

NATICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Committee Meeting
May 12, 2022
1:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Posted Date: Wednesday, May 4, 2022 @9:15AM, Reposted on Monday, May 9, 2022 @9:30AM, Reposed on Monday, May 9, 2022 @9:54AM

Policy Subcommittee Meeting - 1:00 Open Meeting To Access Virtual Meeting: Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2038566119?pwd=TmtsdxGxenQ0YXRlN1FlcHVpd3hEZz09> Meeting ID: 203 856 6119 Passcode: 987179 One tap mobile +13126266799,,2038566119# US (Chicago) +16465588656,,2038566119# US (New York) Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) +1 646 558 8656 US (New York) +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC) +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston) +1 720 707 2699 US (Denver) +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma) Meeting ID: 203 856 6119 Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2038566119?pwd=TmtsdxGxenQ0YXRlN1FlcHVpd3hEZz09> If any member of the public, attending the meeting virtually, wishes to take advantage of public speak, they should email the Policy Subcommittee Chair, Donna McKenzie (dmckenzie@natickps.org), one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Your email should include your name, address and your request to be called upon during the public speak portion of the agenda. The Policy Subcommittee Chair will then announce your name and you will be unmuted and prompted to turn on your video for your opportunity to share your remarks. Per our public speak policy, each speaker will have up to 3 minutes.

Posted In Accordance with Provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Sections 18-25

OPEN SESSION

PUBLIC SPEAK

Public Speak is scheduled for a period of fifteen minutes. Each speaker will be permitted a maximum of three minutes during which time they can speak about topics within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. All remarks will be addressed through the School Committee Chair.

Subcommittee Meeting Item

1. Equity Policy Review
2. Review Harassment and Discrimination Policies Including Title IX
3. Calendar, Religious Holidays and Homework Policy
4. Additional Review and Next Steps on Policies Updated by Superintendent
5. Review of Student Vaccination Policy
6. Review of Staff Vaccination Policy
7. Review of Relations With Nonpublic Schools Policy - LBC
LINK to Wellesley Policy
8. Review Mask Policy

Agenda items will be addressed in an order determined by the chair. Times are approximate.

ITEM TITLE: Equity Policy Review

DATE: 4/28/2022

ITEM TYPE: Discussion

ITEM SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
Letter from Waugh reviewing policies	Review_of__Policies_4.22.2022_1296014_1.PDF	Cover Memo
equal access and evaluation of bias	equal_access_and_evaluation_of_bias.pdf	Cover Memo

Andrew J. Waugh
awaugh@mhtl.com

April 22, 2022

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dr. Anna Nolin
Superintendent of Schools
Natick Public Schools
13 East Central Street
Natick, MA 01760

Re: Review of Committee policies and other policy questions

Dear Dr. Nolin:

I am writing in response to your request that I respond to several questions related to our recent review of several draft School Committee policies, based on template policies provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. Please forward this respond to the School Committee members on the policy review committee for their review. On behalf of the policy review committee, you pose the following questions: 1) In our review of the draft policies, why did we combine Policy AC and AC-R instead of maintaining them as separate policies; 2) whether the School Committee should adopt a separate equity policy and, if the equity language is not included as policy, alternative locations where it would be appropriate to include it; 3) whether the School Committee can adopt a racism policy separate and apart from its non-discrimination policy.

1. Combining Policy AC and AC-R instead of maintaining them as separate policies. Multiple attorneys in my office reviewed the policies that were forwarded to me and the consensus was that Policy AC and AC-R (Non-Discrimination Policy) should be combined into one single policy. The reasoning behind this is to avoid having policies that may be similar but with slightly different language, thereby leading the administrator attempting to implement the policies to be unclear on which policy to follow. This would allow whoever is charged with conducting investigations to be able to review one policy and then implement the language in it promptly without any confusion as to procedural or substantive issues created by multiple policies.

