

# THE GIFFORD SCHOOL

## **Parent – Student Handbook**

**2016-2017**



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## **Purpose of the Handbook**

This Parent Handbook is provided to families with students enrolled at The Gifford School in order to familiarize them with the various academic, educational, clinical and operational policies and guidelines applicable at the School. Familiarity with its contents can be helpful in many matters relating to your child's enrollment at Gifford. Please read the handbook carefully and then save it for future reference.

Please note that this Parent Handbook, as well as other Gifford School manuals, policies and procedures may be modified, amended, revised or rescinded at any time at the School's discretion, and they are not intended to give rise to contractual rights or obligations. Additionally, please be advised that students enjoy all the rights conferred under federal and state laws.

A complete set of The Gifford School's policy and procedure manuals, state and federal special education regulations, and parents' rights information are available at the school.

## **Mission Statement**

The Gifford School provides educational services in a clinical milieu to students with special academic, behavioral and emotional needs so that they may achieve their full potential. The entire School community is committed to helping students increase their self-esteem, gain academic knowledge, and develop social skills. We value a diverse community and strive to maintain a safe, accepting environment that respects individual differences and provides all community members with a sense of belonging.

## **Statement of Multicultural Competence**

The Gifford School is committed to ensuring that services to ethnically and culturally diverse children and their families are provided in a manner that reflects sensitivity and responsiveness to their educational and social needs. The Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and others in a management role at Gifford recommend that concepts of culture be integrated into every aspect of teaching, hiring and staff, assemblies, and all areas of the campus milieu.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Student Description**

Gifford is a coeducational day school serving students from age eight to high school seniors. Our students come from diverse racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds with a healthy balance of students from suburban, rural and city areas within commuting distance of Gifford.

Gifford works with students who have moderate to severe special needs who have been found eligible for special education services and are receiving services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Gifford students' learning challenges may be based in neurological, social, emotional or behavioral issues. Gifford students are of average intelligence and can manage an academically and behaviorally based day school setting.

Students who are most successful while at Gifford are those who, together with their families, actively engage in the Gifford Program.

### **ADMISSIONS PROCESS (NEW)**

For questions about the admissions process or about The Gifford School, please contact our Admissions Director Ann Fry at 781-899-9500. Gifford's admissions process is designed to help us determine the appropriateness of our program for the student. It is always our intention to admit only students who we feel have a good chance of being successful in our program.

The Gifford Admissions process begins with a referral packet (including the student IEP, testing and other pertinent data) sent by the students' school district. The packet is then screened by the Admissions staff to make an initial determination of the appropriateness of the referral. If it is determined that the Gifford School may be an appropriate placement, the LEA and parent are contacted and a student interview meeting is scheduled for the purpose of determining a good fit between the school and student. Parents may also choose to meet with the Admissions Director initially without their child to gain a better understanding our academic and therapeutic programming and how services are provided.

At the first meeting, parents are given a packet of materials including a Parent Handbook detailing school policies, code of conduct and program expectations. If after the student interview we agree with the family and the sending school district that Gifford is an appropriate placement, a formal student intake meeting is scheduled. At the intake meeting, the student and his parents/guardian participate in a structured family interview with the Admissions Director and the appropriate program Clinician. Families are asked to share information about the student's support network and who the important people are in the student's life. We brainstorm student preferences, strengths and challenges at home and in the academic setting. We also discuss the student's emotional triggers and coping strategies in the school setting. At the end of the intake, the student is asked to identify some goals for their school placement at Gifford. Gifford requires that the student successfully complete the student intake meeting before the student is admitted to the Gifford community.

A written letter of acceptance will be sent to the LEA indicating that the student has been accepted pending receipt of a signed IEP, completion of a new student registration packet and our receipt of a current physical examination (within the past 12 months), signed by the student's

physician. In addition, Gifford and the LEA will enter into a written contract governing the school's responsibilities as an out of District placement.

Once a student has been accepted the Gifford School, the student's parents and LEA discuss the Gifford School's service delivery model as part of the admissions process, and each new student's IEP is amended, as needed, to reflect Gifford's mode of service delivery.

### Intake Process (NEW)

During this process The Gifford School will make every attempt to accurately describe our program and to communicate directly about what our program offers and what our program does not offer. Similarly, we expect that the LEA and parents will be forthright in communicating pertinent information that may impact our ability to be successful with a student. If, after a student is enrolled at The Gifford School, information comes to our attention that has been omitted from a student's file and may bear adversely on our ability to provide a successful school experience for a student, we may request that the LEA convene a team meeting to review the appropriateness of the placement.

### REGISTRATION PACKET (NEW)

Prior to a student attending The Gifford School, we must have a completed registration packet on file. Students will not be permitted to attend school without a current physical examination, immunization record, and signed Permission for Emergency Medical Treatment form. *The following information is obtained through the student registration packet:*

### Packet materials: (NEW)

1. Student and Family Information sheet
2. Permissions and Releases Form
3. [Student Records Policy Acknowledgment \(New Students only\)](#)
4. Providers/Agency Involvement Page
5. Health Record
6. Permission for Medical Treatment
7. Medication Information (current medications)
8. Prescription Medication / Special Procedure Order Form (must be signed by BOTH licensed prescriber and parent/guardian)
9. Over-the-Counter Medication Order (must be signed by BOTH licensed prescriber and parent/guardian)
10. Student Acceptable Technology Use Policy (signed by student and parent)
11. [Signed student form acknowledging understanding of school rules and policies found in the Parent/Student Handbook \(High School only\)](#)

### **Additionally, parents/guardians must provide:**

- ❖ Current Health Examination and Immunization Record; form is provided the physician
- ❖ Proof of most recent dental exam (provided by dental office)

**The registration packet also includes a Parent/Student Handbook, which covers Gifford's policies regarding runaways, physical restraint, suspension, termination, snow days, emergency procedures, reporting of child abuse and medication administration.**

**Parents/guardians sign off in the Permissions & Releases form that they have received this handbook.**

## **EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Program Organization**

The Gifford School is comprised of a Lower School, Middle School and High School. The School will send out an organizational chart identifying staff and their respective roles. Parent(s) /guardian(s) will be informed of appropriate persons to contact regarding any concerns or questions involving their child.

### **Curriculum and Instruction (NEW)**

Gifford's curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and is implemented through language-based instruction, writing across the curriculum and content and skill strands. Teachers use a multi-modality approach, an inquiry-based curriculum, and a great deal of individualization in order to help students achieve success.

Gifford works closely with referring public schools to ensure that students are receiving instruction in content areas consistent with the public schools so that, if appropriate, students can more easily transition back to their public school programs.

Teachers work to remediate learning difficulties within the context of regular content instruction. This allows students to work on their learning skills while gaining content knowledge.

In instances where instruction may focus upon human sexuality or sex education, parents are notified via letter prior to instruction taking place.

### **Program Modifications and Support Services for Students with Limited English Proficiency**

The Gifford School is committed to working with each student's public school district to accept students and implement necessary program modifications and support services to identify and effectively serve students with limited English proficiency (LEP). The following procedures will be in place:

1. Unless the student's IEP specifies otherwise or the student has received a waiver, the student shall receive sheltered content instruction and additional instruction in English as a Second Language.
2. The student shall be afforded the same opportunity to access and participate in the program's services, activities and other benefits as all other students.
3. It is the district's obligation to determine if a student is LEP. IF a student has been placed and appears to be limited English Proficient, The Gifford School will request an evaluation be done by the sending school system. The TEAM will discuss the evaluation and decide on the program modification and needed support.
4. Eligible students at The Gifford School will receive Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) by trained and qualified teachers.



5. The Gifford School will work collaboratively with the sending school for the implementation of the student's program as outlined in the SEI program written into the student's IEP.
6. Students at The Gifford School will receive all the protections afforded by the state law (M.G.L. c.71A) and the federal law (Title IV) in this area.

### **SUPPORT FOR PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

The Gifford School works with the sending school district to provide important information to parents/guardians whose home language is not English. For any Team meeting, we collaborate with the sending district to have an interpreter present at the meeting to translate information and ensure understanding by the parent/guardian. If a request is made by the parent/guardian, we will work with the sending school district to have other important information translated into the home language.

