child, but not for you.

4. Don't make false promises or give hollow reassurances. e.g.: "Everything will be just fine." You, in fact, have no way of predicting this and the child may either feel unduly disappointed or sense that you don't understand.

What you can offer is your willingness to try to help and your authority to get the family evaluated for services by filing a 51A. You can tell a child that there are special professionals available to help with these matters and that you will get the ball rolling.

5. Don't assume it is an exaggeration if a child verbalizes fears of retaliation, of harm, or physical threats for having "spilled the beans." Take the child very seriously. Call DCF and inform them of these statements. DCF may determine the situation is an emergency.
6. Don't back off from uncertain, unresolved situations. Children in these situations may be in need of more support than ever.

Collecting Money

Be sure that no large sums of money are left in your room or desk at any time. Field trip money must be placed in your field trip envelope, labeled with your name and field trip name, and be brought to the office and put in the safe.

Communication

Communication with students and parents is fundamental to good teaching. Teachers should develop and maintain lines of communication with all parents. This may include notes, phone calls, meetings, and email. While 'sign and returns' can inform parents of grades, they do not replace authentic communication.

Copy Machines

A copy machine is available on each floor. The office copy machine is available when not being used by office personnel. If a machine is not working or you have any questions contact the office immediately.

Crisis Plan

All teachers will have a folder outlining the procedures to follow in the case of a crisis. It should be kept in the top drawer of the desk.

Custodians

If you need the services of a custodian, report it to the office. Do not send students to find the custodian.

Take pride in the facility and encourage all students to keep the building clean.

The following tasks are to be completed at the end of the school day:

- Any items on the floors such as paper, pencils, etc., are to be picked up.
- All windows are to be closed.
- Do not clean erasers on the sides of the buildings.
- Report broken or damaged school property to the office.

Discipline

Discipline is necessary for learning; effective teaching is a form of discipline.

Our objective is to provide fair, firm, and consistent disciplinary procedures. Teachers are expected to maintain their own discipline in their classroom. Most disciplinary issues and procedures are covered in the Code of Conduct.

Effective discipline includes parents as partners with the school in the discipline of their child.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately during school hours, on school property, and at school events. Revealing clothes or clothes with inappropriate pictures or words will not be allowed in school. Should attire be considered unacceptable, the nurse may call home and request a change of clothes to be brought to school. Students are not allowed to wear hats, caps or bandannas in school.

Faculty should dress professionally and appropriately. Faculty who would like to donate to our “Washington DC Fund” and participate in “Dress Down Fridays” should speak with the secretary.

Duties

Teachers and paraprofessionals may be assigned various duties. This coverage is needed to insure safety and efficiency. It is the teachers’ and paraprofessionals’ responsibility to be prompt and at assigned areas. Be sure this information is included in your plan book.

Email

All staff members are assigned an email account. It will be used to efficiently disseminate information from the administration. It should be checked regularly. Email is also an excellent way of communicating with parents and students.

Evaluations

Evaluations will be carried out as directed by the North Middlesex Regional School District. The purpose of the evaluations is to help the teachers develop to his/her fullest potential. Each teacher will meet with the Principal at the beginning of the school year to discuss objectives and goals for the coming year.

Extra Help

Students who stay after school for extra help should arrange transportation home. Students should not be in the building unsupervised at any time. Teachers/coaches are responsible to oversee their students until they are picked up.

Faculty Arrival Time

All staff are to be in the building and available for duty by 7:45am. Please check your mailbox in the office upon arrival.

Fire Drill

Fire drills are conducted periodically.

All personnel are to leave the building during these drills.

At the sound of the fire bells, immediately prepare to evacuate the building orderly, rapidly and quietly. Teacher should make sure that all students are familiar with the evacuation route from the classroom. Teachers are responsible to close windows, turn off lights and take attendance in the designated area outside.

All rooms are to have fire exit signs clearly posted over both exits. Review fire drill procedures on the first day of school.

Goals

Teachers should submit a list of their professional goals for the school year to the principal by October 15.

