

**NORTH STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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**6/19/09**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Equal Employment Opportunity</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>The District and its Mission Statement</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>The District’s Organizational Chart</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Funding</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Hiring</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Training</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Employment Procedures</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>General Information</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Payroll Information</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Personnel Procedures and Policies</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Rules</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Family and Medical Leave Act</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>COBRA Notice</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPAA)</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Privacy Protection – Social Security Numbers</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Sexual Harassment Policy</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Network/Internet Acceptable Use Policy</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Employee Acknowledgement Form</b> .....	<b>35</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

This employee handbook has been developed as a summary of the policies and procedures of the North Stonington Board of Education. It is designed to be a working guide for personnel in the day-to-day administration of our personnel program. It does not contain all the policies and procedures and is not intended to be construed as a binding contract between an employee and The North Stonington Board of Education. Copies of the complete Board of Education Policy and Procedures Manual are available for viewing in each school office and the central office.

No part of this handbook is to be construed as a contract of employment or an implied contract of employment. Unless controlled by the specific provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, the employment relationship between the North Stonington Board of Education and each of its employees is employment "at will", and all provisions of this staff handbook shall apply. Under this "at will" relationship, neither the employee nor the North Stonington Board of Education is bound to continue the employment relationship if either chooses, at its will, to end the relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Where there are differences between the provisions of this handbook and more specific statements contained in the North Stonington Board of Education's files (such as insurance policies), the statements contained in the Board of Education files shall control. The North Stonington Board of Education reserves the right to revise its policies and the handbook as needed and the handbook is subject to change without notice.

It is the responsibility of each employee of the North Stonington Board of Education to be familiar with this handbook and to remain in compliance with the rules and requirements contained within.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

The North Stonington Board of Education is firmly committed to Equal Employment and advancement opportunities for all present employees as well as for applicants in all phases of the employment process (recruitment, hiring, assignment, conditions of employment, compensation, benefits, training, promotion, transfer, discipline and termination). Therefore, except in cases of bona fide occupational qualification or need, the North Stonington Board of Education will act without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, past/present history of mental disorder, mental retardation, physical or learning disability including blindness, genetic information or any other characteristics protected by applicable law, (unless it is shown by supervisory personnel that a disability prevents performance of the work involved or may result in undue hardship) in all aspects of the employment process and relationship. This policy is based on the understanding that the applicant is able to perform the job requirements. Employment decisions will be based on merit, qualifications and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns about *any* type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or the Superintendent. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment.

## THE DISTRICT

The North Stonington Public School District is operated under the guidance of the North Stonington Board of Education. The district consists of: the Central Office (Superintendent, Special Services Division, and the business office); North Stonington Elementary School; and, Wheeler High/Middle School. Student population as of January, 2009, was approximately 800.

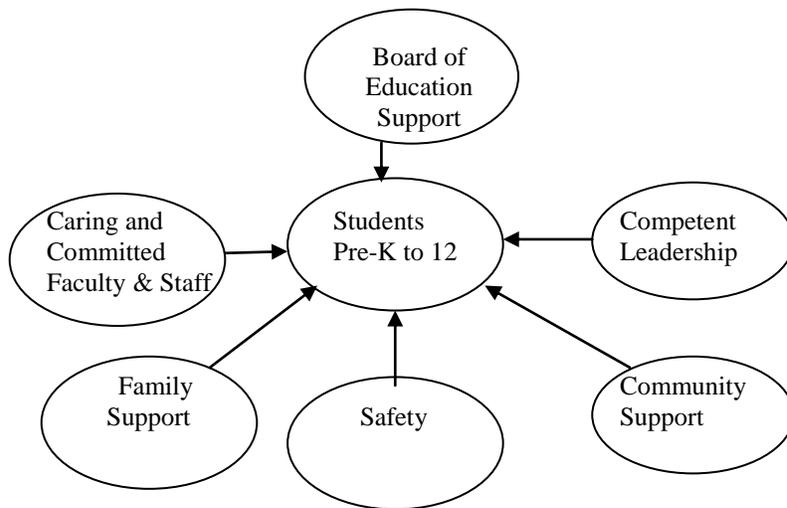
## MISSION STATEMENT

### All Students Will Learn at Their Highest Potential

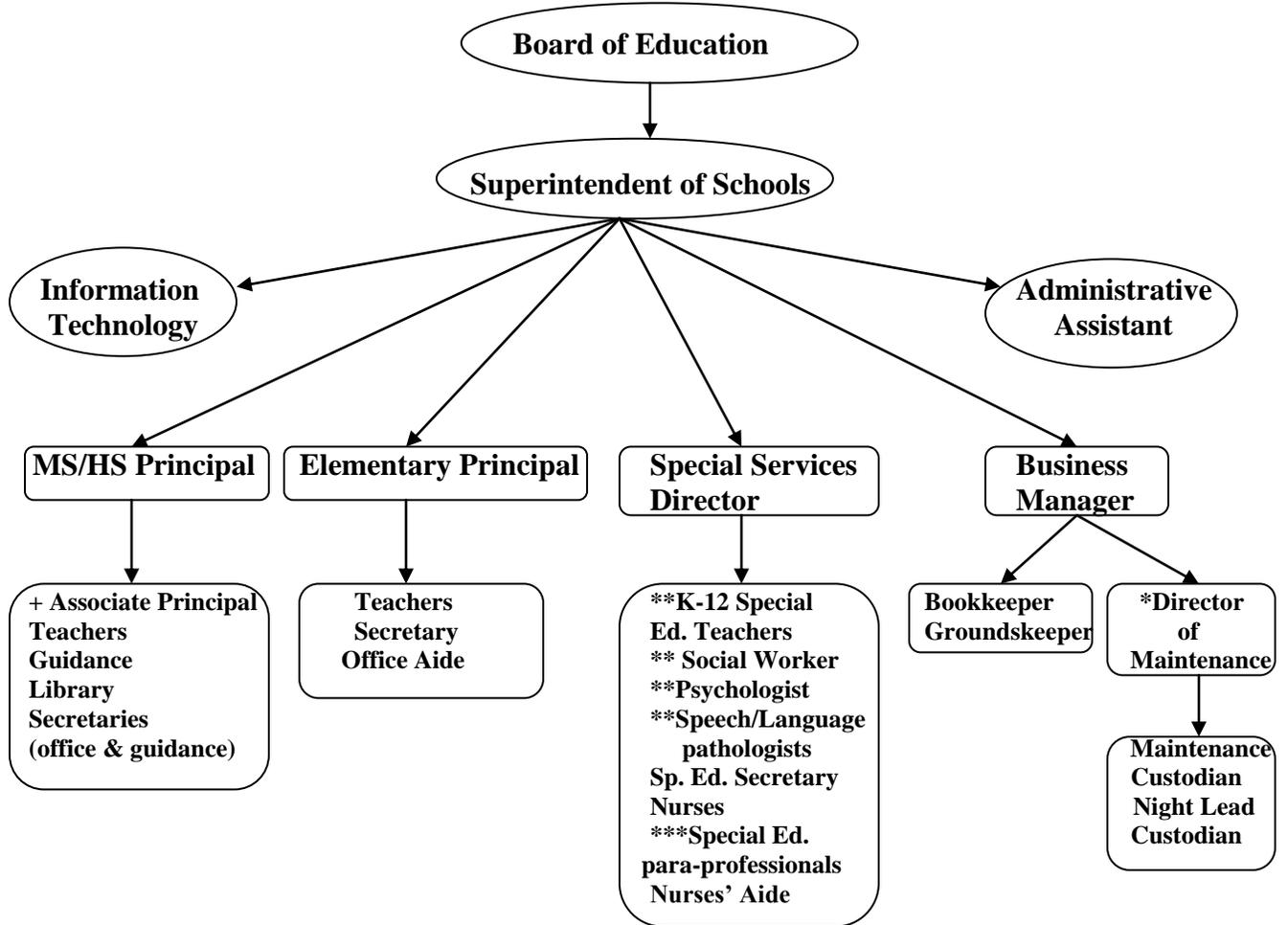
In keeping with this mission, the North Stonington School District, in partnership with families and community, will provide the students with the education that will best help them to live a life of accomplishments and satisfaction in a complex and changing world. In order to meet this goal, students will acquire skills that foster critical and creative thinking, effective communications, and responsible citizenship. The district has put into place long-range planning for increased academic rigor and accomplishments as the utilization of advanced technology. In addition, the plans include expansion of academic offerings and facilities. In order to meet our goals and fulfill our mission, our efforts must be embraced by all.