2. Should the School Committee adopt a separate equity policy. The district should take care to ensure that any policy it adopts does not conflict with or duplicate existing policies. Having said that, another client of ours adopted a policy titled Equal Access and Evaluation of Bias in advance of a Coordinated Program Review, which addressed reviewing problems to



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Attorneys At Law

Dr. Anna Nolin

April 22, 2022

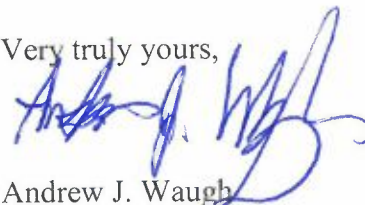
Page 2

ensure equity. I've attached a copy of the policy for your review and consideration. The goal of the policy would be to proactively identify potential issues versus a non-discrimination policy that is more about reacting to a complaint once it is filed. Alternatively, if the Committee does not like the attached language but wants to signal its commitment to equity, it could do so in a vision statement that is included prior to the policy book, or in a statement on the School District's website. The Committee should be aware, however, that if they publish a statement of intent in either of the above-referenced locations, if there is a claim of a violation of its anti-discrimination policy, the alleged victim may cite to the statement language if their allegations are not sufficient to show a violation of the anti-discrimination policy.

3. Should the School Committee adopt a racism policy separate and apart from its anti-discrimination policy. In my opinion, the Committee's anti-discrimination policy is sufficient and covers racist behavior, so the addition of a racism policy would be duplicative. For the reasons I have already stated, there is a risk that multiple policies on the same topic may differ slightly, thereby creating different standards and/or expectations and making it more difficult for the administrator implementing the policy to follow it faithfully. The sexual harassment policy is different as it also addresses potential Title IX violations, so its inclusion as a separate policy is necessary.

If you have any questions concerning my responses, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Andrew J. Waugh

Enclosure

EQUAL ACCESS AND EVALUATION OF BIAS

Overview

The district evaluates all aspects of its K-12 program annually to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities. It makes such changes as are indicated by the evaluation.

Evaluation of programs shall be directed by the Superintendent. Among other things, these evaluations may employ various testing programs, surveys, outside research agencies, teacher and parent information, and information about attendance and dropout rates of the district. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to report periodically to the Natick School Committee on program evaluations and the progress the District is making in the attainment of its educational goals.

Evaluation of Bias

The district ensures that individual teachers in the district review all educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials are used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials.

The district is required to ensure that *individual* teachers in the district review *all* educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit on the basis of race, color, disability, age, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation. This goes beyond a typical review of standard curriculum materials. Teachers must review all educational materials they bring into the classroom, whether it be a news article, picture book, advertisement, etc. on an ongoing basis. The review shall include consideration of achievement results for all student populations, educational equity, curriculum breadth and depth, and congruence of instructional strategies and assessments with district content standards. If a teacher does discover bias in a certain material he/she must also then develop appropriate activities, lead discussions or provide additional material to provide balance and context.

All staff will receive bias training information in annual Civil Rights training. Materials will include a sample checklist for teachers to use when bringing educational materials into the classroom and for reviewing long-standing curriculum.

In the case that a student or parent/guardian believes that any curricula or supplementary material is inappropriate for a school setting, the district encourages families to share their perspective so that together teachers and parents/guardians can make sense of the situation, look at it from

different lenses, and establish a resolution focusing on providing balance and context for any stereotypes depicted in materials.

Title VI: 42 U.S.C. 2000d; 34 CFR 100.3(b)(2); EEOA: 20 U.S.C. 1703(f); Section 504: 29 U.S.C. 794; 34 CFR 104.4(b)(4); Title II: 42 U.S.C. 12132; 28 CFR 35.130(b)(3); NCLB: Title III, Part A, Sec. 3121(c)(1)(C); Title X, Part C, Sec. 722(g)(1)(J)(i), 722(g)(7); Mass. Const. amend. art. 114; M.G.L. c. 71A, s. 7; c. 76, s. 5; 603 CMR 26.07(1),(4) as amended by Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011.