Homeroom/Daily Attendance

- All students will be assigned to a grade level, alphabetical homeroom.
- Students are expected to be in homeroom by 8:00am.
- Students who are tardy should have a pass from the office.
- Teams should ensure that the locker areas are supervised at 7:55am.
- Opening exercises will be directed from the office.
- Attendance will be submitted electronically by teachers through *Aspen* before 8:15am.
- Teachers should collect forms, notes, and permission slips, and send them to the office in the homeroom folder before the beginning of class.
- Please review the *Student Handbook* and the *Code of Conduct* with your class by the close of the first day of school.

Homework

Philosophy: Homework is an integral part of the curriculum. It should be meaningful and a successful experience. At no time should homework be used as a form of discipline. Homework should be utilized to reinforce skills, develop independent study and improve study habits. Homework should be considered an extension of the classroom.

Quality: All homework must show effort and thought according to the student's ability. Only neat and legible work should be accepted.

Quantity: All students have unique individual needs along with diverse abilities. The amount of homework should reflect these needs and ability levels. Teachers should coordinate the homework schedule with their team to see that homework assignments and requirements are of appropriate distribution.

Grading: Grading rubrics should be clear to students. It may not be necessary to grade each assignment. However, every homework assignment should be checked and noted by the teacher. Homework not handed in on time or not handed in at all, should be reflected in the student's grade. Daily assessments used for reinforcement should count between 5 and 10% of grades. Long term projects and writing assignments may be weighted more depending on expected learning outcomes.

Special Needs: Homework for special needs students will correspond with their needs, abilities, and education plan.

Keys/Door Card

All teachers should have a back door card and a key to their classroom. Cards, room keys, desk keys, and cabinet keys should be clearly identified and returned to the office at the end of the year.

Library

Teachers should sign up in the office to use the library and/or computers. Students should be supervised at all times in the library. Teachers should check the computer equipment before leaving the library.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Hawthorne Brook Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender identity, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability. Individuals have equal access to admission to school, courses, extracurricular activities, and employment opportunities, and will not be excluded for reasons of marriage and pregnancy. If an individual believes that she/he has been the victim of discrimination within the school or during school related activities, the incident should be reported to the Principal immediately.

Non-School Employment

It is the policy of the North Middlesex Regional School District that all employees obtain prior approval of the Superintendent for outside employment that might involve a conflict of interest or is of such duration that it would conflict with the employees' normal responsibilities as defined by applicable conditions of employment. If there is any doubt in regard to potential conflict it is the responsibility of the employee(s) to obtain clarification from the School Superintendent prior to engaging in outside employment activities. Outside employment is defined here to include but not be limited to, performance of services by an employee(s) for another person(s) and/or organization, or providing services as a self employed person.

This policy shall not apply to employee activities during scheduled vacation periods, provided that such activity does not result in a conflict of interest.

No School Signals

School cancellation or delay announcements are posted on local TV and radio stations.

Connect-Ed messages will be sent to alert staff of any delay or cancellation.

Nurse

Students are to have a pass to see the nurse unless it is an emergency. Students may see the nurse at lunch for routine medications. All medications must be approved and administered by the nurse. The nurse's office is closed daily from 1:00 to 1:30 and 2:00 to 2:30.

Plan Books

All teachers and paraprofessionals are to keep an up-to-date plan book. It is to include, but is not limited to the following:

- Time schedule for the day.
- Procedure of opening of school, attendance, notes from students to be sent to the office, and etc.
- Time and location of any duties assigned to you.
- A brief description of goals and objectives you expect to accomplish for the day.
- A copy of the specific lesson plans currently being utilized.
- Location of materials to be used in order to implement lesson.
- List of class rules.
- Seating plan for each group.
- Homework assignments.
- The student handbook should be available for any substitute.

Professionalism

All staff and students should be treated with respect.

It is the policy of the Hawthorne Brook Middle School to hold all staff and persons associated with the school to the highest standards in regards to respect to all parties and the extension of dignity in the treatment of all issues.

We acknowledge that public education is essentially a people business and that from time to time any person can act in a less than perfect manner. The school seeks professional and personal growth from its students and staff. The use of profanity, defamatory statements and disrespectful behavior to or from any party involved in this school cannot be condoned. In addressing issues throughout the school, all parties will follow established procedures and extend the courtesy of respect and dignity throughout all proceedings.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Progress reports will be sent home with students at the approximate halfway point of each term to inform them of current performance levels (Policy 5.13). All staff will submit grades and comments electronically.