### All Students Will Learn At their Highest Potential

- With Long-range Planning
- With Academic Support
- With Fiscal Support



**Organizational Chart**  
Adopted March 9, 2005, Revised Summer 2009



+ The Associate Principal shares the evaluation of teachers with the Principal.  
 \* The Director of Maintenance oversees and evaluates the custodians, maintenance, and night lead custodian.  
 \*\* The Special Services Director works in conjunction with the building principals and Associate Principal (certified employees).  
 \*\*\* The Special Services Director works in conjunction with the building principals and Associate Principal (non-certified employees).

## **FUNDING**

The primary source of funding for the North Stonington Board of Education is through local property taxes. In addition, funding is received from the State of Connecticut in the form of various educational or technology grants (e.g., ECS, student transportation) and the federal government through title grants, specifically, Title I, Title IIA, Title IID, Title IV, and IDEA. Occasionally funding is received from private sources to support specific student activities. The town of North Stonington also provides many “in kind” services such as snow removal and parking lot repairs/maintenance. The town’s Permanent School Planning and Building Committee also provides funds for repair projects outside the scope of normal building maintenance.

## **HIRING**

The North Stonington Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of a person’s protected class status under applicable law (please refer to the Equal Employment Opportunity policy set forth above).

Job openings are first posted internally. For openings which are not filled internally, advertisements may be placed in major newspapers in the North Stonington area. Certified positions are also posted on the Connecticut REAP website. The level of applicant review ranges from supervisor and Superintendent to committee and Superintendent depending upon the position to be filled. The ultimate hiring authority rests with the Superintendent (hiring authority for the position of Superintendent rests with the Board of Education).

All applicants are required to fully complete the appropriate North Stonington Board of Education application form. Falsifying information on the application will be grounds for removing the applicant from consideration. If after an employee has been hired it is determined that false information was provided on the employee’s application or during the Human Performance Evaluation (when conducted), it shall be cause for immediate dismissal.

Prospective employees in certain positions will be required to complete a post-offer, pre-employment Human Performance Evaluation (HPE) to ensure the employee can adequately meet the physical requirements of the position for which he/she is being considered. Other contingencies may apply to offers of employment depending on specific facts and circumstances.

Newly hired employees will be required to submit to fingerprinting and background checks. A criminal conviction which surfaces during the background check that has not been fully disclosed on the application are grounds for immediate dismissal.

The North Stonington Board of Education is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. The North Stonington Board of Education does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin. In compliance with the *Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986* each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the *Employment Verification Form I-9* and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are re-hired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with the North Stonington Board of Education within the past three years or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid. In certain cases, depending on the nature of the documentation the employee has presented to complete the I-9, it may be necessary to re-verify his or

her employment eligibility at a later time.

It is widely accepted that employment of relatives in the same area of an organization can cause serious conflicts and problems concerning favoritism and employee morale. In these circumstances, all parties, including supervisors, leave themselves open to charges of inequitable consideration in decisions concerning work assignments, transfer opportunities, time off privileges, training and development opportunities, performance evaluations, promotions, demotions, disciplinary actions and discharge from employment. In addition, should the related parties have any conflict outside the workplace they may bring that problem to work with them, thereby creating additional concerns within the organization. While it is the North Stonington Board of Education's policy that relatives of personnel currently employed by the organization may be hired, the North Stonington Board of Education reserves the right to prohibit a direct working relationship between family members. (i.e. supervisor/employee relationship; co-workers within the same department, or any other working relationship which the company determines may cause potential conflict.)

In cases where a conflict or the potential for conflict arises, even if there is no supervisory relationship involved, the parties may be separated by reassignment or discharged from employment at the discretion of the North Stonington Board of Education.

For the purposes of this policy, a relative is defined to include: *spouses, civil union partners, parents, children, brothers, sisters, brothers- and sisters in-law, fathers- and mothers-in-law, stepparents, stepbrothers, stepsisters, stepchildren* or "*significant others.*" This policy also applies to individuals who are not legally related but who reside with another employee.

## TRAINING

**Orientation** – Newly hired teachers may be offered one day of orientation before the beginning of the school year. This is an unpaid day.

**Professional Development** – Professional development is offered during the school year.

**OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Training** – All employees are required to have OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens training on an annual basis. The training is generally provided as part of the professional development days at the opening of school.

**Educational Enhancement** - All employees are encouraged to continually improve their skills and knowledge. You should review your collective bargaining agreement (if applicable) for any educational reimbursements which may be available to you.

**Meetings and Committees** - All employees are encouraged to participate in meetings and serve on committees (such as the safety committee and the food advisory committee) as a way of both expanding your knowledge of the district's practices as well as providing valuable input.

## EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

**Notification of Assignments** – Contracts for teaching staff and letters of employment for para-professionals are sent out each year. It is the employee's responsibility to carefully review all information contained in the contracts and/or notices for accuracy. The correspondence must be signed and one copy returned to the Central Office by the due date.

**Employee benefits** - A variety of benefits are available to individuals who qualify according to the particular eligibility requirements that may apply to such benefits. A list of benefits and qualifying criteria are generally included in bargaining unit agreements or individual letters of employment.

**Job descriptions** - Job descriptions have been developed for every position in the district giving a general outline of physical responsibilities, essential functions and job qualifications. If you do not have a copy of the job description for your position, contact the Central Office.

