

## Section K Contents

SCHOOL / COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS.....	2
SCHOOL / PARENT RELATIONS GOALS.....	3
NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS.....	4
RELATIONS WITH PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS.....	5
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING.....	6
PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS.....	7
NEWBURYPORT EDUCATION FOUNDATION.....	8
PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW.....	9
NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/ NEWS RELEASES.....	10
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS.....	11
PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS.....	12
ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS.....	13
VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS.....	14
RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES.....	15
RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES.....	17

# SCHOOL / COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KA
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The School Committee believes that the District is an integral part of the community and that community support is necessary for the District's operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and District staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the District contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the District is committed to sustaining:

- Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in District programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.
- Volunteer programs that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.
- Recognition programs that publicly honor the contributions of our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in our individual and collective accomplishments.
- Community service efforts which enable the District's staff and students to express their commitment to the community.

SOURCE: MASC

## Version Control

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# SCHOOL / PARENT RELATIONS GOALS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KBA
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It is the general goal of the District to foster relationships which encourage cooperation between the home and school with parents, in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While parents are individually responsible for their children, the District provides direct services of education and indirect services of childcare for students during the time when they are within the supervision of school personnel. Consistent with these shared responsibilities and as appropriate to the maturity of the student, members of the school staff will consult with parents regarding student progress and achievement, methods to enhance student development, and matters of correction.

Additionally, parental involvement in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the classroom teachers, school Principal and staff, the parent/teacher organizations, the school volunteer program, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and District programs.

SOURCE: MASC

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# NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KBBA
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As required by Massachusetts General Law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

1. A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:
  - (a) The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
  - (b) The parent has been denied visitation, or
  - (c) The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
  - (d) There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
2. The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to regulation.
3. In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
4. Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in regulation.
5. The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
6. Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to law, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:34D](#); [71:34H](#)

603 CMR [23.07](#) (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents

20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

SOURCE: MASC

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# RELATIONS WITH PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KBE
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To foster relationships with parents that encourage the home and school to work together to establish and achieve common educational goals for students, the Superintendent and the professional staff will:

1. Consult with and encourage parents to share in school planning and in setting objectives and evaluating programs.
2. Help parents understand the educational process and their role in promoting it.
3. Provide for parent understanding of school operations.
4. Provide opportunities for parents to be informed of their child's development and the criteria for its measurement.

To accomplish the above and to enhance communications between parents and school officials, the School Committee encourages the maintenance of formal Parent-Teacher Organizations at each school building. For this purpose, the School Committee officially recognizes the Newburyport PTO's as parent organizations.

All parent organizations need to recognize that spending on student activities must comply with federal law relating to equity among student genders and with District and School priorities.

LEGAL REFS: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

CROSS REFS: [ACA](#) - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

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# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Section K: Community Relations	File: KCB
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The School Committee endorses the concept that community participation in the affairs of the schools is essential if the school system and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect and work together to improve the quality of education for students. It therefore intends to exert every effort to identify the desires of the community and to be responsive, through its actions, to those desires.

All citizens will be encouraged to express ideas, concerns, and/or questions about the schools to the school administration, to any appointed advisory bodies, and to the School Committee.

Residents who are specially qualified because of interest, training, experience, or personal characteristics, will be encouraged to assume an active role in school affairs. From time to time, these people may be invited by the School Committee to act as advisors, either individually or in ad hoc committees, sub committees or other groups appointed by the School Committee or Superintendent.

The School Committee and the staff will give substantial weight to the advice they receive from individuals and community groups interested in the schools, particularly from those individuals and groups they have invited to advise them regarding specific problems, but will use their best judgment in arriving at decisions.

SOURCE: MASC

CROSS REF.: BDF, Advisory Committees to the School Committee

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# PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KCD
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The Superintendent will have authority to accept gifts and offers of equipment for the schools in the name of the School Committee when the gift is of educational value. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts that would involve changes in school plants or sites will be subject to School Committee approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school system. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be accepted by vote of the School Committee, handled as a separate account and expended at the discretion of the School Committee, as provided by law.

The School Committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given all donors.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37A](#)

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# NEWBURYPORT EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Section K: Community Relations	File: KCE
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The School Committee recognizes the Newburyport Education Foundation (NEF) as a primary fundraising agent for the Newburyport School District. The NEF is an independent organization operating with its own board. The Newburyport Education Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization (EIN 04-3583906) and donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

*The mission of the Newburyport Education Foundation is to generate financial resources and community involvement to enhance education in the Newburyport Public Schools.*

Formed to enhance educational opportunities for the city's public school children, the goal of the Newburyport Education Foundation is to supplement funding for programs which are already supported by public financing at a basic level, but which can be substantially improved by additional private sector financing, and to finance programs that might not receive funding from traditional sources such as the district budget or state aid.