### **School Communication**

When students have parents/ guardians with limited English language skills, Gifford will work together with the public school to ensure that all general announcements and notices of activities or other opportunities are provided to them in the primary language of the home.

### **Field Trips/Daily Recreation and Leisure Activities**

The Gifford School does not limit access to participation in extracurricular activities, such as intramurals, sports, or clubs that it sponsors on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness.

The Gifford School tries to provide a rich and varied experience for students by ensuring that they have the opportunity to participate in daily recreational and leisure activities including the use of community recreational resources where appropriate. These activities are incorporated as a regular part of student schedules. Among many other opportunities, Gifford provides the following:

- Field trips for each of Gifford's three divisions - These trips are a regular part of the program and allow students access to museums, theatre productions, sporting events and other community resources.
- Monthly "V.I.P." incentive trips in the Lower and Middle Schools - These are trips that are earned by students as part of Gifford's incentive-based behavioral program and include activities at local recreational facilities.
- Group and Elective programs that vary from year to year but are a regular and ongoing part of each student's daily schedule. These programs include activities such as the running club, community service, sports teams, technology, art, woodworking, and drama.
- Each year the school also develops a yearlong Creative Arts Program that includes on-campus presentations as well as trips to area theaters.

Parents/guardians will be requested to sign authorization and release forms for students to participate in regular and special school trips.

## **Physical Education**

Physical education is a required subject at all grade levels for all students to promote physical well-being. Other physical activities are offered throughout the program to all students.

## **Traditions**

Gifford celebrates many traditions throughout the school year. These include:

- Halloween Carnival – Students and staff put on a costume fair complete with events and prizes.
- Thanksgiving Feast – The entire school community holds a family-style dinner.
- Holiday Follies – Students and staff present plays and skits at an all-school assembly. Food is shared as part of our holiday celebration, and the school presents a gift to each of the students (staff and students do not exchange individual gifts).
- Yard Sale – Each spring the Gifford community hosts a community yard sale. Parents, students, staff and board members join in this fund-raising effort. This event is open to the public.
- High School Dance – All students from the High School plan and hold a dance usually in June. Dinner, dancing and guests are part of the tradition.
- Student Leaving – Students and staff are encouraged to verbalize their feelings around saying good-bye. Pictures and signing farewell books are sometimes used.
- Closing Exercises / Graduation – A school wide ceremony is held each June at which each student is recognized, and the graduates are in cap and gown to receive diplomas.
- Fall and Spring Parent Nights – All parents and guardians are invited to meet teachers, learn about Gifford's programs and view their students' work.

## Individual Education Programs

The Individualized Educational Program (IEP) represents an agreed upon plan for each student's education. The Gifford School implements services as agreed upon by the team and outlined in the IEP. An IEP document is developed for each student containing:

- Parent/student concerns
- Student strengths / evaluation results
- Student vision statement
- Present levels of performance
- Goals and objectives / benchmarks
- Service delivery
- Schedule modifications
- Test accommodations
- Transition related issues including a transition statement for students 14, 16 and 18

In general, Gifford staff develop a draft IEP prior to a student's annual team meeting. The team discusses each section of the draft and makes any necessary revisions. Following the team meeting, Gifford prepares a revised version of the IEP and sends it to the LEA who reviews, signs and sends the IEP to the parent/guardian(s) for signature. IEPs are updated annually, however the team may reconvene as necessary to make revisions to the IEP.

The Gifford School follows Massachusetts standards and regulations regarding IEP development and implementation. Massachusetts Parents' Rights brochures, IEP Process Guide and other state and federal education policies are available at the school.

### **Team Meeting Process**

Gifford staff, often the Educational Director and Special Education Coordinator work together with LEAs to ensure ongoing communication, collaboration and coordination of services for students. At least annually, the student's educational team (parents/guardians, school system and Gifford staff) convenes to review a student's progress. An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is developed at the annual Team meeting. Gifford's Educational Director works together with the student's public school liaison to make sure that team participants receive a letter of invitation to the meeting. Students age 14 and older are invited to participate in their team meeting.

At each annual review the Team reports on the student's progress, discusses current performance, and develops goals and objectives for the next year, including documentation of transition needs and services as appropriate. For students older than 14 and older, this includes a discussion of transition needs (Transition Planning Form). Additional information regarding expected transfer of rights at age 18 and anticipated graduation date and/or need for ongoing support services from other human service agencies are also discussed at the team meeting.

Gifford staff work with the LEA in completion of 3-year eligibility reevaluations. In general, Gifford participates with the team to determine the necessary assessments.

Gifford works closely with school districts to facilitate monitoring of student progress and allow both scheduled and unscheduled visits for monitoring purposes. Gifford staff members make every effort to keep school district liaisons informed about student progress.

### **Progress Reports**

Quarterly Progress Reports for each student are completed and sent to families and referring public schools in November, January, April and June. Progress Reports describe a student's progress towards achieving his/her goals identified at the annual team meeting. The student's team leaders and teachers, with input from staff members who see the student on a regular basis, complete this report. Progress Reports serve as a monitoring device as well as a form of communication with parents, educators and others.

Additionally, The Gifford School maintains regular contact by phone and in writing with parents and public school liaisons regarding any student-related developments, including matters involving students' behavioral plans and other program issues.

### **Grade Policy**

Students at Gifford are evaluated in light of their progress toward meeting educational goals and objectives outlined on their IEPs.

Students in the Lower and Middle Schools do not receive any letter grades. Gifford High School Students receive a "Pass/Not Passed" grade for each course taken. Classroom teachers determine grades. Criteria for passing a course are clearly explained to students at the beginning of each course. Criteria include achieving 65% or higher for class attendance, 65% or higher for in-class credit (which encompasses academic performance and peer and adult relations), and 65% or higher for homework completion. Honors status requires 80% or higher in attendance, credit and homework. High Honors requires 90% or better.

High School Grade Reports are sent at the end of each term. The Head Teacher is responsible for coordinating the completion of Grade Reports. At the end of each academic year, cumulative credits are calculated and added to each High School student's transcript. In general, High School students can earn a total of 6.75 credits per term and 20.25 credits per year.

### **Homework Policy**

Homework is assigned at a student's independent work level in order to provide skill practice and to avoid frustration. Homework is viewed as the student's responsibility, not the parents'. If a student has difficulty with his/her homework, the student should be encouraged to discuss it with the teacher at school.

In the Lower and Middle Schools, students earn rewards for homework completion. In the High School, all students are expected to complete homework on a regular and consistent basis. Minimally, students are assigned homework four nights per week rotating academic courses on a nightly basis. There are homework criteria to pass any course in the High School. High School students are expected to use study skills periods to assist them in meeting the homework criteria.

### **Educational Assessment / Participation in MCAS**

The Gifford School's Principal and Educational Director are responsible for ensuring that all enrolled students participate in state assessment programs in accordance with the student's IEP. At each team meeting Gifford teachers, public school liaison, parents and others present discuss and record what tests the student will be taking during the upcoming calendar year. Appropriate accommodations, including the Alternate Assessment, are also discussed. These are recorded on IEP page 7, and copied to a Master Assessment/Accommodation file. Prior to the administration of the MCAS testing, Head Teachers review and prepare for each student's testing, including accommodations. The Educational Director writes a letter to all parents informing them of the tests their child will be taking and when those tests will be administered. Additionally, Gifford conducts annual achievement testing to update reading and math levels.

### **Case Conferences**

Staff hold Case Conferences to discuss individual students in more depth. Discussion includes the student's performance level and progress in all areas, educational and clinical intervention strategies and program recommendations.

### **In-School Transition**

When a student's chronological age, social and/or academic skill development indicate a need for services provided at a higher program level within The Gifford School, a transition plan is developed. To initiate a transition between Gifford programs, Team Leaders make a recommendation to administrators and parents are contacted and invited in for a transition planning meeting. A successful transition requires close communication between both the sending and receiving teams and parents/guardians.