**Employee photographs and IDs** – Every employee will be furnished a picture ID badge which must be worn at all times. Employees requiring replacement badges should contact the Central Office.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Calendar** - The calendar for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>) for the district is usually distributed in May and June. A copy is available on the district's website: [www.northstonington.k12.ct.us](http://www.northstonington.k12.ct.us). School/staff hours for each school are shown on the calendar.

**Central Office Hours** – The Central Office's normal hours of operation are 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday (except on holidays). Voice mail is available twenty-four hours a day by calling 860-535-2800. On rare occasions during vacations, the Central Office may not be staffed.

**Office/School Closings** – Closings are posted with the local radio and television stations. In addition, the district utilizes the **ConnectEd** system which notifies employees and parents via phone. It is important that employees notify the Central Office of any changes in contact information (home phone number, cell phone number, etc.) to ensure each employee is contacted.

**The Board of Education's website** - [www.northstonington.k12.ct.us](http://www.northstonington.k12.ct.us) contains a large amount of useful information including the complete publication of its Policies, Regulations, and By-Laws.

**Official Bulletin Board** - All official notices as required by law and all district job postings are located in the Central Office. No employee may remove or replace these important postings without proper authorization, or damage or deface them.

**Purchasing Procedures** – The district utilizes the purchase order method for placing orders. It is imperative that a purchase order be submitted and approved BEFORE an order for goods or services is given. Failure to do so may result in the *employee's personal liability for the purchase*. Emergency purchases which need to be made before a purchase order can be submitted require prior authorization from the Business Manager or the Superintendent. Each school utilizes its own internal form to request purchase orders from the school's office. Only orders approved at the building level will be submitted to the Business Manager or Superintendent for approval. Since checks are cut weekly on Thursday, it is imperative that if a pre-payment is required, adequate lead time is given. Purchase orders are not official until signed by either the Business Manager or the Superintendent.

**Activity Accounts** – The district maintains a separate bank account in a local bank for the purpose of conducting student activities. This account does not utilize the purchase order method; however, it has its own deposit and payment authorization forms. These forms are available in each school's office. Only payment authorization forms that have been signed by the activity's advisor and the school's principal will be submitted to the Business Manager for payment.

**Authorization to sign contracts** - In the course of scheduling student events such as proms and field trips, a vendor will often require a signed contract from the Board of Education. THE SUPERINTENDENT IS THE ONLY PERSON AUTHORIZED TO SIGN CONTRACTS ON BEHALF OF THE NORTH STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION. Should an individual employee sign a contract in violation of this provision, *that employee may become personally liable* for any damages caused during the execution or cancellation of that contract. This applies to all contracts even ones with no monetary implications.

## **PAYROLL INFORMATION**

**Pay date Schedule** - All employees are paid on Fridays on a bi-weekly basis. Pay dates are published at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup>). If you are paid on an hourly basis, it is important to note that paychecks **cannot be issued without a signed time sheet**.

**Distribution of Paychecks** – Unless exempted by collective bargaining agreement terms, employees are required to use the direct deposit system. Using this system, your net check is deposited directly to your bank. A form to initiate direct deposit must be completed with the bookkeeper. You will receive a voucher showing the details on each pay day. All new direct deposit requests take at least one payroll period for processing (called “pre-noting”). Pay checks and vouchers will be delivered to the appropriate buildings on payday; those not employed on a daily basis will have their checks/vouchers mailed to their address of record. In the case of school closure, paychecks will be available on the next school day.

**Payroll Information Changes** - It may become necessary from time to time to change personal information on file in the payroll office (i.e. new address, change in federal or state withholding, dependent additions/deletions to medical coverage, etc.). Please contact the Central Office to effect these changes.

**Pay Deductions** - The law requires that the North Stonington Board of Education make certain deductions from *every* employee’s compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state and local income taxes. The employer must also deduct Medicare and/or Social Security taxes on each employee’s earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security “wage base.”

**Exempt and Non-Exempt Employees** – Certain employees, by the nature of the duties they perform, are exempt from certain wage and hour laws. As a general rule of thumb, hourly employees are non-exempt; however, if you have a question concerning your status, please contact the Central Office.

**Complaint and Correction Procedure** - Every precaution is taken to ensure that employees, both exempt and non-exempt are paid correctly, and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday. Furthermore, it is our policy to comply with the salary basis requirements of state and federal wage and hour laws pertaining to exempt employees. We prohibit improper deductions from the salaries of employees. As a general matter you should always feel free to check with the bookkeeper if you have any questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated.

If an employee believes there are errors in his/her pay, in particular any improper deduction from the salary of an exempt employee, the bookkeeper should be notified promptly. The Board will make every effort to adjust an actual error promptly, including reimbursement for an improper deduction.

**Retirement Savings Plan (403b)** – The North Stonington Board of Education 403(b) Plan is a tax-deferred way to save for retirement. In most cases, employees can contribute funds to this program on a pre-tax basis. This means that most employees who are at least 21 years of age may authorize deductions to be taken directly from their paycheck prior to any federal or state withholding taxes. Details on the 403(b) plan may be obtained from the Business Manager.

**Time Sheets** - All hourly employees are required to submit time sheets according to the published pay date schedule. Time sheets are due in the Central Office by 3:00 p.m. on Monday of pay week. **Please note: you may have an earlier deadline for submitting your time sheet to your supervisor.** All time sheets require the employee's signature and that of the supervisor. Additional hours beyond a normal work week should be pre-approved and listed on the bottom of the time sheet in the space provided. All sick days, emergency leave, etc. should also be noted on the time sheet.

**Absences** - A "Report of Absence" form is used for all work missed even if a substitute is not required. This form should be completed by the employee and submitted to his/her supervisor. It is then passed on to the Central Office. Each employee should verify that the time has been approved prior to taking time off. Since the procedure involves many steps, it is important to submit the Report of Absence form as soon as possible (ideally, allow at least three days for processing).

**Work Schedules** - Work schedules are developed based on many factors including school/office hours, budgetary restrictions, student/classroom needs, etc. Work hours/days are determined by the Superintendent and/or contract provisions.

**Concerns, Issues, Conflict Resolution** - From time to time, issues arise within the course of employment that may need to be addressed in a systematic way. Bargaining unit agreements and the Board of Education Policy Manual detail established procedures for dealing with personnel issues, disciplinary actions/ terminations.

**Supplemental Workers' Wage Benefits** - The North Stonington Board of Education does not offer supplemental wage benefits such as salary continuation.

## PERSONNEL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

**Employee Information Form** - Each year, district employees will be asked to complete an information sheet. This information is kept confidential and is used in case of an emergency to contact family or friends. Forms should be completed and returned to the school's office or the Central Office as appropriate.

**Crisis/Emergency Plan** - The North Stonington Board of Education has an emergency crisis plan which includes site teams. A complete description of the plan may be obtained from a building administrator or from the Central Office.