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ITEM TITLE:	Review Harassment and Discrimination Policies Including Title IX
DATE:	4/28/2022
ITEM TYPE:	Discussion
ITEM SUMMARY:	
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE: Calendar, Religious Holidays and Homework Policy
DATE: 4/28/2022
ITEM TYPE: Discussion
ITEM SUMMARY:
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
Proposal Religious Holidays	Proposal_Religious_Holidays_and_Homework.pdf	Cover Memo

DRAFT Proposal

Including a statement about Religious Holidays in the Student Handbook

Rationale:

- Dr. Nolin initiated a desire for our committee to ensure that our school calendar reflects our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - We have worked hard to research and understand how to address this in Natick.
- We've communicated clearly to students and families that while we are committed to making some kind of change to our calendar, the target date for that decision is the 2023-2024 school year.
- Families indicated that homework and tests continue to be held on major holidays and asked us to consider making a "first step" change to the coming school year.
- Looking at Westborough/Brookline example that we have been using as a template this year and I don't believe that they are official School Committee Policies - I may be wrong but I can't find them in their policy manuals.
- The link shared with our committee at [a meeting in December of 2020](#) shows Westborough's as a calendar decision made by the School Committee.
- As such, this document serves as a way to step back from an official calendar policy, and into the first ask parents of students in especially minority religious communities are asking we consider: finding a way to make a promise to our students and families that that we will honor cultural and religious observances while also supporting our faculty and staff and their desire to grow in awareness and knowledge of the diversity of our students.

Proposal: Add the following item to our [Student Handbook page 37](#) - **under Teacher Responsibility:**

"Refrain from administering a test, project completion or assign homework due on or the day after a significant* Religious Holiday within a student's religious/cultural tradition. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, it is strongly encouraged for work to be due or tests administered on the following Tuesday."

*Significant Religious Holiday identified by the Natick Public School Committee are as follows

January:

Christmas (Orthodox)
Lunar New Year

April:

Good Friday and Easter (Roman)
Good Friday and Easter (Orthodox)
Eid-Al-Fitr

Passover (First and Last day) (Wednesday April 5th, Thursday April 13th, 2023)

September:

Rosh Hasanah

Yom Kipur*

November:

Diwali

December:

Christmas

Kwanzaa

*Religious Holidays often vary from year to year because most follow a lunar calendar. The School District will be responsible for providing teachers and staff with a calendar listing the specific dates of the significant religious holidays within that school year in August every year.

Athletics and Fine Arts:

Our athletic and fine arts programs are also sensitive to these issues. Coaches and fine arts instructors are advised of and sensitive to the religious and cultural needs of their students and families. There will be no athletic or fine arts consequence for missing games/performances and/or practices due to religious observances.

Summary:

This proposal is a slight adjustment and perhaps a stronger clarification of what our administration has already asked of our teachers. By placing it in the student handbook, we make it clear to families what the expectations of staff are and the district will support the staff in a growing awareness of these holidays.

This does not suggest that no Homework or tests can be administered on these days - but for students who celebrate the specific holiday - he/she/they would be exempt. This would provide students with potentially 1-4 days of sensitivity around a religious Holiday celebration.

I understand there is some concern that we have not built enough stakeholder buy-in, especially with the teachers, but I argue that the professional development focus on DEI awareness this year and the already stated expectation from principals, this foundation for this kind of adjustment in our homework policy has been laid.

***** IF WE WANT TO TAKE IT FURTHER *****

We have received recommendations by religious leaders and families within the district to include other important Holidays in our sensitivity training and outreach. If we did wanted to add another layer of holidays, these are the ones that have been suggested:

February:

Ash Wednesday (Roman) (Fr. Hines)

March:

Orthodox (Orthodox)

Holi* (including this at the Recommendation of Dr. Preeta Banerjee)

Purim (including this at the recommendation of Farrah Rubenstein)

May:

Shavuot (First and Last) (including this at the recommendation of Farrah Rubenstein)

September:

Sukkot

October:

Navratri and Durga Puja* (including this at the Recommendation of Dr. Preeta Banerjee)

Student Handbook - Page 37

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 the secondary schools, homework expectations will necessarily differ.