### **Transition Planning for Students Leaving Gifford**

Gifford's primary goal for all students is to educate them in the most normalized setting possible. In many cases this involves careful program planning that enables a student to return to his or her home community (though, in some cases, students may complete their high school education at Gifford and can receive a diploma or certificate of completion).

When a student leaves The Gifford School for a new placement, Gifford's staff and administrators work closely with the student, the family and any other school or agency involved to develop a transition plan that allows for a smooth and supported transition.

### **Planned Termination**

The Gifford School makes every attempt to accept students who we feel will be successful in the program, but there are times when we are unable to meet a student and/or family's needs. Planned Termination is the conclusion to a process in which the team has developed and implemented a variety of strategies to address a problem but a student is no longer able to make meaningful progress at The Gifford School. Some reasons for Planned Termination include: an ongoing inability to follow the program, a pattern of behavior that indicates need for services beyond what Gifford can provide, and the lack of a positive working relationship with parents/guardians that interferes with a child's ability to make progress.

If modifications are not successful and it is determined that a student is no longer able to make meaningful progress in the program, The Gifford School will request that the LEA convene the team for a Planned Termination meeting for the purpose of developing a termination plan that will be implemented in no less than 30 days unless all parties agree to an earlier date. Notice of this meeting will be provided to all appropriate parties at least ten days in advance of the intended date of the meeting.

The Gifford School will make every reasonable attempt to maintain the student's placement until the local Administrator of Special Education or officials of the appropriate human service agency have had sufficient time to search for an alternative placement. If, during the 30 day Planned Termination period, a student's participation in the program presents a clear and present health and safety risk, the Gifford School may then treat the termination as an Emergency Termination. Emergency Termination Procedures will be followed as described below.

### **Emergency Termination**

The Gifford School follows all procedures required under 603 CMR 28.09 (12)(b) should Emergency Termination be necessary. Emergency Termination may occur if a student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/herself or others. Some reasons for Emergency Termination include an assault on a staff member, assault on another student, destruction of property, self-injurious behavior, possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons, or any serious infraction of safety rules. In the event of such an incident, the student will be suspended from school until such time as there is an emergency team meeting. The Gifford School will notify the LEA and parent by phone and in writing of the immediate need to initiate an emergency discharge and will request that the LEA convene a team meeting as soon as possible.

The Gifford School will not terminate the enrollment of a student, even in emergency circumstances, until the enrolling public school district is informed and assumes responsibility for the student. At the request of the public school system, the Gifford School will delay termination of the student for up to two calendar weeks to allow the public school district the opportunity to convene and emergency team meeting or conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination. **Termination of enrollment may be delayed longer than two calendar weeks upon the mutual agreement of The Gifford School and the school district.**

For both Planned and Emergency Terminations, the decision to terminate a student is always made by school administrators in consultation with relevant Gifford Staff and may also include consultation from an independent source to determine the level of health and safety risk. The final determination to terminate a student is made by the Executive Director.

### **Graduation**

Gifford follows State guidelines in granting high school diplomas and certificates. Students may opt for a Gifford diploma or one from their sending school. We work closely with students' public school systems to ensure that students have completed all graduation standards.

In order for students to receive a Gifford diploma, they must have completed all required course work and passed the 10th grade MCAS in English language arts and mathematics. A transcript of credits is maintained for each high school student.

In some circumstances, a student's participation in the high school program will be recognized by a certificate of attainment rather than a diploma.

In all cases the Team, including the student, his or her family and the LEA, will discuss plans for program attainment, including the granting of a diploma or certificate, at least one year in advance.

## **CLINICAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Milieu Therapy**

An important part of Gifford's program is our therapeutic milieu. The concept of a therapeutic milieu is to assure that all aspects of the school day are geared toward promoting healthy adaptation and personal development. The milieu is nurturing, structured and consistent. Each interaction between a staff member and a student, particularly in the area of behavior management, is handled in a well thought out, professional manner. The goal is not just behavioral compliance but to promote a positive self-image, self-control and pride in personal competency.

### **Family Work / Parent Support Groups**

Gifford School provides a variety of support services to the families of Gifford students because their involvement and assistance is seen as essential to the student's success at Gifford. Much of this work is accomplished through parent groups designed to provide support, information and social contact. In addition, crisis counseling may be provided to families, as well as longer term counseling designed to assist families with relationship building and/or behavior management techniques.

### **Individual Counseling**

A limited number of Gifford students receive counseling from a clinical staff member or from a supervised clinical intern at Gifford. The goal of counseling is to provide the student with a corrective emotional experience through the use of a therapeutic relationship. Several factors are considered in determining whether a student will receive this service at Gifford—the individual student's needs, the resources available at Gifford and the resources available in the student's local community. Many Gifford students receive counseling in their local community. Privately contracted therapy services also may be available through the Brookline Center, a private mental health clinic. Gifford clinicians will communicate with outside therapists and invite them to meetings when appropriate.

### **Case Monitoring**

Each student at Gifford has a designated case monitor who is a Gifford staff member, or social work intern. The case monitor collects and shares pertinent information regarding a student with his/her Gifford team; facilitates planning to make sure the student's needs are being met; and maintains regular contact with the student and the student's parents. Team Leaders supervise case monitors.

### **Confidentiality**

The right to privacy for all Gifford students and their families is consistently protected. No Gifford staff member, intern or volunteer is allowed to discuss or disseminate any information pertaining to a student or his/her family outside of The Gifford School without permission.



### **Suspected Abuse and Neglect / 51-A Reports (NEW)**

State law mandates that Gifford staff members must report any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect. Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a child, enrolled at The Gifford School, is suffering physical or emotional injury as a result of neglect or abuse (including sexual abuse) must immediately notify their supervisor or an administrator, and they will notify the Executive Director, or in his absence, the Clinical Director or Principal for appropriate action. Obligation to report extends to all instances of suspected child abuse or neglect whether occurring on or off The Gifford School's premises. If determined, a report is made alleging child abuse or neglect, the Clinical Director will file a 51-A report by phone with the appropriate office of the Department of Children and Families as soon as possible, and submit a written report within 48 hours. If the report involves alleged activities of a staff member, the Executive Director will take appropriate action. All employees must cooperate fully with an investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect.

### **Professional Relationships**

One of the most important tools at Gifford is the relationship that is formed between students, their families and our staff. In order to be effective, however, we must respect all professional boundaries. Specifically all Gifford staff adhere to the following principles:

- 1) Staff time spent with students will be during school hours only –not in the evening, on weekends or in the summer, unless it is a school sponsored activity.
- 2) Clinical and educational staff do not consider Gifford students or their families personal clients. This professional relationship ends when either the student or staff member leaves the school.
- 3) Any activities outside of the normal school program must be approved by the appropriate team leaders and/or administrators.

## Emergency Procedures

### **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS      EMERGENCY 911**

Weston Police: 781/893-4800

Weston Fire: 781/893-2372

Newton-Wellesley Hospital Emergency Dept.: 617-243-6193

### **Emergency Readiness Management (NEW)**

The Gifford School has an emergency response plan in place for fire, medical and psychiatric crises including a runaway procedure. Additionally, in collaboration with our local law enforcement officials, we have established a lockdown response to keep students, staff and visitors safe in the event there is a threat in progress or imminent on campus. When the school is planning a drill, students are informed and parents/guardians are notified in advance. For additional information, please contact the school Principal.

### **Lockdown Response (NEW)**

A lockdown is a RESPONSE when there is an immediate threat to anyone in the building. Staff, students and visitors are secured in classrooms and other designated rooms throughout the building and ARE NOT allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved. The purpose of a lockdown is to keep staff and students safe. Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to modify the procedure and let common sense prevail.

### **Emergency Procedures/FIRE**

In case of fire, a fire alarm will sound. All staff and students are to follow the posted evacuation routes and procedures, leave the buildings immediately, and congregate in the basketball court and playing fields-NOT in the driveway or near any of the buildings. Classes should stay together. After the Fire Chief gives the "All Clear," everyone can return to the buildings. In the case of a pulled alarm, the School will determine possible consequences for any student involved. There could be a charge for false alarms.