**Work-related Injuries** - An employee who is injured while performing job-related duties may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits. Certain steps must be taken to substantiate the potential claim:

1. The employee must immediately notify his/her supervisor of the injury, the circumstances surrounding the injury, and the nature of the injury. Failure to do so may result in the delay or potential denial of Workers' Compensation benefit by the Board of Education's Workers' Compensation carrier;
2. The supervisor must immediately notify the Central Office and forward to the Central Office, the completed Employee Injury Report **THE SAME DAY THE INJURY OCCURS**;
3. The Central Office must call in the claim to the Workers' Compensation insurer **THE SAME DAY THE INJURY OCCURS**;
4. The employee may receive a form 30C, Notice of Claim for Compensation from the State of Connecticut. If the employee elects to complete the 30C, it **MUST BE TURNED IN TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE ONLY**.

For a non-serious or non-life threatening injury, the employee shall be directed to his/her own physician or walk-in clinic for initial care or the district may direct the employee to receive care at a facility or physician which has been declared by the district as a designated Initial Care Provider. Should the district adopt a Preferred Provider Network (PPN), continuing non-emergency care will be provided through Preferred Provider physicians subsequent to visiting the established Initial Care Provider.

If the injury is serious or life threatening, the employee shall be transported by qualified medical personnel in a medically approved vehicle (e.g., ambulance, med-evacuation helicopter) to the nearest hospital or facility capable of treating the injury. The Workers' Compensation insurer must be notified if medical transportation was required.

**Return to Work Program** – Employees of the North Stonington Board of Education who are or could be on leave of absence from their duties as a result of a work related illness or injury, may be eligible for the Return to Work Program upon written certification of a medical care provider. The medical care provider must certify that the employee may return to work with restrictions on physical requirements of the job in question and that those restrictions are not expected to last for more than 30 days. When an employee is approved for participation in the Return to Work Program, primary consideration will be given to job placement within the employee's normal job duties. A critical consideration is to place the injured employee in a position to perform productive work that is both useful to the North Stonington Board of Education and achievable within the limits of the restrictions placed on the employee.

**Safety Committee** - The North Stonington Board of Education strives to maintain a safety committee to review safety issues throughout the district and to be proactive in improving the safety of both employees and students. Committee members and meeting minutes will be posted in the school offices as soon as they become available. Anyone interested in joining a committee should contact the Central Office. Issues and concerns can also be brought to any member of the committee.

**Travel Reimbursement** - Occasionally, employees may be required to use personal vehicles for work related travel. Travel reimbursement forms are to be filled out and forwarded to either the school secretary or special services secretary as appropriate within one month of travel completion. Approval prior to travel must be obtained from the Superintendent to be eligible for reimbursement. June vouchers must be submitted no later than June 25th.

**Jury Duty** - The North Stonington Board of Education encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving Jury Duty when required. Regular, full-time employees are allowed up to five days of paid jury duty leave under Connecticut Law. Jury duty pay will be calculated on the employee's base pay rate times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on the day of absence.

If an employee is required to serve jury duty beyond the period of paid jury duty leave, he or she may use any available paid time off (i.e., vacation benefits) or may request an unpaid jury duty leave of absence.

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate the employee's absence. Of course, the employee is expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

Either the North Stonington Board of Education or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in the North Stonington Board of Education judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties.

The North Stonington Board of Education will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full term of the jury duty absence.

Accrual for benefits calculations such as vacation, sick leave or holiday benefits, will not be affected during unpaid jury duty leave.

## **RULES**

The North Stonington Board of Education has established rules and regulations to ensure a safe workplace environment. Employees observing violations of these rules should immediately report the activity to a building principal or the Central Office.

**Employee Conduct** - The Board reaffirms one of the oldest beliefs in education: One of the best methods of instruction is that of setting a good example. The Board expects that the employees of the district will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior which will contribute toward an appropriate school atmosphere. To that end, in dress, conduct, language and interpersonal relationships, all employees should recognize that they are being continuously observed by students while on duty or attending school functions and that their actions and demeanor will be reflected in the conduct of the students.

All employees have the responsibility to become familiar with, and abide by, the laws of the State of Connecticut as they may affect their work, the policies of the North Stonington Board of Education, and the administrative regulations designed to implement them. All employees shall be expected to carry out their assigned duties, support and enforce the Board's policies and administrative regulations, submit required reports, protect the Board's property, and oversee and contribute to the education and development of students.

**Smoking, Drinking and Use of Drugs on School Premises** - All district employees are hereby notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, consumption and/or use of illicit drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco is prohibited on school premises and during any school sponsored activities. Consumption/use of alcohol/drugs includes employees exhibiting evidence of having consumed alcohol/drugs. Compliance with these standards of conduct is mandatory. Employees who violate them will be subject to disciplinary action, consistent with applicable state and federal laws, and referral for criminal prosecution. Disciplinary action will be consistent with published Board of Education Policies.

**Weapons** - All dangerous instruments and weapons of any kind (guns, knives, etc.), regardless of any lawful license to possess or carry the same, are prohibited on school property, on student transportation vehicles, and at school-sponsored activities. Such instruments and weapons shall be confiscated. Any violation will be reported to the police. Appropriate disciplinary or legal action shall be pursued by school officials. This does not apply to a peace officer, as defined in subdivision 9 of Section 53a-3 of the Connecticut General Statutes while engaged in the performance of his/her official duties. Any employee violating this policy shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Any other person violating this policy shall be considered a trespasser and subject to arrest.

**Crossing Route 2** – A tunnel is provided for safe access between the two sides of Route 2. Employees walking are required to use this tunnel – there are NO crosswalks even at the traffic signal in front of the Elementary School. Because of the extreme danger, any employee observed crossing Route 2 is subject to disciplinary action.

**Employee/Student Non-Fraternalization** - It is the policy of the North Stonington Board of Education to prohibit any sexual relationship, contact or sexually nuanced behavior or communication (verbal or non-verbal) between an employee and a student, while the student is enrolled in the school system. The prohibition extends to students of the opposite sex or the same sex as the employee, and applies regardless of whether the student or the employee is the initiator of the behavior and whether or not the student welcomes or reciprocates the attention.

**Employee Relationships** – Relationships between employees which exist or develop where one employee in the relationship is in any way involved in the evaluation or assignment of the other employee should be disclosed to the Superintendent immediately.

**Prohibition of Workplace Violence** - Employees shall have the right to work in an environment free from violence. Employees are prohibited from committing any act of violence on or towards another person on school property. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees shall have the right to work in an environment free from threats of violence and from verbal abuse. This includes the use of racial epithets. An employee

who witnesses or is subject to an act of violence, use of threatening language, or verbal abuse as described in this policy shall immediately notify his/her supervisor of such act. An employee may choose to directly notify the Superintendent. Any supervisor so notified shall take any necessary remedial measure to ensure the safety of employees and other persons in the immediate area and shall immediately inform the Superintendent. The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall promptly investigate the report and take all necessary appropriate actions.

**Nondiscrimination** - The North Stonington Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, or handicapping condition.