Teacher Responsibilities:

1. Assign homework that is meaningful and useful;
2. Allow time for students' questions to clarify directions;
3. Respond to each assignment by a grade and/or a comment within a reasonable length of time;
4. Provide opportunities for both short-term and long-term assignments;
5. Monitor long-term assignments in order to avoid last-minute student efforts;
6. Limit assigning homework over school vacations;
7. Inform parents of their role in supervising homework;
8. Communicate with pupil and parent when problems arise.
- 9. Refrain from administering a test, project completion or assign homework due for a student on or the day after a significant* Religious Holiday within that student's religious/cultural tradition. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, it is encouraged for work to be due on the following Tuesday.**

Bolded item is the proposal I am suggesting that we add

Respectfully submitted by Catherine Brunell
April 26, 2022

DRAFT/Proposal

ITEM TITLE:	Additional Review and Next Steps on Policies Updated by Superintendent
DATE:	4/28/2022
ITEM TYPE:	Discussion
ITEM SUMMARY:	
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:	
RECOMMENDATION:	

ITEM TITLE: Review of Student Vaccination Policy
DATE: 5/12/2022
ITEM TYPE:
ITEM SUMMARY:
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
EBC Supplemental	EBC_Supplemental_9.20.21.pdf	Cover Memo

INTERIM POLICY ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The School Committee establishes an emergency, interim policy for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic that will:

- promote public safety and the safety of students, faculty, and staff;
- maintain the district's commitment to an inclusive, equitable education;
- ensure support for all students, including those at highest risk educationally, socially, and/or economically;
- adhere, to the extent possible, to the guidance of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), MA Department of Public Health and other agencies of state and federal government; and expedite, in collaboration with the Natick Board of Health, the COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

The School Committee will authorize the Superintendent to act expeditiously in executing COVID-19 related school plans for students, their families, and the community.

Interim changes to policies affected by the pandemic

The Superintendent, with the advice and consent of the School Committee, may suspend or modify individual district policies to address the COVID-19 emergency.

The goal of emergency pandemic policies shall be to:

- ensure the safety and health of students, faculty, staff, and all persons who may come in contact with them;
- provide the most effective education across all learning models, to the extent possible under the circumstances;
- authorize changes to operating protocols, as needed, to open and operate schools effectively from various venues or platforms;
- conduct the business and operational functions of the district as efficiently as possible;
- allow the Superintendent and staff to act quickly to carry out a schooling plans; and
- facilitate the re-establishment of a safe and productive school day and year.

The development and implementation of school operations and procedures falls under the purview of the Superintendent. Per policy File BGD - School Committee Review of Procedures, the School Committee may review procedures developed by the Superintendent for the school system, but does not officially approve procedures and operations except when inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee, required by state law, or other necessary circumstances. In order to allow the Superintendent to make COVID-related changes to operating protocols that would have been inconsistent with current policy, the School Committee is temporarily amending selected policy subsections.

Added/Amended Sections to the Policy Manual

The following sections of the NPS Policy Manual are hereby added or amended to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Face masks and face coverings (File: EBCFA)

A face mask or face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed.

Face masks or face coverings may be removed only during school-designated periods for mask breaks and eating or drinking breaks, and while outside whenever permitted by school staff. During mask breaks, individuals must still maintain appropriate social distancing.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by NPS staff in consultation with the school nurse, Director of Health Services, or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

- Operations and plant maintenance and security (File EC, ECA)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may suspend or amend current policy to ensure the efficient operation of business functions and maintenance of school buildings, and other such offices as the district maintains.

- Transportation and busing (File EE, EEAE EEAEC, EEAG)

Subject to current law and regulation, the Superintendent may suspend or modify policies related to the transportation of students by the school district. Legal requirements relating to IEP's that contain transportation for students shall not be altered without the appropriate family consent. These modifications shall be consistent with the district return to school plan.

- School calendar/school year (File IC/ICA)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation, and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may revise the school calendar with the approval of the School Committee.

- Time on learning and length of school day (File IC/ICA and ID)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation, and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may suspend or amend requirements for time on learning and may alter daily school hours as needed.

- Home-bound instruction (File IHBF)

The district shall provide remote instruction for students who are temporarily homebound due to illness, quarantine, or disability.

- Student assignment to schools (File JCA)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation, and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may alter or revise the assignment of students to schools.

- Student absences (File JH)

Subject to operative law and regulations, the Superintendent may suspend or modify policies related to student attendance.

- Discipline and Suspension/Expulsion (File JIC, JK)

The Superintendent, subject to the approval of the School Committee, shall adopt protocols for serving students who are disciplined or suspended during the pandemic emergency. The schools must include opportunities for students to make academic progress during that time. Students may elect to remain at home under the provisions of the policies related to homeschooling.