### **Emergency Procedures / MEDICAL (NEW)**

All serious accidents must be reported immediately to the School Nurse. The Nurse will immediately attempt to contact the student's parents/guardians and if appropriate, have them take responsibility for procuring treatment. If, in the Nurse's assessment, the student should receive immediate medical attention, the Weston Fire Department ambulance will be called. A staff member from Gifford will accompany a student to the hospital. The staff member should bring the student's Medical Release Form to the hospital. To complete the process, the administration should be informed, an Accident Form should be filled out, the referring school district notified, a Form 2 should be completed following the Form 2 Checklist, and sent to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), as well as a phone call made to DESE. A Record of Treatment should be returned from the hospital. Any state agency involved in the care and treatment of the child should be notified by telephone and letter.

### **Emergency Procedures / PSYCHIATRIC (NEW)**

When there is a psychiatric emergency, notify an administrator. It is a psychiatric emergency when a student makes an attempt to seriously hurt him/herself, when staff assess a student's

behavior to be significantly out of character, or when normal attempts by staff to bring a student under control are not effective. In the event of a psychiatric emergency, parents will be contacted immediately by the Clinical Director, Principal or Executive Director. Other clinical service providers (for example, a student's therapist) also will be notified, if appropriate.

Program Leaders are responsible for informing program administrators in the event of a serious incident. It is the responsibility of program administrators, generally the Principal, to ensure that incident reports are completed and that notifications are made in a timely fashion - including notification of parents, school districts and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In general, this means immediate phone notification of parents and other safety officials, if required. In addition, an Incident Report must be completed within 48 hours. The school district must be notified, and phone contact, Form 2 and the Incident Report must be submitted to the DESE within 72 hours.

In the event of any serious incident requiring DESE notification, the Principal shall notify the Executive Director, complete an internal review of the circumstances, and ensure that all procedures have been followed appropriately.

#### **Notification of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (NEW)**

A program administrator is responsible for sending immediate notification to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education using a phone call and Form 2 for the following circumstances. A program administrator will respond to any further requests for information.

- Whenever a student runs away;
- Whenever a student is administered medication in an emergency situation;
- In case of emergency termination, such as circumstances in which the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/herself or others (A written termination summary explaining the reasons for the emergency termination is sent to the parents, the student (if over 14 years of age), local administrator of special education, officials of the appropriate human service agency and the Department.);
- The death of a student;
- The hospitalization of a student (including out-patient emergency room visits) due to physical injury at school or previously unidentified illness, accident or disorder which occurs while the student is in the program;
- The filing of a 51-A report with Department of Children and Families against a school staff member for possible or suspected abuse or neglect of a student (see also Suspected Abuse and Neglect / 51-A Reports in the Clinical Policies and Procedures section of this manual);
- Any action taken by a federal, state or local agency that might jeopardize the school's approval with DESE;
- Any legal proceeding brought against the school or employee arising out of circumstances related to the care or education of students in the school; and
- Any motor vehicle accident causing student injury

Emergency notification to all parties is made for any other incident of a serious nature that occurs to a Massachusetts' student.

Emergency notification procedures apply to ALL students enrolled in the program, including Massachusetts' students, out-of-state students and privately funded students.

Notification to all appropriate parties will be made in the case of any action taken by a federal, state, or local agency that might jeopardize the school's approval with the DESE. Further, notification to all appropriate parties is made for any legal proceedings brought against the program or its employee(s) arising out of circumstances related to the care or education of any of its students regardless of state of residence.

### **Runaway Procedures (NEW)**

In the event that a student leaves or is missing from the program without permission, staff are instructed to determine when and where the student was last seen and communicate this to a Team Leader or Team Clinician who will then communicate the circumstances to the Principal. Unless it is clinically inadvisable, the Principal will wait 30 minutes before making any phone calls. During this time, relevant program staff will be notified that a student is missing, and available staff will search the campus. After 30 minutes, or sooner if warranted, the Principal will call the Weston Police, parents and State Police. If the student returns, those called will again be notified. Following any runaway incident, an Incident Report will be written, the school district and the DESE will be notified in writing and with a phone call. The student's team will decide on consequences.

## **MEDICAL CARE (NEW)**

**For complete information on Gifford's health care policies and procedures, please refer to our [Healthcare Manual](#).**

### **Annual Physical Examination (NEW)**

Each student is required to submit an updated record of a yearly physical examination to the School before the beginning of the school year. The annual health record is filed in the student's master file and in the Health Office. Current emergency medical forms are also filed in the Main Office for emergency purposes. Every attempt will be made to ensure students' privacy.

The annual health record must include:

- Current year physical exam form including allergies and immunizations signed by physician or nurse practitioner;
- Confirmation of most recent dental exam signed by your dentist;
- List of all medications currently being taken including medications taken at home as well as those given by Gifford Nurse during school hours;
- Pertinent health/medical conditions;
- Release forms for communication with outside providers;
- Current medical emergency release forms;
- Current emergency contact numbers;
- Physician guidelines for participation in school sports;

- Physician's order and signed parental consent for any standing prescription or PRN medications that are prescribed to be administered during the school day;
- Physician's order and signed parental consent for over-the-counter medications if parents or guardians wish those to be available for their child on an as needed basis;
- Contact information for health care providers.

### **Vision/Hearing/Postural Screening**

The School provides vision and hearing screening for all students and postural screening for all students in grades 5-9 as mandated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts unless otherwise performed by child's pediatrician.

### **Health Care Program Staff and Hours**

The health program at Gifford is carried out by the School Nurse (a Registered Nurse) during school hours (8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.), the School Psychiatrist (on call at all times), and the program administrators.

In the absence of emergency or epidemic as declared by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the School does not require students to receive medical treatment when parent/guardian objects on religious grounds.

### **Illness or Injury During School Hours**

During school hours, students are directed to the School Nurse for all health care needs and first aid services.

- ***For minor cuts or scratches or complaints of illness***, the School Nurse will administer first aid or approved medication. The School Nurse may allow the student to rest in the nurse's office or other available space until able to return to the program.
- ***If a student has a fever, a contagious illness or a serious accident***, the School Nurse will contact the parent/guardian, or if unreachable, the emergency contact person, to facilitate proper treatment. If the student is too ill to remain in class, the parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the student and take him/her home or to the family physician.

### **Health Care in the School Nurse's Absence (NEW)**

In the School Nurse's absence, administrators are trained to provide first aid and health assessment and respond to medical emergencies. In some cases such as field trips, team leaders or other staff may be designated to provide first aid or medication administration.

The School Nurse provides training and relevant health care information to designated staff members who may be called on to assist students with health needs and treatments specific to identified conditions. Again for complete information on designated non-licensed school personnel and restrictions, please refer [Gifford's Healthcare Manual](#).

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

All serious accidents and emergency medical situations are reported to the School Nurse and administrator on duty. The Nurse will attempt to contact the student's parents and, if appropriate,

have parents take responsibility for procuring treatment. If, in the assessment of the Nurse and senior staff, the student should receive immediate medical attention, emergency medical services will be accessed through 911. In a life-threatening situation, 911 will be accessed immediately, followed by notification of the Nurse, administrator and parent/guardian. A staff member from Gifford will always accompany a student to the hospital. Unless otherwise directed, the student will be taken to Newton-Wellesley Hospital Emergency Department.

### **Flu Season**

The school reserves the right to ask that a student who is experiencing a flu-like illness or a case of confirmed influenza remain out of school according to guidelines set by the Massachusetts Department of Health.

### **Alcohol or Drug Intoxication**

A student who appears to have signs and symptoms of alcohol or other drug intoxication is referred immediately to the Nurse and/or an administrator for assessment. Depending on the results of the assessment, the parent/guardian may be contacted to pick the student up and arrange for an immediate drug screening. In emergency circumstances, the student will be transported by ambulance to Newton Wellesley Hospital. Follow-up care will be determined by hospital, staff, and family. Gifford will notify the student's physician, and consider both program planning and disciplinary measures.