In order to ensure that School District Priorities are being addressed by the NEF, The School Superintendent and a member of the School Committee will serve on the NEF Board in accordance with NEF bylaws.

Source: Policy Sub-committee, October 2017

## Version Control

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# PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The School Committee is a public servant, and its meetings and records will be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other classified matters which are legally covered in executive session.

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

All commonly available public record documents of the School District shall be posted on the district's website. The length of time such records shall remain posted on the district website shall be in accordance with the Municipal Record Retention Manual. In addition, the official minutes of the School Committee, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep parents and others in the particular school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [4:7](#); [66:10](#); [30A:18-25](#)

CROSS REFS.: BEDG, Minutes

GBJ, Personnel Records

JRA, Student Records

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## NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/ NEWS RELEASES

Section K: Community Relations

File: KDD

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the challenges, programs, planning, and activities of the school system.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that school system publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

1. The School Committee Chair will be the official spokesperson for the School Committee, except as this duty is delegated to the Vice-chair or Superintendent.
2. News releases that are of a system-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established School Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.
3. News releases that are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school. All statements made to the press by other staff members of the particular school must be cleared with the Principal.

While it is impossible to know how news releases will be treated by the press, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school system.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

### Version Control

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# PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KE
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Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the School Committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the School Committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern School Committee actions or School Committee operations only.

The School Committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the School Committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building administrator
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the School Committee and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the School Committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the School Committee and then placed in the official files.

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

The School Committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

LEGAL REFS.: MG.L. [76:5](#)

603 CMR [26.00](#)

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# PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KHA
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The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools for the following reasons:

1. The school system should provide students, parents, and employees some measure of protection from exploitation by commercial and charitable fund-raising organizations.
2. The school system should not give the public the impression of generally endorsing or sanctioning commercial and fund-raising activities.
3. Commercial and fund-raising activities may disrupt school routine and cause loss of instructional time.

Following these guiding statements, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools with the following exceptions:

- No direct solicitation of students or employees may take place without School Committee permission.
- No general or class distribution of commercial or fund-raising literature may take place without School Committee permission.

For the purposes of this policy, local PTO groups and groups representing school system employees will be considered "school groups" and will be governed by the School Committee's policy on staff solicitations.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [44:53A](#)

CROSS REFS.: [GBEBC](#), Staff Gifts and Solicitations

[JJE](#), Student Fund-Raising Activities

[JP](#), Student Gifts and Solicitations

[KHB](#), Advertising in the Schools

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# ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

Section K: Community Relations	File: KHB
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The School Committee may grant permission for advertising of commercial products or services in school buildings or on school property under guidelines or regulations it may approve. This includes “naming” opportunities normally handled through the Newburyport Education Foundation under guidelines approved by the School Committee.

Otherwise, no advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school property. Publications of the school system will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in publications that are published by student organizations or , subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially-sponsored, free teaching aids if the content is approved by the administration.

Solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school system to promote any product will not be permitted by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

CROSS REF.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations

KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

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# VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee welcomes parents and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school system's mission and goals.

Visits by parents to several classrooms in a given grade for the purposes of comparing teaching styles to provide a basis for a request for student assignment to a particular teacher are strongly discouraged because the School District's policy of assigning a student to a particular class is the sole responsibility of the building Principal in consultation with the staff of that school.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Parental requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end, we request that such requests be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes it is requested that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Under ordinary circumstances classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.
5. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school MUST ask permission of one of the administrative staff 24 HOURS in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.

CROSS REF.: IHBAA, Observations of Special Education Programs

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

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# RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

Newburyport Schools have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Newburyport Police Department and the Essex County District Attorney's office which guide the school relations with the authorities.

## **Memorandum of Understanding: Collaborative Initiative Involving the Newburyport Schools, Police, and District Attorney**

I. General Principles: The Newburyport Public Schools, the Newburyport Police Department, and the Essex County District Attorney's Office agree to coordinate their response to violent, delinquent, or criminal acts by students and to alcohol and other drug use, which occur on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events. To ensure a safe educational environment, this collaborative effort between school administration and law enforcement supports "zero tolerance" for drugs, alcohol, weapons and violence. Non-students involved in such acts on school premises or at school events are to be reported as students are.

It continues to remain the sole prerogative of school officials to impose discipline for infractions of school rules and policies. In cases where the school has reported an incident to the police, as described below, the school agrees to notify the police department before suspending a student under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H 1/2.