- Students at risk (JIE, JL, JLC, JLCC)

During the COVID pandemic, the Superintendent or principal of a school may revise or suspend provisions of policy to facilitate the education of students who are at risk, have special physical needs, or play a role as their family caregivers. This includes, but is not limited to, caring for or educating students with disabilities, illness, pregnancy, child rearing responsibilities, or special education needs consistent with law and regulation.

- Eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities including programs outside of the school day, school and school club-sponsored events, and school-sponsored athletics.

Subject to law, regulation, and standards established by the appropriate and legitimate regulatory body, the Superintendent may propose changes to district protocols for participation in extracurricular activities, including programs outside of the school day, school and school club-sponsored events, and school sponsored athletics subject to the rules established by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

For the 2021-2022 school year, FDA approved vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 is required for all age-eligible students to participate in extracurricular activities, events and athletics that occur outside of the school day.

1. Age-eligible students
 - a. Students who participate in extracurricular activities including programs outside of the school day, school and school club-sponsored events, and school sponsored athletics. are required to be vaccinated except as outlined in b (below) .
 - b. Students who are unvaccinated are required to participate in state-sponsored testing through Natick Public Schools or submit evidence of a weekly negative COVID-19 PCR test delivered on the same timeline and due dates as the Natick Public Schools program.
2. Age-ineligible students
 - a. Students are required to participate in state-sponsored pooled, test and stay and symptomatic testing through Natick Public Schools or submit evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test delivered on the same timeline and due dates as the Natick Public Schools program.

- Exemptions from health and safety requirements for particular groups of students (File JL)

The Superintendent shall provide protocols to principals and educators teachers regarding students who may require special exemptions from health and safety standards during the pandemic emergency. Such protocols may address, for example, exemptions on the use of masks for the youngest children and/or high risk students.

- Illness and contact tracing (File JLCC)

The Superintendent may establish protocols for tracking student contacts as a means of locating others from whom students may contract or expose other persons to the COVID-19 virus. Such protocols will be consistent with law and regulation and be consistent with standards to protect the privacy of students, their families, and other persons.

- Privacy of Students (File JRA, JRA-R, JRD)

During the pandemic, the rights to privacy held by students and their families shall not be abridged by the public schools. Such rights extend to the confidentiality of student academic records, health data, economic status, and other such information as may be considered confidential by law.

Massachusetts law prohibits the recording of individuals without their permission. Similarly, students may not be recorded in classrooms by audio, visual, or remote means without the permission of parents or, if of age, by individual students. During periods of remote learning, the privacy of students participating in on-line classes shall not be violated by recording them without appropriate permissions.

- Visitors in schools and buildings (File KI)

Subject to current emergency declarations, the Superintendent may propose suspension or modification of district policies regarding visitors to school buildings during the school day and after school hours.

REFS.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Declaration of State of Emergency To Respond to Covid-19

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Considerations for Wearing Masks

CROSS REF.: [BGD](#) - School Committee Review of Procedures

Adopted and Approved by School Committee on September 20, 2021

ITEM TITLE: Review of Staff Vaccination Policy
DATE: 5/12/2022
ITEM TYPE:
ITEM SUMMARY:
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
GBEF Vaccine Policy	GBEF_Vaccine_Policy.pdf	Cover Memo

(INTERIM) STAFF COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

The District is committed to providing a safe environment for the 2021-2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, vaccination is the leading prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic, prevent hospitalizations and severe disease, and keep members of our school community safe. Particularly due to the inability of students to obtain vaccination until they are age-eligible, and the environment of schools where groups are gathering indoors, the District, consistent with public health guidance and the Governor's Order, shall require all staff to demonstrate that they have received full COVID-19 vaccination and maintain full vaccination as a condition of employment. A person is fully vaccinated two (2) weeks after the final dose of vaccination (1 dose for Johnson & Johnson and 2 doses for Pfizer and Moderna).

This policy applies to all existing and newly hired employees and staff, as well as transportation and food service vendors and contractors, regardless of whether the employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past.

Staff must demonstrate that they are fully vaccinated with an FDA approved or emergency use authorized COVID-19 vaccine by October 15, 2021. Only those staff who have been granted medical exemptions under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") or have an exemption for a sincerely held religious belief (Title VII) will be exempt from this mandate.