### **Non-Smoking Policy**

The Gifford School, in compliance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, prohibits the use of tobacco products by any individual(s), including students and school personnel, within the school buildings, on the grounds, or in school vehicles. School personnel and students also are prohibited from smoking off campus when participating in school-related activities.

### **Medication Administration**

The School Nurse coordinates the administration of daily medications in school under the supervision of an administrator and the student's prescribing physician. In the absence of the School Nurse, medication administration is delegated to designate, non-licensed school personnel. An updated list of designated, non-licensed school personnel who have been trained to administer prescription medications shall be maintained and provided to parents upon request. **Under no circumstances is a student allowed to carry or self-administer prescription or over-the-counter medication. Under very limited circumstances, and with prior approval by the School Nurse, a student may be allowed to carry an inhaler *in addition* to keeping one in the Health Office.**

### **Prescription Medications (NEW)**

If a student must take prescription medication(s) during school hours, the medication(s) will be administered at Gifford only under the following circumstances:

- Written parent/guardian consent, release forms and emergency contact numbers are on file and renewed annually.
- **Written physician's order is required for all medications, and/or medication changes. Emailed or faxed medication orders or changes in orders (dose, times)**

**signed by a licensed prescriber are considered written orders. Written parental consent must also be obtained.**

### **Administration of Anti-psychotic Medication**

The Gifford School does not prescribe anti-psychotic medication; rather school personnel work in conjunction with outside psycho-pharmacologists who prescribe the medication. The School does not administer anti-psychotic medication except under the following circumstances:

- The prescribing physician will submit a written report to the School detailing the necessity for the medication, staff monitoring requirements, potential side effects and the next scheduled clinical meeting or series of meetings with student.
- Written consent is obtained from the parent to administer anti-psychotic medication or, if the parent does not give consent, the referral source shall be notified and judicial approval sought.
- No anti-psychotic prescription shall be administered for a period longer than is medically necessary, as determined by the prescribing physician.
- The school receives an original written order from the prescribing psycho-pharmacologist authorizing the administration of anti-psychotic medication during school hours. Staff providing care to the student who is receiving anti-psychotic medication are instructed in the nature of the medication.
- Students age 12 and older demonstrate that the prescribing provider has informed them as to treatment risks and potential side effects.

When a student refuses to take the prescribed dose of anti-psychotic medication, the School will alert the parent/guardian.

In a psychiatric crisis when a student who is not already prescribed an anti-psychotic medication may require emergency anti-psychotic medication, the School does not prescribe this medication. Instead, the School requests that the parent/guardian come to the school and then arranges for emergency transportation of the child to a hospital emergency room for assessment.

### **PRN Medications (NEW)**

The School Nurse administers PRN prescription medications at school only under the following conditions:

1. Parent/guardian permission is on file and renewed annually;
2. A current physician's order is on file;
3. The need and proper use for medication has been reviewed with the student; and
4. Each use of medication, dose, time, reason and effectiveness is documented on student PRN sheet in medication administration record or daily log in nurse's office;
5. **In the absence of the School Nurse, an LICSW is the only school personnel designated to assess the student's need for a psychiatric PRN medication.**

### **Specific PRN Medications (Inhalers, Epi-pens, Insulin Dependent Diabetes)**

- **Inhalers:** With written, parent/guardian consent and physician's order, inhalers may be

locked in the nurse's office and be self-administered as needed by student after review of student competency by School Nurse. **Under very limited circumstances, and with prior approval by the School Nurse, a student may be allowed to carry an inhaler *in addition* to keeping one in the Health Office.**

- **EpiPen:** With written parent/guardian consent and signed physician's orders, an EpiPen will be administered to the student whose name appears on the prescription label and may be given by any staff member, as needed, in the event of a bee sting or other serious allergic reaction. In the event that use of an EpiPen is necessary, emergency medical services will also be accessed through 911.
- **Insulin Dependent Diabetes:** Students with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus will have free access to the nurse's office for management of blood testing and insulin administration. Supplies of insulin, syringe, emergency glucose tablets and glucagon for injection should be stored in the nurse's office during the school day. Supplies must be kept in a container clearly labeled for the purpose.

### **Over-the-Counter Medications (NEW)**

Over-the-counter medications are given only with a written physician's order and signed parent consent on file. **Only** the School Nurse may administer over-the-counter medications as needed and as indicated in the written physician's order and approved in the signed parent consent. Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Tums, Pepto Bismol, Bacitracin, Caladryl/Benadryl Lotion and cough drops are kept in supply in the nurse's office. Parents must supply any other over-the-counter medications. Students are not allowed to carry or self-administer over-the-counter medications.

Parents must supply any Homeopathic medications to be given to a student during the school day. We will give them, as requested, provided a signed physician's order and written parental consent are on file. Homeopathic medications must be stored in the nurse's office. They may be self-administered by the student in the presence of the School Nurse provided a signed physician's order and written parent/guardian permission have been received.

### **Storage of Medications (NEW)**

All medications are stored in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office. If your child takes a prescription medication that must be administered at school, please be advised that:

Medications and refills must be delivered by a responsible adult to the School Nurse in a container with a current label from a physician or pharmacy with student's name, medication, dosage, route and administration times. Unlabeled medications cannot be accepted.

1. Medications and medical supplies are stored in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office, separate from any toxic substances. Provision will be made to refrigerate those medications that need it.
2. Medications and refills must be delivered by a responsible adult to the School Nurse in a container with a current label from a physician or pharmacist with student's name, medication, dosage, route and administration times. Unlabeled medications cannot be



- accepted.
3. No more than one month's supply will be stored at school at any time. A one-month supply for The Gifford School's purposes is a 20-day supply. Empty prescription bottles will be sent home to be refilled and returned to the school. The School Nurse shall document quantity of prescription medications delivered.
  4. Parent/guardian may retrieve their child's medication at any time.
  5. We will attempt to return all medications to parent/guardian at the end of the school year, or parents will be given the option to store the medication at the Gifford School Health Office in a secured and locked area. Outdated or discontinued medications may be destroyed after notifying parents.
  6. After two weeks, Gifford reserves the right to dispose of all unclaimed medications if parent/guardian has not responded.
  7. Access to the medication cabinet is available only to School Nurse and designated, non-licensed personnel.
  8. The Board of Health may inspect at any time.

## **THERAPEUTIC BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

### **Goals of Therapeutic Behavior Management (NEW)**

Gifford's approach to behavior management balances rules and structure with positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. The goals of Gifford's behavior management system are to create an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for everyone, to promote socially acceptable behavior, and to teach adaptive coping skills. We believe that therapeutic behavior management should promote competence, change, and healthy personal development.

School rules are established to guarantee a clear and simple structure for students, and to promote predictable and consistent responses on the part of adults. It is important for students to understand that there is a defined set of behavioral expectations that they must adhere to, and that it is the responsibility of all Gifford staff members to maintain those standards. Helping students understand the connection between behavior and consequences is an important part of our behavior management approach. Gifford utilizes a reward-based behavioral point sheet, with a level system that provides incentives for demonstrating pro-social behavior and adaptive coping. Meals are never withheld as a consequence. Students are never denied or unreasonably delayed a meal for any reason other than medical prescription.

Individual behavior plans are an integral part of Gifford's response to student behavior, and are intended to address each student's unique constellation of strengths and challenges. These plans are developed in collaboration with families, guardians, and outside treaters, and implemented by the Principal, Assistant Principal, or their designee.

If warranted, Gifford staff implement a variety of restrictions in an attempt to contain disruptive or dangerous behavior. Staff are trained to follow Gifford's "Hierarchy of Response" procedure, beginning with in-class responses, and culminating in separation from the community. Students may have a portion of their program restricted until they have demonstrated a readiness to reengage appropriately. The length of time for such interventions varies widely, and is determined on an individual basis. The goal is always to reintegrate students as quickly as possible.

Our behavior management policy emphasizes early intervention and providing multiple opportunities for de-escalation, to ensure that physical management is minimized. In cases of significantly disruptive or dangerous behavior, students may face suspension or expulsion in accordance with established policy.