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H requires each school district to have a written Code of Conduct reflected in student handbooks stating the standards and procedures to assure building security and safety of students and school personnel, and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or civil rights violations. Reference to this Memorandum shall be made in these handbooks.

### II. Objectives

A. To develop and implement a process for school officials and local police to coordinate a response to criminal/delinquent behavior and to refer appropriate first time or early offenders, ages 7-17, to the Essex County District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program. The Juvenile Diversion Program is an alternative to the court system. Participating youth are required to attend counseling/education programs, perform community service and in some cases pay restitution. Youth who successfully complete the Juvenile Diversion Program will have no court record.

B. To work with the Substance Abuse Advisory Committee, which should include representatives for the school age population, local police, clergy, parents, teachers, school administrators, community agency representatives and the District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Coordinator, and which should make recommendations to the appropriate school officials and parent groups concerning more effective ways to promote an awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol use and abuse and sound preventative measures.

### III. Procedures

While acknowledging that school officials are not agents of the police or Commonwealth and the Commonwealth and police are not agents of the agents of the school, the school and police should develop policies and protocols for coordinated efforts.

A. The Superintendent of Schools and the school Principal are responsible for reporting acts. The Police Chief shall designate an officer (or officers) to coordinate all reported criminal acts.

A mandatory reportable act shall include:

- Any serious incident of assaultive behavior, assault and battery, destruction of property, or theft;
- Violation of a restraining order;
- Possession of a dangerous weapon;

- Finding any student who is in actual or constructive possession of what is reasonably believed to be a controlled substance as defined by state law, except that possession of drugs pursuant to a valid prescription is a discretionary reportable act; and
- Having a reasonable belief that any student has sold or offered to sell or otherwise distributed a drug that is believed to be a controlled substance under the law.

A discretionary reportable act shall include

- Any student's violation of a state criminal statute which warrants reporting but is not as serious as a mandatory reportable act; and
- Finding any student, regardless of age, who is reasonably believed to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

B. Any teacher or other school employee who has reasonable grounds to believe that student has committed a mandatory reportable act or a discretionary reportable act, as defined above, shall take (or cause to be taken) the student to the Principal or Superintendent. The Principal/Superintendent shall ask the reporting teacher/employee what happened and take custody of any physical evidence.

C. The Principal/Superintendent shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the nature of the offense and inform them that certain offenses must be reported to the police. The Principal/Superintendent may offer the student the opportunity to respond to the teacher/employee's report. The Principal/Superintendent shall in the case of a mandatory reportable act, and may in the case of a discretionary reportable act, notify the police of the incident and the existence of any physical evidence. All contraband (drug, alcohol, firearms, and dangerous weapons) shall be immediately surrendered to the appropriate police department. In addition, the Principal/Superintendent will comply with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37L requiring that an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time be reported in writing to the Chief of Police. This report must be filed in any case involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises, regardless of whether it occurred during school hours, and whether or not the student has been expelled

D. School personnel are permitted to search a student's clothing, personal possessions or locker at the direction of the Principal/Superintendent if there is a reasonable basis for believing that the student is concealing material the possession of which is prohibited by federal, state, or local law, or the provisions of the School Discipline Code. However, if the Principal/Superintendent believes, prior to the search, that the student's act should be reported to the police, they should inform the police that the school intends to conduct the search. The Principal/Superintendent shall inform students in writing at the beginning of each school year of this practice. The Principal/Superintendent should keep a record of such searches detailing time, place, reasons and witnesses.

E. Upon notification from the Principal/Superintendent, police shall respond in cases of mandatory reportable acts and may respond in other cases.

F. Juvenile offenders who meet the eligibility criteria for the Essex County District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program may be admitted to that program in lieu of prosecution. The Juvenile

Diversion/Juvenile Justice Coordinator together with police and the Assistant District Attorney will decide which candidates should be offered the Juvenile Diversion Program. Cases that are not appropriate for Juvenile Diversion will be prosecuted through the Juvenile Justice System. For those student offenders who have reached their seventeenth birthday, the police and the Assistant District Attorney will decide which adult cases to prosecute in the criminal court.

## Version Control

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# RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Section K: Community Relations	File: KLK
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The School Committee and its administrative officers welcome all who seek to serve the residents of the community and will participate with them in the planning and execution of such projects as will be mutually beneficial for students.

It is School Committee policy that administration inform elected and appointed officials of the local government through regular participation in the Joint Committee on Education of the City Council, All efforts will be made to to work cooperatively with City departments for improved services.

SOURCE: MASC

### Version Control

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