**Sexual and Protected Class Harassment** - Sexual harassment, or harassment based on a person's protected class status under applicable law, is forbidden by federal and state law and by the North Stonington Board of Education and will not be tolerated in the North Stonington School District. Employees and students are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful and courteous to fellow employees and students and to the public. If an employee believes that he/she is being or has been subject to behavior that could constitute sexual harassment or harassment on a protected class basis, that person should immediately inform the alleged harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome, and unacceptable, offensive, in poor taste, unprofessional, and/or highly inappropriate and that such behavior must stop. It is recognized, however, that victims of sexual harassment or harassment on a protected class basis are not always able to express their feelings to their harasser or to others. In all cases, the responsibility for ending the harassment rests with the harasser, not the victim. As soon as an employee or student feels that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment or harassment on a protected class basis, he or she should make a written complaint to the Civil Rights Coordinator or his or her supervisor, and/or the School Principal. The complete sexual harassment policy is contained as an appendix to this handbook. Employees must annually read the policy and complete, sign, and return the Acknowledgement Form contained in the appendix.

**Harassment** - The district strives to provide a safe, positive working climate for its employees. Therefore, harassment, in any form, will not be tolerated. This applies to all students, employees, Board of Education members, parents, vendors, contracted individuals, volunteers, and visitors who are on school property, on buses operated for the district, while attending or engaged in school activities, and while away from the school if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the district. If an individual believes that he/she is being or has been harassed, that person should immediately inform the harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive, in poor taste, unprofessional, or highly inappropriate. The individual should also report the behavior to his/her own supervisor or the Superintendent of Schools if the accused individual is the individual's supervisor.

**Computer Use, E-mail and Internet Policy** - The Board of Education believes access to the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique educational resources. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, collaboration, and communication. Whoever uses the North Stonington Public Schools Wide Area Network System shall behave ethically and comply with the policies and administrative regulations issued by the Superintendent of Schools. Employees are advised that the use of e-mail and/or Internet correspondence shall not be abused. All school computer systems, including equipment and operating systems are the sole property of the North Stonington Board of Education. Use of these computer systems, including internet access and email, is NOT private. **As such, the user does not have an expectation of privacy in his/her use of such systems and the district reserves the right to monitor the use of such systems to ensure compliance with Board of Education policies and use guidelines.** The complete Network-Internet Acceptable Use policy is contained as an appendix to this handbook. Personal computers and mobile electronic devices brought into the school district are also subject to the same restrictions as they pertain to the files they contain. They **MAY NOT** be connected to the District's network. Employees must annually read the policy and complete, sign, and return the Employee Computer and Internet Use Acknowledgement Form contained in the appendix.

**Telephones & Fax Machines** – Employees are reminded that the Board of Education's phones (including wireless devices) and fax machines are for official business only. Personal toll calls which cannot be placed on a personal cell phone may be made through the front office at each school using an employee's phone card or charged to the employee's home phone number. Faxes of a personal nature should be sent at a commercial establishment or bank which offers the service. Personal calls discovered on the Board's phone bill will result in reimbursement and possible disciplinary action.

**Personal Appliances** – Employees are prohibited from using any of the following personal items in any Board of Education spaces: microwaves, hot plates, refrigerators or any other heat generating or compressor containing unit. Not only do these appliances increase the utility bills, any use or malfunction which causes damage or injury may be disallowed by the Board's insurance policy and will become the responsibility of the owner of the appliance.

**Transporting Students** - Transporting students in personal vehicles is discouraged and should not be done without the permission/knowledge of the Superintendent. Student travel for field trips or other activities is governed by Board of Education Policy 6153.

**Outside Employment** - Employees may hold outside jobs as long as they meet the performance standards of their job with the North Stonington Board of Education. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to the North Stonington Board of Education's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements. If the North Stonington Board of Education determines that an employee's outside work interferes with their performance or their ability to meet the requirements of the job with the North Stonington Board of Education, as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with the North Stonington Board of Education. Outside employment that constitutes a conflict of interest is prohibited. Employees may not receive any income or material gain from individuals *outside* the North Stonington Board of Education for materials produced or services rendered while performing their jobs for the North Stonington Board of Education

## **YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993 (As Amended November 17, 2008)**

**Basic Leave Entitlement** - FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees in a 12 month period for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

**Military Family Leave Entitlements** - Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

The 12-month entitlement period for family or medical leave is measured on the basis of a "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave.

**Benefits and Protections** - During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

**Eligibility Requirements** - Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least 12 months (need not be consecutive, but must occur in the preceding 7 years prior to FMLA leave), for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

**Definition of Serious Health Condition** - A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care

provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. The first (or only visit to the health care provider) must occur within 7 days of the commencement of the incapacity, and the second, if required to establish FMLA eligibility, within 30 days. Chronic conditions require at least two visits to a health care provider per year. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

**Use of Leave** - An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

**Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave** – Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

**Employee Responsibilities** - Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a fully completed medical certification on the appropriate Department of Labor form and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

**Employer Responsibilities** - Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer must notify the employee.

**Unlawful Acts by Employers** - FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

**Enforcement** - An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

## COBRA NOTICE

This notice is to inform you of your rights to continue health coverage at 102% of the insurance cost if you, your spouse or a dependent child lose the coverage because of a qualifying event.

**Qualifying Event** - A qualifying event is any of the following events that causes you or a dependent child to lose coverage under the district's health plan:

1. a covered employee's termination of employment for any reason other than gross misconduct, or reduction in hours fewer than the number required for plan participation;
2. a covered employee's death;
3. a covered employee's divorce or legal separation from the spouse;
4. a covered employee's entitlement to Medicare under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act; or
5. a covered child's loss of dependent status under the plan.

**Continuation of Coverage** - If a covered individual has a qualifying event, continuation of the health coverage in effect at that time may be continued. However, persons covered by Medicare under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act on the day before a qualifying event are not eligible to continue coverage.

If coverage is continued, all expenses accumulated toward deductibles will be credited as if the qualifying event never took place. No proof of insurability will be required in order to continue coverage. During open enrollment periods, an individual with continuation coverage has the same rights as active employees to change his/her coverage or to add or eliminate coverage for family members.

**Electing to Continue Coverage** - If you, your spouse or dependent child has a qualifying event, we will re-notify you of your continuation rights. At that time, you will have at least 60 days to decide whether you want to continue your health coverage through the district's plan. This election period will end 60 days from the **latter** of the date the coverage would otherwise terminate or the district notifies you of your continuation rights.

For families that lose coverage, each family member can separately elect coverage. However, unless otherwise specified in the election, an employee's election to continue coverage will be deemed to include an election of continuation for any dependent child covered by the plan. An election on behalf of a family member is binding on the family member.

Although an employee and spouse can continue coverage on behalf of other family members, they cannot decline coverage on behalf of other family members. For example, if an employee declines continuation coverage, the spouse or dependent children can elect to continue the coverage.

**Maximum Coverage Period** - In general, you can continue coverage for up to 18 to 36 months, depending upon the qualifying event.

If the qualifying event is employment termination or reduction in hours, the maximum period of time

you can continue coverage is 18 months from the date of the qualifying event. For other qualifying events, the maximum period is 36 months.