Teachers are encouraged to keep an electronic rank book using *Aspen*. Training will be available.

Hawthorne Brook is on a trimester schedule. We will send report cards home to parents three times during the year. Progress reports will be sent home with students on or about the 30th day of each term to inform parents and students of current performance levels. Terms will close after 60 days and report cards will be issued the following week. Dates below are approximate and are dependent on unanticipated school closings.

| | Progress Reports Issued | Marks Close |
|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1st Term | Oct. 14, 2015 | Dec. 1, 2015 |
| 2nd Term | Jan. 25, 2016 | Mar. 14, 2016 |
| 3rd Term | May 2, 2016 | June 14, 2016 |

Responsibilities of Teachers

- Be on time in the morning and to duties and meetings.
- Be on duty in your room at all times when students are there.
- Never leave students unsupervised.
- Supervise halls and bathrooms.
- Be prepared for your classes.
- Have a routine for all classroom procedures.
- Keep a neat and pleasant room.
- Keep students aware of the need for “good housekeeping”.
- Promote and maintain a controlled classroom.
- Keep a personal log of parent contacts; phone calls, emails, and meetings.

Restrooms

Each team will establish consistent practices and procedures for allowing students to use the restrooms.

School Hours

School begins at 8:00am and ends at 2:30pm. Early release days: 8:00am to 11:10pm. Students who are tardy to school must check in at the office and receive a pass before reporting to class. Please follow contracted workday times.

Seating Charts

Each student have an assigned a seat in each of his/her classrooms. Seating plans for every class must be kept up to date and available to the substitute in case of teacher’s absence or to visiting administrators. Attendance will be checked at the beginning of each period.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of North Middlesex Regional School District, as well as, state and federal law, that sexual harassment of a student, present or prospective employee, or visitor shall not be tolerated. Violation of this policy and of the law, if proven, will result in disciplinary action. Any person who believes that he/she has been the victim of sexual harassment may seek redress through the North Middlesex Regional School District's Grievance Procedure.

Sexual harassment is defined as:

Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or success as a student;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of employment or educational decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work or educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

CONSIDERATIONS

By definition, sexual harassment is not limited to prohibited conduct by a male toward a female, by a supervisory employee toward a non-supervisory employee or by a teacher toward a student. The North Middlesex Regional School District's view of sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following considerations.

- a) A man, as well as a woman, may be the victim of sexual harassment, and a woman, as well as a man, may be the harasser.
- b) The harasser does not have to be the victim's supervisor. He/she may also be an agent of the employer, a supervisory employee who does not supervise the victim, a non-supervisory employee (co-worker), or, in some circumstances, even a non-employee (student, parent).
- c) The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser.
- d) The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The victim may also be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is directed toward another person. For example, inappropriate attempts of humor or the sexual harassment of one female (or male) employee may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment for another female (or male) or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's work or educational performance.
- e) Sexual harassment does not depend on the victim's having suffered a concrete economic injury as a result of the harasser's conduct. For example, improper sexual advances which do not result in the loss of a promotion by the victim or the discharge of the victim may nonetheless, constitute sexual harassment where they unreasonably interfered with the victim's work or education, or create a harmful or offensive work or educational environment.

All personnel will be responsible for implementing, monitoring and enforcing the above policy. All personnel are to strictly adhere to this policy.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A student may file a formal grievance at any time, employee, administrator, and/or applicant who believes that his/her right as outlined in the sexual harassment policy have been violated. Each student, faculty member, administrator, or staff member have an obligation to make every effort to resolve problems informally as they arise. All members of the North Middlesex School District community are urged to resolve problems fairly and informally so that they do not become sources of grievances to be pursued formally through the grievance procedure. An admission of guilt, an acknowledgment of a verbal warning, a promise not to commit such abuse again, and action taken to provide appropriate relief for the grievant may be sufficient resolution. If a suitable solution cannot be reached informally through independent means, a formal grievance may be initiated.

Definitions

A "grievance" shall be a complaint by an individual that there has been a violation of the sexual harassment policy.