Gifford's behavior management policies and practices are implemented and monitored by the school's Principal and Assistant Principals, and their designees. All behavior management and physical management policies are reviewed annually.

**Positive Reinforcement / Point and Level System**

Gifford’s approach to behavior management is based on extensive, systematic positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. Students receive verbal encouragement, concrete rewards and privileges for positive behavior.

The Gifford School uses a point and level system that is designed to put an external value on behavior for the purpose of helping students to internalize that value and to then self-regulate behavior. The system is set up as a continuum that moves from the Lower School and the Middle School where students receive incentives such as reward trips, to the High School where students can move off the point sheet and focus on earning high school credits and a diploma.

Students can earn from 0-3 points in the areas of adult relations, peer relations, academic performance and respect for materials during each period of the school day. Additionally, students can earn points for progress on one or two target behaviors that are tailored to the individual. Points are tracked on individual Point Sheets.

Points earned by a student each day translate to a level for the following day. Levels represent both the amount of supervision needed and the privileges earned. For example, a student who earns only enough points to be on level 1 has indicated through behavior, that he/she needs to be highly supervised and in the company of an adult at all times; whereas, a student who has earned Level 4 has indicated that he/she is capable of managing additional privileges and independence.

Teachers award points at the end of each period of the school day. This is a time when the teacher talks with each student about how he/she has done and how many points he/she has earned. At the end of each day homeroom teachers meet with students to tally the total points earned and determine students’ levels for the following day. Generally this is used as an opportunity to process with a student how the day has gone and to set goals for the next day.

**BEHAVIORAL PLAN CONTINUUM**

<b>LOWER SCHOOL</b>	<b>MIDDLE SCHOOL</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>
Point Sheet	Point Sheet	Point Sheet	Credit Sheet
Levels 1-4	Levels 1-4	Levels 1-3	
VIP Trip = 15 Level 4’s	VIP = 3/5 days @ level 4	Level 3 for 3/5 days for 3 weeks = option for credit sheet only	Earn 0, 1, 2, 3 credits per class
	Community VIP Trip = Established # of community VIPs		
	<b>CRITERIA FOR PASSING</b>		
	65%=credit 65%= homework 65%=attendance 80%=Honors 90%=High Honors		

### **Consequences for Negative Behavior**

When a student behaves in an inappropriate manner, staff will help the student stop the behavior. This process involves setting limits for a student and removing any reinforcement for the negative behavior. This process may include a verbal redirection or consequences that should be immediate, brief and non-punitive. Consequences may include time out or loss of privilege, points or activity.

### **Counseling Break**

Gifford's policy and procedures regarding counseling breaks are implemented by the Principal, Assistant Principals, and their designees.

A counseling break is a procedure used to respond to a student's needs for support, and to interrupt inappropriate behavior. A student may request a voluntary counseling break if he/she feels that time away from the group will help him/her to maintain self-control. Staff will assess whether a voluntary break is indicated. Counseling breaks may occur within the classroom, in the milieu, or in the counseling area. Individual Counseling Area rooms are always unlocked, safe, clean, and continually supervised to meet students' needs.

A student who has been asked to take a break is expected to sit in a designated area that provides a brief physical separation from the classroom or activity group. A counseling break allows a student the opportunity to regain control of his/her behavior, to gain an understanding of their needs, and to develop a plan to reintegrate into the community. Generally there is an expectation that the student will reflect on any disruptive behavior with staff, make a commitment to change it, and brainstorm strategies that will support that commitment.

Counseling breaks should be as brief, allowing a student to return to interactions with the group as soon as possible. While in the Counseling Area, a student must be continuously observed by the supervising staff, and staff shall be immediately available to the student at all times. Supervising staff members should individualize their response to the student to ensure optimal benefit. Counseling breaks lasting longer than 30 minutes are approved by the Principal or their designee based on the individual student's level of agitation. A time out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed and has given indication of their preparedness to return to the community.

All Counseling Area interventions are recorded in a logbook that indicates the length of the intervention, precipitating causes, strategies used or brainstormed to support a return to the community, person(s) responsible for monitoring the student, and the person responsible for giving approval of the break being over 30 minutes.

### **Suspension**

Suspension from the program, whether in-house or at home, is the School's strongest response outside of termination from the program and is seen as an intervention tool to be used in cases of grossly inappropriate or dangerous behavior. Suspension should send a clear message to all involved that safety has been violated. (Suspension, however, is not the only response to a student's dangerous or inappropriate behavior—programmatic responses should always be considered.) Behaviors warranting suspension may include significant disruption to the community, assault on a student or staff member, wanton destruction of school property,

possession of a weapon, drugs, alcohol or other contraband. An ongoing inability to follow the program also may warrant suspension.

The determination to suspend a student is made by the Assistant Principal and/or Principal. Staff members who witness grossly inappropriate or dangerous behaviors are to report this to the Principal, and complete an Incident Report. All suspensions are in-house (referred to as “structured alternative programs”) unless an opportunity exists for maximum learning at home, student behavior cannot be managed in the school setting or more extensive evaluation is required. No student will be sent home without verification that a responsible adult will be available to receive the student. A suspension can last from one to three days.

### **Suspension / Re-entry**

Any time a student is suspended, it is viewed as an indication that the home and school need to be working closely together to address the student’s school needs. For this reason, prior to the student re-entering the program after a suspension, parents or guardians are required to attend a re-entry meeting with the student and appropriate Gifford staff. Re-entry meetings are used to build a working relationship, to set goals and consider alternative responses to student behavior, and for the student to contract to re-enter the unrestricted part of the school program.

Parents/guardians are expected to attend a re-entry meeting within three days of a student’s suspension, preferably on the earliest day the student is permitted to re-enter. If a parent or guardian is unable to attend a re-entry meeting within three days, The Gifford School will request that the school district convene an emergency team meeting. Additionally, if the reason for suspension is due to a serious violation of health and safety standards, The Gifford School will request that the school district convene an emergency team meeting prior to a student re-entering the program.

### **Out of School Suspension / Communication & Notification**

Letters are sent to parents and LEAs documenting the circumstances of student suspensions. Case monitors are responsible for tracking student suspensions on Case Information & Tracking Forms. Additionally, Case Monitors are responsible for alerting the Assistant Principal any time a student reaches five consecutive days of absence for any reasons including but not limited to suspension. The Assistant Principal is responsible for communicating this information to the Principal who sends an Extended Absence Alert form to the LEA and copies it to the parent. The LEA, usually after a dialogue with Gifford administrator(s), is then responsible for calling a team meeting if it is warranted.

In any case where a student’s behavior and/or pattern of suspensions is of concern to Gifford staff, it is communicated through Team Leaders to program administrators, and from program administrators to the LEA. Gifford’s Educational Director maintains regular contact with LEAs, particularly in cases where a student’s placement is in question.

### **Extended Suspension (3 days consecutive, or 5 days cumulative), or Ongoing Pattern of Suspension (10 days cumulative)**

In some cases, a student’s behavior necessitates a longer period of suspension from school. As with all suspensions, the frequency and duration of extended suspensions are tracked by

Gifford's Principal or their designee. The Principal shall work with Assistant Principals to gather and track suspension letters, and will review these letters with other administrators to ensure compliance with policy.

If a student has been suspended for three consecutive days, or for five non-consecutive days, Gifford shall convene the educational team to explore all possible program modifications in an attempt to avoid further suspension. If a student has been suspended for three consecutive days, or for five non-consecutive days, Gifford shall immediately notify the parent, guardian, or human service agency responsible for the placement, and within 24 hours will notify the parent/guardian and the school system by a written statement.

If a student is sent home early, and is NOT receiving instruction from either a licensed teacher or paraprofessional who is being supervised by a licensed teacher, it is considered a suspension. In these instances, no student will be sent home unless a responsible adult is available to receive the student.