**More than One Qualifying Event** - There may be times when a spouse or dependent child can have more than one qualifying event. A second qualifying event occurs if these three conditions are met:

1. the first event is the employee's employment termination in hours;
2. the second event is a sort that gives rise to 36 months of continuation coverage (e.g. a covered employee's death or divorce); and
3. If a second qualifying event occurs, we will extend the maximum coverage period from 18 months to 36 months, measured from the date of the first qualifying event.

**Termination of Continuation Coverage Before the Maximum Period Ends** - Continuation coverage will be terminated for any covered person before the end of the maximum coverage period for any one of these reasons:

1. Payment for the person's coverage is not received in a timely manner;
2. The person becomes covered by another group health plan, not maintained by the district, if that new plan does not limit or exclude coverage for any pre-existing medical condition of the person
3. The person becomes entitled to Medicare benefits; or
4. The district ceases to provide group health plan coverage for all employees

**Paying for Continuation Coverage** - Individuals electing continuation coverage must pay the full cost of the coverage, plus 2% for administrative expenses. The first payment must be received no later than 45 days after the date continuation coverage is elected.

Information on the cost of continuation coverage and the payment terms will be provided to individuals who have a qualifying event.

**Special Provisions to the Disabled** - Persons who Social Security determines are disabled, under Title II or XVI of the Social Security Act, at the time of employment termination or reduction in hours can request an extension in the maximum coverage period from 18 to 29 months.

To obtain this extended coverage, you must notify the Human Resources Department of Social Security's disability determination unit within 60 days of the termination and 18 months of the qualifying event.

If you receive this extended coverage, you must pay 102% of the full cost of the continuation coverage for the first 18 months. After 18 months, the required payments will increase from 102% to 150% of the full cost of coverage.

If you receive the extended coverage, you are required by law, to notify the district that you are no longer disabled within 30 days of any final determination made by Social Security. Once notified, your extended coverage will be terminated effective the first month beginning more than 30 days after

Social Security's determination.

**Notice** - Employees or their families must notify the employer in the event of divorce, legal separation, or when a child no longer qualifies as a covered dependent under the plan or within 60 days of the date coverage would otherwise terminate.

Please contact the Central Office if you have questions regarding this notice.

## NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.**

**PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal program that requires that all medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by us in any form, whether electronically, on paper, or orally, are kept properly confidential. The Act gives you significant new rights to understand and control how your health information is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities that misuse personal health information.

As required by HIPAA, we have prepared this explanation of how we are required to maintain the privacy of your health information and how we may use and disclose your health information.

We may use and disclose your medical records only for each of the following purposes:  
Treatment, payment and health care operations.

- Treatment means providing, coordinating, or managing health care and related services by one or more health care provider. An example of this would include case management.
- Payment means such activities as obtaining reimbursement for services, confirming coverage, billing or collection activities, and utilization review. An example of this would be adjudicating a claim or reimbursing a provider of an office visit.
- Health care operations means such business-related activities as conducting quality assessment and improvement activities, auditing functions, cost-management analysis, and customer service. An example would be an internal quality assessment review.

We may also create and distribute de-identified health information by removing all references to individually identifiable information.

We may contact you to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Any other uses or disclosures will be made only with your written authorization. You may revoke such authorization in writing and we are required to honor and abide by that written request, except to the extent that we have already taken actions relying on your authorization.

You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information, which you can exercise by presenting a written request to the Privacy Officer:

- The right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information, including those related to disclosures to family members, other relatives, close personal friends, or any other person identified by you. We are not, however, required to agree to a requested restriction. If we do agree to a restriction, we must abide by it unless you agree in writing to remove it.

- The right to reasonable requests to receive confidential communications of protected health information from us by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- The right to inspect and copy your protected health information.
- The right to amend your protected health information.
- The right to receive an accounting of non-routine disclosures of protected health information.
- We have the obligation to provide and you have the right to obtain a paper copy of this noticed from us at least once every three years.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information.

This notice is effective as of April 1, 2004 and we are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices currently in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices and to make the new notice provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. We will post and you may request a written copy of a revised Notice of Privacy Practices from this office.

You have recourse if you feel that your privacy protections have been violated. You have the right to file a formal, written complaint with us at the address below, or with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, about violations of the provisions of this notice or the policies, procedures, or regulations of our office. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Please contact us for more information:      For More information about HIPAA or to file a complaint:

Roberta McCarthy  
 Administrative Assistant  
 North Stonington BOE  
 297 Norwich-Westerly Road  
 North Stonington, CT 06359  
 860-535-2800, ext 2

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
 Office for Civil Rights  
 200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20201  
 (202) 619-0257  
 Toll Free: 1-877-696-6775

The district maintains the following health plans (July 1, 2008)  
 Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield  
 Delta Dental of Rhode Island

## **PRIVACY PROTECITON POLICY – SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS**

The Board may collect certain personal information, including Social Security numbers, in the course of its operations. It will take what are believed to be reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of the Social Security numbers collected.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

### **NORTH STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 4118.112, 4218.112**

Sexual harassment is forbidden by federal and state law and by the North Stonington Board of Education and will not be tolerated in the North Stonington Public Schools. Employees and students are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful and courteous to fellow employees and students and to the public.

Should sexual harassment be alleged, Board policy dictates that it shall be thoroughly investigated, that there shall be no retaliation against the victim of the harassment, and that the problem/concern shall be appropriately addressed.

Each year, or more frequently if the Board deems it appropriate, employees will receive training regarding sexual harassment and related matters. Such training may include a review of this regulation and procedures, discussion, films, or other activities.

Sexual harassment is defined as “any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature”, made by someone from or in the work or education setting. Sexual harassment occurs when:

1. Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individual’s employment, participation, or progress, or
2. Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as a basis of employment or educational decisions affecting the individual, or
3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual’s work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or education environment, or
4. Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as a basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the educational institution.

#### **(End of Policy statement)**

While an exhaustive list is not possible, the following constitute examples of specific behaviors that, if unwelcome and of a sexual nature, could constitute sexual harassment:

1. Suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations, derogatory comments, slurs, jokes, epithets, touching, impeding or blocking movement, leering, gestures, noises, pulling at clothes, display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or cartoons, assault, rape/attempted rape.
2. Continuing to express sexual interest after learning or being informed that the interest is unwelcome.
3. Coercive sexual behavior used to control, influence, or affect the career, salary and/or work environment of another employee, such as threats of reprisal; implying or withholding support for an appointment, promotion, transfer, or change of assignment; suggesting a poor performance report will be prepared; or suggesting probation will be failed.
4. Coercive sexual behavior used to control influence, or affect the educational opportunities, grades, and/or learning environment of student, including promises or threats regarding grades,

course admission, performance evaluations, or recommendations; enhancement or limitation of student benefits or services (e.g. scholarships, financial aid, work-study job).

5. The deliberate or careless creation of an atmosphere of sexual harassment or intimidation, or a hostile or offensive working environment.
6. Inappropriate attention of a sexual nature from peer(s), i.e. student to student, employee to employee.