Staff who are granted an exemption must either participate in NPS provided weekly asymptomatic COVID-19 testing when provided by NPS OR provide official proof of weekly negative COVID-19 tests as a condition of employment.

Newton Public School administration will establish processes for verifying staff vaccination status, the exemption process, and testing protocols necessary to implement this policy.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee or the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year, whichever comes first.

REFERENCES:

Governor Baker's Executive Order No. 595

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/august-19-2021-executive-department-employee-vaccination-order/download>

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccine-information>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Vaccine Information

[Vaccines for COVID-19](#)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools Updated August 5, 2021

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools and ECE Programs](#)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Public Health

[DESE/DPH COVID-19 Guidance for Districts and Schools: Fall 2021 - July 30, 2021](#)

SOURCE: Newton

Adopted: September 1, 2021

ITEM TITLE: Review of Relations With Nonpublic Schools Policy - LBC
DATE: 5/12/2022
ITEM TYPE:
ITEM SUMMARY: **LINK** to Wellesley Policy
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
Policy LBC	Policy_LBC.pdf	Cover Memo

RELATIONS WITH NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

Private Schools

In accordance with state law, the School Committee will approve a private school when it is satisfied that the instructional program of the school equals that of the town's public schools in thoroughness, efficiency, and progress made.

The Committee recognizes that many worthwhile contributions are made to this community by parochial and other private schools. Therefore, it will cooperate with these schools in matters of mutual benefit when law does not expressly prohibit this cooperation.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:4E; 71:48; 71:71D; 71B:4; 74:4 through 74:7A; 76:1

ITEM TITLE: Review Mask Policy

DATE: 5/12/2022

ITEM TYPE: Discussion

ITEM SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	File Name	Type
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EBCFA	EBCFA.pdf	Cover Memo

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The School Committee will authorize the Superintendent to act expeditiously in executing COVID-19 related school plans for students, their families, and the community.

Interim changes to policies affected by the pandemic

The Superintendent, with the advice and consent of the School Committee, may suspend or modify individual district policies to address the COVID-19 emergency.

The goal of emergency pandemic policies shall be to:

- ensure the safety and health of students, faculty, staff, and all persons who may come in contact with them;
- provide the most effective education across all learning models, to the extent possible under the circumstances;
- authorize changes to operating protocols, as needed, to open and operate schools effectively from various venues or platforms;
- conduct the business and operational functions of the district as efficiently as possible;
- allow the Superintendent and staff to act quickly to carry out a schooling plans; and
- facilitate the re-establishment of a safe and productive school day and year.

The development and implementation of school operations and procedures falls under the purview of the Superintendent. Per policy File BGD - School Committee Review of Procedures, the School Committee may review procedures developed by the Superintendent for the school system, but does not officially approve procedures and operations except when inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee, required by state law, or other necessary circumstances. In order to allow the Superintendent to make COVID-related changes to operating protocols that would have been inconsistent with current policy, the School Committee is temporarily amending selected policy subsections.

Added/Amended Sections to the Policy Manual

The following sections of the NPS Policy Manual are hereby added or amended to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Face masks and face coverings (File: EBCFA)

A face mask or face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed.

Face masks or face coverings may be removed only during school-designated periods for mask breaks and eating or drinking breaks, and while outside whenever permitted by school staff. During mask breaks, individuals must still maintain appropriate social distancing.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by NPS staff in consultation with the school nurse, Director of Health Services, or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

- Operations and plant maintenance and security (File EC, ECA)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may suspend or amend current policy to ensure the efficient operation of business functions and maintenance of school buildings, and other such offices as the district maintains.

- Transportation and busing (File EE, EEAE EEAEC, EEAG)

Subject to current law and regulation, the Superintendent may suspend or modify policies related to the transportation of students by the school district. Legal requirements relating to IEP's that contain transportation for students shall not be altered without the appropriate family consent. These modifications shall be consistent with the district return to school plan.

- School calendar/school year (File IC/ICA)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation, and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may revise the school calendar with the approval of the School Committee.