In some cases the number or pattern of a student's suspensions may necessitate the convening of a team meeting to determine whether a change in placement is warranted. Gifford's Principal and Assistant Principals review suspension letters to determine the cumulative number of suspensions. Minimally, suspensions that last longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days, but constitute a pattern, indicate the need for a team meeting. More often, Gifford administrators and the LEA are alerted to the need for a team meeting well before a student reaches 10 days of suspension. At this meeting the team shall: develop or review a functional behavioral assessment or modify a behavior intervention plan, and/or identify appropriate alternative educational setting(s), and conduct a manifestation determination.

If a manifestation determination has concluded that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the student's disability, Gifford may terminate the placement in accordance with policies and procedures. In this case the responsible school district must offer an appropriate educational program in some other setting. If the manifestation determination has concluded that the behavior IS a manifestation of the student's disability the team must take steps to modify the IEP, the behavior intervention plan, and/or the placement.

### **Physical MANAGEMENT (NEW)**

In order to maintain the safety of the milieu and to prevent injury, staff members may need to physically manage, or physically hold a student. The Gifford School uses physical management only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have proven to be unsuccessful, or deemed to be inappropriate. Students are physically held only when their behavior represents an imminent risk to themselves or others. All program staff members are trained in Safety-Care physical management techniques, as well as a wide range of other de-escalation and prevention strategies. These techniques are therapeutic and non-punitive, used only to stop dangerous behavior and to allow the student to regain control of him/herself. The Safety-Care training is conducted only by Gifford staff who have been certified by Safety-Care as trainers for our school.

Training for Gifford staff who may become involved in restraint shall occur within the first month of each school year and, for employees hired after the school year begins, within a month of their employment. Training shall include information on the following:

1. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
2. The school's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures;
3. Interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
4. When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration.
5. Administering physical restraint in accordance with medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
6. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the administration of physical restraint.

The Gifford School does not employ seclusion restraints, mechanical restraints, or chemical restraints, under any circumstances. Physical management of a student is prohibited unless the staff member administering the restraint has received in-depth training according to the requirements of 603 CMR 46.03(3) and, in the judgment of the trained staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others present.

Prior to the use of a physical hold, Gifford staff utilize a wide variety of de-escalation strategies, including the implementation of adaptive coping skills, to try and avoid the need for physical intervention. All program staff are trained in Gifford's Hierarchy of Response protocol, which address student's distress and potentially escalating behavior in a proactive and collaborative manner.

Non-violent physical intervention is never used due to compliance issues. However if a student's behavior has become unsafe or disruptive to the learning environment of other students, there may be an attempt to physically escort the student without the use of force to the Counseling Area if they are not able to go on their own. This process allows continued opportunities for the student to demonstrate self-control, while allowing for the educational experience of other students to continue.

Any time a student is physically held it is viewed as a serious loss of behavioral control for the student, and it is marked as a significant incident. Parents or guardians will be informed of any physical intervention involving their child as soon as possible. Parents receive a copy of Gifford's physical management policy in the Parent Handbook. During the admissions process, parents will be asked to engage in discussion about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure.

When a student has been physically held, The Principal or a Team Leader of the program will verbally notify the student's parents or guardians of the incident as soon as possible, and within 24 hours of the restraint. Staff who administer a restraint are responsible for completing a report and submitting it to the Principal for review by the end of the next school day. The report is then sent by the Principal to the student's parents or guardians and sending school system, and is postmarked no later than three working days following the restraint. If the hold lasts longer than 20 minutes, the Principal will submit a report and a log of all physical holds on campus for the past 30 days to the Department of Education within five days. At any point in the reporting process, either verbal or written, parents are encouraged to notify the Principal or his designee regarding any questions, concerns or complaints regarding the decision to restrain, or the restraint itself. The Principal will also conduct a weekly, monthly, and annual review of all restraints that occur at Gifford, with the intent of looking at data and documentation to potentially improve the training needs of staff, and the services provided to students.

In the event of any serious incident or injury requiring DESE notification, the Principal shall notify the Executive Director, complete an internal review of the circumstances and ensure that all procedures have been followed appropriately. In the event of a complaint regarding a physical hold, the Executive Director and/or the Principal will investigate the matter in accordance with established procedures.

The Gifford School follows all state regulations regarding physical management, including the requirements of DESE regulations 603CMR 46.03(3). A copy of these guidelines is available at the school office.

### **Incident Reports**

Serious behavior incidents such as a runaway, pulled fire alarm, dangerous or overly disruptive behavior, fighting, or destruction of property require an Incident Report to be completed by the staff member who was primarily involved. Incident Reports are to be written on the day of the incident and submitted to the staff member's direct supervisor. All Incident Reports will be reviewed by the Principal and placed in the student's file.

## **Standard of Conduct and ANTI BULLYING POLICY (updated December 2016)**

It is the policy of the Gifford School to maintain a safe, fair, humane and respectful environment so that all people in the community, students and staff alike, are able to enjoy an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

This anti-harassment policy refers to, but is not limited to, harassment in the following areas: age, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, handicap and veteran status. Harassment includes display or circulation of written materials or pictures degrading to other Gifford community members and verbal abuse or insults directed at or made in the presence of other Gifford community members.

All interactions should be on a respectful basis. Harassment or intimidation of any nature is not tolerated. Civility, courtesy and mutual respect in all interactions are expected.



Additionally, the Gifford School administers a student survey at least once every four years to assess the school's climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying at the school in accordance with Chapter 86 of the state statute.

### **Anti Hazing**

Students and staff are strictly prohibited from participating in initiation or membership rites in connection with school sponsored activities when their conduct may reasonably be seen as demeaning or assaultive in nature. This prohibition applies even if those targeted give "consent" to such conduct. Students afforded the privilege of participating in athletics and other school sponsored activities are expected to take a leadership role, both by avoiding such conduct themselves and by reporting any such conduct by others to the Principal or his designee. Students who participate in this type of conduct, even as a bystander, or who become aware of it and fail to report it can expect to be excluded from athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Students and staff are also reminded that the Massachusetts General Laws imposes criminal sanctions for particularly serious circumstances involving initiation rights and other conduct. (See M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19).

The term "hazing" as used in this section shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

Gifford students are presented with, and are expected to sign an Annual Statement of Acknowledgement for State Anti-Hazing Law. (M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19)

### **Anti Bullying**

The Gifford School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

We are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and The Gifford School is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. We at Gifford recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become a target of bullying or

harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Our plan includes steps to support these vulnerable students and provide all of our students, regardless of their status under the law, with the skills, knowledge, and strategies they need to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

### **Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation**

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds; on a transportation vehicle or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by The Gifford School; and
- At a location, activity, function or program that is not school related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by The Gifford School, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

### **Definitions**

1. Aggressor is a student, or member of the school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.
2. Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students, or school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:
  - Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
  - Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
  - Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
  - Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
  - Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
3. Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.
4. Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

5. Retaliation, is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.
6. Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.
7. Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

### **Training and Professional Development**

1. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include:
  - Staff duties;
  - An overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation; and
  - An overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades

Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

2. Ongoing professional development

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

  - Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
  - Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
  - Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
  - Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
  - Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
  - Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

### **Academic and Non-Academic Activities**

1. Specific bullying prevention approaches

Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research, which among other things, emphasizes the following approaches

  - Using scripts and role plays to develop skills;

- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying;
- Emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

2. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- Modeling and teaching pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- Using the Internet safely; and
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

## **Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation**

(updated December 2016)

### Reporting bullying or retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A Gifford School staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members may be made anonymously.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will:

- Include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians;
- Make it available in the school's main office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and
- Make the Incident Reporting Form available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school policies and procedures for behavior management

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, staff, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the principal or designee.

3. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

a. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, on transportation; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

b. Obligations to Notify Others

• Notice to Parents or Guardians

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of the occurrence and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation.

• Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the

principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action.

- Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

4. Investigation

- a. The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation, and in doing so will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.
- b. During the investigation, the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- c. Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee or other staff members as determined by the principal or designee. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

5. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will:

- Determine what remedial action is required, if any;
- Determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary actions are necessary; and
- Promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation

Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or

guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a “stay away” order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

## 6. Responses to Bullying

a) Teaching appropriate behavior through skills-building by:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on anti-bullying curricula;
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students;
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home.

b) Taking Disciplinary Action

- If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.
- If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

c) Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

- The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.
- [Another is to provide counseling or offer a referral to appropriate services for targets, aggressors and their families](#)
- Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately

## 7. Collaboration with Families

• Parent Education and Resources

Education programs that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school will be offered for parents and guardians by The Gifford School.