**Civil Rights Coordinator** - Questions, complaints, and other matters concerning sexual harassment will normally be handled by the Civil Rights Coordinator, who may be reached at 535-2800. The Civil Rights Coordinator is also responsible for compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Civil Rights Act of 1987, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Complaint Procedure** - If an employee believes that he/she is being or has been subject to behavior that could constitute sexual harassment, that person should immediately inform the alleged harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome, and unacceptable, offensive, in poor taste, unprofessional, and/or highly inappropriate and that such behavior must stop. It is recognized, however, that victims of sexual harassment are not always able to express their feelings to their harasser or to others. In all cases, the responsibility for ending the harassment rests with the harasser, not the victim. As soon as an employee or student feels that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, he or she should make a written complaint to the Civil Rights Coordinator or his or her supervisor, and/or the School Principal. Normally, complaints should be made within thirty (30) days of the act of harassment. Complaint forms are available from the Civil Rights Coordinator, Guidance Office, and Building Principal. The complaint should state the name of the complainant and the date of the complaint, the date of the alleged harassment, the name or names of the harasser or harassers, where such harassment occurred, and a statement of the circumstances constituting the alleged harassment. Any employee or student who makes an oral complaint of harassment to personnel other than those listed above will be provided a copy of this regulation and a complaint form, and will be instructed to make a written complaint pursuant to the above procedure.

If the complainant is a minor student, the person to whom the complaint is given should consider whether a child abuse report is required by law. All complaints are to be forwarded immediately to the Civil Rights Coordinator unless that individual is the subject of the complaint, in which case the complaint should be forwarded directly to the Superintendent. If possible, within five (5) working days of receipt of a written complaint, the complainant shall be supplied with a copy of this Regulation and Procedure when necessary in order that he or she will be made fully aware of this or his/her rights and the Board's procedure to handling the complaint. If possible, within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint, the Civil Rights Coordinator shall commence an effective, thorough, objective and complete investigation of the complaint. The investigator shall consult with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information, including the complainant and the alleged harasser, any witnesses to the conduct, and victims of similar conduct that the investigator reasonably believes may exist.

The investigation shall be free of stereotypical assumptions about either party. The investigation shall be carried on discreetly, maintaining confidentiality insofar as possible while still conducting an effective and thorough investigation. Throughout the entire investigative process, the due process rights of the alleged harasser will be upheld.

The investigator shall make a written report summarizing the results of the investigation and proposed disposition of the matter, and shall provide copies to the complainant, the alleged harasser, and, as appropriate, to all other directly concerned. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, he or she may file a written appeal to the Superintendent, who shall review the

investigator's written report, the information collected by the investigator together with the recommended disposition of the complaint to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes harassment. The Superintendent may also conduct a reasonable investigation, including interviewing the complainant and alleged harasser and any witnesses with relevant information. After completing this review, the Superintendent shall respond to the complainant, in writing, as soon as possible. If after a thorough investigation, there is reasonable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred, the district shall take all reasonable actions to ensure that the harassment ceases and will not recur. Actions taken in response to sexual harassment may include reassignment, transfer, or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

The harasser and any other employees, if appropriate, will be informed that appropriate action shall be taken if further acts of harassment or retaliation occur. If further acts of harassment or retaliation do occur, appropriate action shall be taken.

It is understood that any sexual or romantic relationships between employees of the Board and students are highly inappropriate and unacceptable, whether or not they constitute sexual harassment as defined in this regulation.

Each year copies of the sexual harassment policy and procedures will be distributed to all employees, supervisors, and students.

Nothing in this procedure shall be deemed to override inconsistent but applicable provisions of any collective bargaining agreement between the Board and an employee bargaining unit.



# North Stonington Board of Education Policy 4118.5(a)

## Network/Internet Acceptable Use Policy

**Internet Use** - The Internet is a global electronic information infrastructure. It is a network of networks used by educators, business, government, the military, organizations and private individuals. In schools and libraries, the Internet can be used to educate, inform, communicate, and entertain. As a learning resource, the Internet is similar to books, magazines, video, CD-ROM, and other information sources.

Internet access is now available in all classrooms, computer labs, and educational areas throughout North Stonington's Schools. The Board of Education believes this access offers vast, diverse, and unique educational resources. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, collaboration, and communication.

While various groups may use these resources, enrolled students, faculty, parents, and community members shall have priority. Whoever uses the North Stonington Public Schools Wide Area Network System shall behave ethically and comply with the policies and administrative regulations issued by the Superintendent of Schools.

The Board of Education shall determine usage priority. All groups and individuals shall have scheduled access times. For students, faculty, and staff, such times are routinely covered by class schedules. The school Principal or designee shall oversee the use of these resources, including the scheduling of user access. For non-school personnel, usage logs (date/times/system/etc.) shall be maintained and kept on file at the school site. Usage fees may be established by the Board of Education

Failure to comply with this policy may result in the withdrawal of Internet privileges.

The North Stonington School Board of Education recognizes the need to go forward into the twenty-first century embracing the challenge of future technology. Our students must be equipped with the anticipated technical skills to compete in tomorrow's world of information and technology. The North Stonington School District is responsible to the staff, students and community in the following areas:

- Developing a use policy for network/Internet access.
- Providing opportunities for training to effectively and appropriately use information technology.
- Ensuring that users understand that if they misuse the network/Internet they will lose their privilege.
- Discussing with users, issues of privacy, copyright infringement, e-mail etiquette, computer viruses, and intended use of the Internet resources.
- The responsibility for developing, implementing, and maintaining security procedures to ensure the integrity of individual and institutional files, including the utilization of filters where appropriate.
- Treating electronically stored information as confidential. All personnel files are confidential and will be treated accordingly. The North Stonington School District shall not examine or disclose the contents without the owner's permission unless required by legal authority or local, state or federal law.

- Placing effective technology measures that will ensure the safety and security of its students while they are using electronic communications. These measures shall include content-filtering software, email content and monitoring software, and virus protection software.

The Superintendent of Schools will appoint one or more administrators to serve as the “Internet Administrator(s)” who will be responsible for implementing this policy, establishing procedures, conducting training, and supervising access privileges.

**Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)** - CIPA became law on April 20, 2001. According to the FCC, in order to be in compliance with these new rules **[DELETE for this funding year,]** schools and libraries must certify by October 28, 2001, that they have certain policies and technology measures in place in order to attain certification. The North Stonington School District has the necessary infrastructure and technology to assure the protection of its students during their use of electronic communication media. The District uses *WebSense* to filter Internet content not deemed suitable for a K-12 environment. This policy also provides other restrictions/safeguards:

- Access by students to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web is forbidden. Teachers and aides are responsible to closely supervise their students during their use of the Internet.
- Students are not allowed to participate in chat rooms. Student email accounts will be implemented only after there is suitable software to monitor its use by school administrators and designated personnel.
- “Hacking” and other unlawful activities are strictly forbidden by any member of the North Stonington School District.
- Disclosure, use, or dissemination of any personal information concerning North Stonington’s students is unauthorized except where authorized by Board of Education policy or state law.
- Stringent measures will be maintained to restrict students’ access to harmful materials which may be encountered on the Internet and World Wide Web.