- A. The grievant should file a written statement of the grievance within thirty (30) days of the alleged harassment. The grievance should be filed with his/her principal, or in the event that the principal is the alleged harasser, with the Superintendent of Schools.
- B. In the event that the grievant does not feel comfortable making the grievance as outline above, he/she is free to file a grievance with the principal above him/her. The grievance should be in writing because of due process concerns for the alleged harasser. However, if the grievant is unable to put the grievance in writing, the grievance, although orally made, will be investigated.
- C. Once the principal receives the grievance, he/she shall conduct an appropriate investigation of the grievance in strict confidence.
- D. In the event a grievant is filing a complaint against a town employee, who is not employed by the North Middlesex Regional School District, the Superintendent of Schools will notify the Town Manager of that community to conduct a joint investigation, follow the sexual harassment procedure as defined below and, meet with the Town Manager of that community to plan appropriate disciplinary action. If the grievant is a town employee filing a complaint against a school department employee the Town Manager of that community will notify the Superintendent of Schools to conduct a joint investigation, follow the sexual harassment policy as defined for employees under his jurisdiction. The Town Manager will meet with the Superintendent of Schools to plan appropriate disciplinary action.

- E. Such investigation may consist of, but may not be limited to, the following action:
- a) Interview(s) with the grievant.
 - b) Interview(s) with the individual alleged to be the harasser.
 - c) Interviews with other employees or witnesses.
 - d) Interviews with other individuals who in the opinion of the principal can provide relevant information.
 - e) Review of pertinent records.
- F. The investigation will be processed in an expeditious manner with a completion time goal of two (2) weeks. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal shall prepare a report outlining the findings. If sexual harassment is found to have occurred, the principal will meet with the Superintendent of Schools to plan appropriate disciplinary action. The disciplinary action may include: an oral warning, reprimand, a written warning or reprimand to be placed in a personnel file, suspension, demotion, termination, or a combination of the above. The investigation report and all documents shall be kept in the principal's confidential files. In the event there is a finding of no sexual harassment, the grievant may appeal the decision to the North Middlesex Regional School District Committee.
- G. The principal will write a summary of the investigation and the disciplinary action decided upon by the Superintendent of Schools. Both the complainant and the harasser shall receive the summary. If a complaint is sustained, the summary shall be placed in the personnel file of the harasser. If the complaint is unsubstantiated, the summary shall be kept in the principal's confidential files for a period of three (3) years.
- H. If it has been determined that the alleged has been falsely accused, the principal may take appropriate disciplinary action against the complainant. The disciplinary action may include, an oral warning, reprimand, a written warning or reprimand to be placed in a personnel file, suspension, demotion, termination, or a combination of the above.

Miscellaneous

- A. Grievants are not limited to a formal grievance procedure but may seek relief from other agencies, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination or the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education.
- B. Any retaliatory action of any kind taken by an employee or student of the North Middlesex Regional School District against any other employee or student of the North Middlesex Regional School District as a result of that person's seeking redress under these procedures, cooperating in an investigation, or otherwise participating in any proceeding under these procedures is prohibited, and shall be regarded as a separate and distinct grievable matter under this procedure.
- C. All grievance proceedings will, to the greatest possible extent, be held in confidence by all persons directly or indirectly involved in them.

Special Needs – Pre-referral and Instructional Student Support Team Process

1. The classroom teacher expresses concern about child to parent.
2. The classroom teacher informs the principal or school adjustment counselor of concerns and fills out Request for the Instructional Student Support Team (ISST). The principal will look through files for any previously documented information on student. *
3. The principal gives pertinent information to ISST members. Sp. Ed. staff, the school adjustment counselor or the principal will arrange with the classroom teacher to observe the child in the classroom.
1. A Pre-Referral meeting will take place with the classroom teacher and ISST members.

Purpose: 1) To brainstorm and provide classroom modifications and strategies which may help to address the student's difficulty.

2) To decide if/who/when further observation of the student should take place by Sp. Ed. staff.

3) To complete Pre-Referral Meeting Summary Form during last 5 minutes of meeting in order to summarize the approach to be utilized with the child.

5. Teacher implements modifications for a designated time period of 3-6 weeks after which time a follow-up meeting will be held with the classroom teacher and the Child

Study Team to assess the child's progress.