- Time on learning and length of school day (File IC/ICA and ID)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation, and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may suspend or amend requirements for time on learning and may alter daily school hours as needed.

- Home-bound instruction (File IHBF)

The district shall provide remote instruction for students who are temporarily homebound due to illness, quarantine, or disability.

- Student assignment to schools (File JCA)

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation, and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may alter or revise the assignment of students to schools.

- Student absences (File JH)

Subject to operative law and regulations, the Superintendent may suspend or modify policies related to student attendance.

- Discipline and Suspension/Expulsion (File JIC, JK)

The Superintendent, subject to the approval of the School Committee, shall adopt protocols for serving students who are disciplined or suspended during the pandemic emergency. The schools must include opportunities for students to make academic progress during that time. Students may elect to remain at home under the provisions of the policies related to homeschooling.

- Students at risk (JIE, JL, JLC, JLCC)

During the COVID pandemic, the Superintendent or principal of a school may revise or suspend provisions of policy to facilitate the education of students who are at risk, have special physical needs, or play a role as their family caregivers. This includes, but is not limited to, caring for or educating students with disabilities, illness, pregnancy, child rearing responsibilities, or special education needs consistent with law and regulation.

- Eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities including programs outside of the school day, school and school club-sponsored events, and school-sponsored athletics.

Subject to law, regulation, and standards established by the appropriate and legitimate regulatory body, the Superintendent may propose changes to district protocols for participation in extracurricular activities, including programs outside of the school day, school and school club-sponsored events, and school sponsored athletics subject to the rules established by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

For the 2021-2022 school year, FDA approved vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 is required for all age-eligible students to participate in extracurricular activities, events and athletics that occur outside of the school day.

1. Age-eligible students
 - a. Students who participate in extracurricular activities including programs outside of the school day, school and school club-sponsored events, and school sponsored athletics. are required to be vaccinated except as outlined in b (below) .
 - b. Students who are unvaccinated are required to participate in state-sponsored testing through Natick Public Schools or submit evidence of a weekly negative COVID-19 PCR test delivered on the same timeline and due dates as the Natick Public Schools program.
2. Age-ineligible students
 - a. Students are required to participate in state-sponsored pooled, test and stay and symptomatic testing through Natick Public Schools or submit evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test delivered on the same timeline and due dates as the Natick Public Schools program.

- Exemptions from health and safety requirements for particular groups of students (File JL)

The Superintendent shall provide protocols to principals and educators teachers regarding students who may require special exemptions from health and safety standards during the pandemic emergency. Such protocols may address, for example, exemptions on the use of masks for the youngest children and/or high risk students.

- Illness and contact tracing (File JLCC)

The Superintendent may establish protocols for tracking student contacts as a means of locating others from whom students may contract or expose other persons to the COVID-19 virus. Such protocols will be consistent with law and regulation and be consistent with standards to protect the privacy of students, their families, and other persons.

- Privacy of Students (File JRA, JRA-R, JRD)

During the pandemic, the rights to privacy held by students and their families shall not be abridged by the public schools. Such rights extend to the confidentiality of student academic records, health data, economic status, and other such information as may be considered confidential by law.

Massachusetts law prohibits the recording of individuals without their permission. Similarly, students may not be recorded in classrooms by audio, visual, or remote means without the permission of parents or, if of age, by individual students. During periods of remote learning, the privacy of students participating in on-line classes shall not be violated by recording them without appropriate permissions.

- Visitors in schools and buildings (File KI)

Subject to current emergency declarations, the Superintendent may propose suspension or modification of district policies regarding visitors to school buildings during the school day and after school hours.

REFS.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Declaration of State of Emergency To Respond to Covid-19

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Considerations for Wearing Masks

CROSS REF.: [BGD](#) - School Committee Review of Procedures

Adopted and Approved by School Committee on September 20, 2021

FACE COVERINGS

The Natick School District is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. Exempted from this policy are students in Grade 1 and below.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing;
- is unconscious;
- is incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks;
- while eating or drinking;
- during physical education classes;
- while outside.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 -
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Wearing Masks -
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Reopening Guidelines - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>
Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Mask Up MA! –
<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

SOURCE: MASC – August 2020

Adopted and Approved by the Natick School Committee: August 10, 2020