**Staff Privileges/Responsibilities** - Only those staff members and designated authorized users, with North Stonington Schools Internet Training shall be given the privilege of using the Internet.

Staff members are advised that the use of e-mail and/or Internet correspondence shall not be abused. All school computer systems, including equipment and operating systems are the sole property of the North Stonington Public School District. **Use of the North Stonington Public School District’s computer systems, including Internet access and email, is NOT guaranteed to be private. As such, the user does not have an expectation of privacy in his/her use of such systems and the North Stonington Public School District reserves the right to monitor the use of such systems to ensure compliance with school policies and use guidelines.**

**Staff members:**

- Have the privilege to access the Internet and to exchange information.
- Have a conditional privilege to request newsgroups and/or listservs from the Internet in order to facilitate real-time learning with members on the network.
- Have the privilege to send e-mail to any member on the Internet.
- Are expected to use appropriate language that is not offensive, abusive or harassing, or embarrassing to the school district and to abide by all rules of etiquette.

- Have the authorization to use their network accounts solely for the support of the educational goals of the North Stonington School Board of Education.
- Have the responsibility to closely monitor all student network and Internet activity in their classrooms and the computer labs under their cognizance. They are also required to enforce the Board's policy and required to take appropriate actions for any misuse or violation. This includes attempts to access inappropriate information, unauthorized chat activity, and "hacking."
- Have the responsibility to protect personal information regarding minors. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors are strictly forbidden.
- Shall also monitor and accept the responsibility for all material received while exercising privileges to use the Internet as an educational resource.
- Have the responsibility to maintain the integrity of the electronic mail system and to be responsible for all mail received under your user account. Users have the responsibility to report violations of privacy to an Internet supervisor.
- May not knowingly receive electronic mail containing pornographic material, inappropriate information, or text-encoded files that are potentially dangerous to the integrity of the hardware on school premises.
- Should realize all files and programs on the computer belong to someone. Users may not modify, erase, rename, or make unusable anyone else's files or programs.
- May not intentionally introduce a computer virus.
- May not use the network for financial or commercial gain.
- May not intentionally damage the system, damage information not belonging to the user, misuse system sources, or allow others to misuse system sources.

Staff users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include the following:

- Be polite. Do not write or send abusive messages to others.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
- Do not reveal a personal address or phone number or those of students or colleagues.
- Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private.
- Use the "subject" line, and make it as descriptive as possible.
- Include your signature at the bottom of e-mail messages. Your signature footer should include your name, position or grade level, school, and Internet address.

**Misuse of Privileges and Consequences** - Users are held responsible for their actions and activity, as outlined in the responsibilities section above. Unacceptable use of the network will result in the suspension of user privileges. Reinstatement of privileges will be made at the discretion of the administration. In addition, where appropriate, disciplinary action up to and including discharge may result from such misuse of computer privileges.

**Student Use** - Students may use the Internet to participate in distance learning activities and to locate material to meet their educational and personal information needs. School library media specialists and teachers have a professional responsibility to work together to help students develop the intellectual skills needed to discriminate among information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels, and to evaluate and use information to meet their educational goals.

With worldwide access to computers and people also comes the availability of material that may not be considered of educational value in the context of the school setting. On a global network, it is impossible to control all materials, and a user may discover controversial information. The North Stonington Public School District believes that the educational value of information and the interaction available on this worldwide network both outweigh the risks that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the school district. One of the district's goals is to support students in the responsible use of this vast reservoir of information.

**Student Privileges** - Only those students who have returned a properly signed "Internet User Agreement and Parent Permission Form" shall be given the privilege of using the Internet. Students are advised that correspondence via the Internet is not authorized unless approved by the administration or other proper authority. Under no circumstances will access to "chat rooms" be permitted. Use of the Internet will be monitored by the administration to ensure that its use is in support of the school district's goals. Students have the privilege to access the Internet to facilitate educational growth in technology, information gathering skills, and communication skills.

**Student Responsibilities** - The use of a student account must be in support of their education in the North Stonington Schools and consistent with the educational objectives of the North Stonington School District. Since the computer systems, including equipment and operating systems, are the property of the North Stonington Public School District, students should have no expectation that their use of the North Stonington Public School District's computer systems, including Internet access and email, is guaranteed to be private. **As such, the user does not have an expectation of privacy in his/her use of such systems and the North Stonington Public School District retains the right to monitor the use of such systems to ensure compliance with school policies and use.** While exercising their privileges to use the Internet as an educational resource, they shall also monitor and accept the responsibility for all material received.

**Student users:**

- have the responsibilities of keeping all pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the network from entering the school via the Internet, and to report all violations.
- shall not knowingly receive electronic mail containing pornographic material, inappropriate information, or text-encoded files that are potentially dangerous to the integrity of the hardware on school premises.
- shall report all inappropriate materials (solicited or unsolicited) to the supervising staff member.
- student users are not to use the network for wasteful or frivolous purposes such as playing network games.
- should realize that all files and programs on the network belong to someone.
- may not erase, modify, rename, or make unusable anyone else's files or programs.

**Student users may not:**

- intentionally introduce a computer virus.
- deliberately uses the computer to annoy or harass others. For example, making accessible any obscene, abusive, or threatening messages are not allowed.
- intentionally damage the system, damage information not belonging to user, misuse system sources, or allow others to misuse system sources.

- would be considered to be inappropriate for educational use.
- use the network for financial or commercial gain.
- make any purchases over the Internet.
- shall not knowingly submit or received materials containing abusive, harassing, threatening, intimidating, vulgar or obscene materials or any materials that are objectionable in the school environment and that do not further the educational mission or goals of the school system.

**Misuse of Privileges and Consequences** - Student users are held responsible for their actions and activity, as outlined in the responsibilities section above. Unacceptable use of the network will result in the suspension of all their privileges. Reinstatement of privileges will be made at the discretion of the administrative staff. Violations of this policy may result in revocation of access to and privileges relating to the Internet or any electronic information retrieval systems. Violations of this policy by a student may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

The use of the computer system to facilitate a violation of any other policy of the North Stonington Public Schools may also lead to disciplinary action.



**NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
North Stonington, Connecticut**

**Employee Acknowledgement Form**

**Sexual Harassment Policy**

I have read, understand, and will comply with the North Stonington Board of Education's Policy on Sexual Harassment.

**Computer Network Use**

I have read, understand, and will comply with the North Stonington Board of Education's Policy on Network and Internet Use. (Newly hired employees only. Others will complete this acknowledgement annually during professional development training.)

**Employee Handbook**

I have received, read, understand, and will comply with the provisions of the North Stonington Board of Education's Employee Handbook.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return the signed and dated acknowledgement page to the Central Office no later than one week after the first day of school or within one week of being hired by the Board of Education.