6. If modifications do not deal sufficiently with the student's difficulty, the Pre-Referral Child Assessment Form will be completed by teacher and given to the principal. The principal will give copies of the completed form to TEAM members.
7. The school adjustment counselor will formally place the child on the agenda for the next *Student Support* meeting to determine the assessments and testing which will be needed to complete a Team Evaluation.
8. A Team meeting is held with the child's parents, the classroom teacher, Sp. Ed. staff, principal and/or school adjustment counselor to discuss the results of the testing and determine the most appropriate placement for the child.
9. At any time, a parent may request in writing to the principal, that a Team Evaluation be conducted on their child. The principal may recommend *Student Support Team Meeting* in lieu of a Team Evaluation.

* If there is a previous special ed. file on the student, pre-referral steps 4 & 5 may be bypassed if recommended by *ISST*.

Special Education PAC (Parent Advisory Council)

Their mission is to offer support, resources, and information to those interested in enhancing the education of children with special needs. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at North Middlesex Regional High School and are open to all parents, educators, and interested parties who wish to attend.

Special Education- 504

Section 504-Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against handicapped persons, including both students and staff members, by school districts. The intent of Section 504 is to accommodate for differences within the regular education environment so that a child can participate in and receive the benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her handicapping condition. This includes all programs or activities provided by the school district. It protects all handicapped students; defined as those having any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (including learning). Modifications must be made if necessary, to provide any handicapped student access to a free appropriate public education. Section 504 is not an aspect of special education but the responsibility of the school district. In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the North Middlesex Regional School District recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its students and personnel. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school district. If the school identifies that, because of a handicap as defined under Section 504, a student needs either special accommodations or related services in the regular setting in order to participate in the school program, parent/guardian must be notified and the school must evaluate the student. The evaluation must be sufficient to accurately and completely assess the nature and extent of the student's handicap. A team decision involving school educators and the child's parent/guardian will be made regarding the development and implementation of a plan for the delivery of all needed services, accommodations and modifications for the child. The plan will be monitored and reviewed with a formal meeting with parent/guardian held annually.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school, he/she has the right to discuss concerns with the school principal, the Superintendent of Schools or seek a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. The District Coordinator for Section 504 is Barbara Conti at the Central Office. The school adjustment counselor is responsible for monitoring each student's Section 504 plan. The principal is responsible for the successful implementation of each student's Section 504 plan.

Smoking

No smoking is allowed at Hawthorne Brook Middle School. This will be strictly enforced.

Staff Meetings

Monthly staff meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month. All staff are expected to attend.

Student Records

Teachers must familiarize themselves with pupil records in order to develop meaningful curriculum programs. This should be done the first two weeks of school. Teachers should become familiar with the "Right to Know Law". No permanent records are to leave the building and all records must be signed in and out in the logbook in the office. Parent conferences are to be recorded in the student's cumulative folders.

Student Related Information

- Students are not to be sent to the teachers' room or copy machines.
- Keep an accurate log of students leaving the room. It should include time out, time in, destination, and date.
- Students who are tardy to school must report to the office to obtain a pass before being admitted to the classroom. Check attendance at the beginning of class and inform the office if students are missing during the day.
- Students are not to leave the school grounds without permission from the office.
- Parents who need to pick up their children must report to the office first. The teacher will be notified via the intercom.
- Every precaution is to be taken to see that students do not deface or damage school property.
- Students are not to be left unattended in the classroom. If it is necessary to leave your classroom, make sure another teacher properly covers it.

Supplies

Materials should be anticipated and on hand before class begins. Any request for materials must follow the prescribed procedure and must be checked through the office.

Supplies are available on a limited basis. Students are encouraged to provide their own materials.

Teachers' Room and Lunch Room

Teachers are responsible for cleaning the teachers' lunchroom and workrooms. Also, please check to see that all machines are shut off and materials are ready for the next day.

Text Books

All textbooks are to be numbered and their condition noted. The teacher is to keep a record of all books, numbers, condition and name of student assigned. Textbooks are to be covered at all times. Any missing or damaged books are to be reported to the office and students who are responsible will be required to pay for a replacement.

Visitors

All visitors must report and sign in at the office. No parent, agent, or solicitor should be permitted to interrupt a classroom or teacher during school hours. Parents and visitors must have a pass from the office. Students are to check in at the office before leaving the building.