- Notification Requirements  
The Gifford School will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. The Gifford School will include the Bullying Plan in the Parent Handbook, which is given to the parents and guardians each year. The school will post the Plan and related information on its website.
- Notification Requirements  
The Gifford School will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used to include online safety, cyberbullying, bullying dynamics and strategies to reinforce the curricula at home. The Gifford School will include the Bullying Plan in the Parent Handbook, which is given to the parents and guardians each year. The school will post the Plan and related information on its website.
- Additional Assistance  
Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

## **Student Records and Attendance Policies**

### **Student Files (NEW)**

The Gifford School maintains a record on each student, which is kept in a locked cabinet outside the school office. To protect the confidentiality of our students, there are specific procedures to access student records. The files are locked and must be signed out properly, both in the student record sign-out binder and on the log of access sheet in the front of each file. Files must be returned by 3:30 p.m. each day.

Students may not access their master files without approval from the Principal or Executive Director.

Gifford adheres to the Massachusetts Student Records Regulation which specific regulatory requirements regarding student records. The key areas that parents/guardians should be aware of are as follows:

- 1) Parents/guardians have a right to review their child's educational record. Non-custodial parents, unless court ordered/restricted, also have the right to review the record, subject to specific requirements. If parents/guardians wish to review their child's record, they should be directed to contact the Principal, in writing, and arrange an appointment to review the file. A Gifford staff member must be present any time a file is reviewed by a parent or guardian.



- 2) If parents/guardians have concerns about their child's educational record, they should be directed to contact the Principal so Gifford can work with them to resolve any issues. Parents/guardians may request an amendment to the file by addressing their specific concern(s) to the Principal in writing if they believe that their child's file contains information that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights. If the parents/guardians are not satisfied with the outcome, they may address the matter in writing to the Executive Director who will review the appeal and respond within one week.
- 3) Parents'/guardians' consent is required prior to releasing information contained in the student record as required by law. There are some exceptions to this in cases where health or safety is in question. Should there be a subpoena for the record, Gifford will always attempt to contact the parents/guardians or child at the last known address to notify them in advance of sending any records. Gifford adheres to regulatory guidelines in these situations.
- 4) Parents/guardians will receive a Student and Parent Handbook, which contain the above regulations at the time of initial application and annual re-registration.

### **Documentation (NEW)**

Student records/files contain information in the following areas: student and family identifying information, signed contract with student and parents, signed release forms, educational information, medical information, assessments and evaluations, clinical information, behavioral information, correspondence and attendance. Copies of suspension letters, incident reports, restraint reports and other pertinent information must be filed in the student master file. Documentation of all serious incidents and required notifications must be made within time guidelines set by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and should be kept in the student master file.

### **Confidentiality (NEW)**

Information about our students, including, but not limited to, medical information, should be treated in a confidential manner. This means that all requests for information about a current or former student should be referred to an administrator for response. It also means that information about students should be shared only with others within The Gifford School on a legitimate need-to-know basis. No Gifford staff member, intern, or volunteer is allowed to discuss or disseminate any information pertaining to a student or his/her family outside of The Gifford School. Staff files, staff memos, personal papers, employment contracts, etc. should not be accessible to students. Staff is responsible for keeping such documents secure.

### **Student Record Retention Policy (NEW)**

Gifford will maintain students' temporary records only for the period of time a student is enrolled at the school. The temporary record consists of all information that's not in the transcript. When the student graduates or terminates from Gifford, we will send their temporary records back to their school district. As such we will notify parents of this policy both at the time of admission and termination, as well as in our Parent/Student Handbook. The Gifford School will maintain a copy of students' transcripts in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71-§§ 34A-G.

Parents/guardians will be notified of our policy regarding temporary records upon:

1. Letter upon admission: Upon admission, Gifford will include a letter to parents/guardians in the registration packet, which must be signed to acknowledge receipt and understanding of our student records policy.
2. Letter upon termination: When a student changes schools, goes back to their sending district and/or graduates, the parent/guardian or the student if 18 years of age, must receive a letter restating our student record policy.

School Districts will be notified of our policy regarding temporary records upon:

1. Letter upon admission: This letter is informational only and lets them know of our student records policy.
2. Letter upon termination: This letter must be signed by a representative of the school district, and faxed, mailed or scanned and emailed back to us to acknowledging receipt of student records. Each letter should go into the student file with the transcript only, which Gifford will keep for 60 years.

### **School Schedule**

Students are in school from 8:30 to 2:30 daily, except for specially scheduled half days. Please see current school calendar for holidays and vacations.

### **Snow Days / School Closings**

If snow or other circumstances cause the School to be closed, the School will notify TV and radio stations that will broadcast the cancellation of school. We also use a reverse calling system to inform you of closings. Please make sure your phone number is current in our records, and let the main office know of any changes.

### **Food Program**

The Gifford School provides nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack options to all students. Each day Gifford's lunch menu includes two entrées, (one vegetarian), a variety of sandwich choices, and a salad bar. Breakfast includes healthy cereal choices, fresh fruit, and yogurt. Currently the Gifford School food program is free of charge.

## **[Student Attendance & Dismissal Procedures \(NEW\)](#)**

### **Student Attendance Procedures**

Please report all absences to Gifford's Main Office by 9:00 AM. Parents may leave a message on the answering machine, or email the Main Office if their child will be absent from school. If the school does not receive notification of the absence either by phone or in writing, the absence will be designated "unexcused." Absences are reported to each student's school department on a regular basis. If a student comes in late, he/she must sign in at the Main Office. Gifford will make individual discretionary program decisions in cases of extended absence and/or truancy.

### [Student Dismissal Procedures \(NEW\)](#)

If a student must be released early for any reason, or there are any changes to the dismissal routine, we ask that the Parent/Guardian notify the Main Office in advance by email or phone. Students must be signed-out at the Main Office any time they are dismissed other than to their designated cab at the regular dismissal time. **The Gifford School will not release students to anyone other than a parent/guardian or designated adult, unless the parent provides a written note (or email). If your child is going home with another student after school, both parents must call, and the parent must transport the student. Students are not allowed to be transported on a van other than their own.**

### Transportation companies

Parents are responsible for contacting the transportation company if they are making changes to a student's pick up or dismissal routine. The Gifford School does not contact transportation companies on parents' behalf. The School will keep the transportation companies informed of the school schedule.

Problems with van personnel such as lateness, surliness, or inappropriate behavior with students should be brought to the attention of an Assistant Principal or the Principal who will report issues to the contracting school system.

## Miscellaneous

### Research / Observation

The Gifford School will not conduct research, experimentation or allow observation or publicity involving any student without prior written authorization of the student's parent or the student (if 18 and older). The only exceptions to this are observation by the student's enrolling school district, state agencies involved in the student's care, and the Department of Education.

### Photography and Video (NEW)

Gifford takes photos and videos of our students on a regular basis to record activities such as sports, school celebrations, plays, etc. These photographs and videos may be used in publication for print and Internet use in addition to in-house viewing and/or training and supervision. All photographs and video become the property of The Gifford School, and consent is valid until withdrawn in writing. All parents/guardians are required to sign a release form at the time of admission and annual re-registration giving The Gifford School permission to use student images, opt out, or use with exceptions.

### Parent Advisory Committee

All parents are invited to join the Parent Advisory Committee. This group gives Gifford support and ideas in regard to policies and programming. The PAC also is used as a clearinghouse for sharing information. The agenda for meetings is developed by participating parents and the administration. The group is chaired by the Clinical Director.

**Student / Family Grievance or Appeal (NEW)**

At times students and their families may disagree with a behavioral, academic or programmatic decision involving them. We encourage students and families to talk directly to teachers and other direct care staff as a first step. Failing any resolution at this level, or in a case where the student and family has a complaint about a program decision, student records, and/or alleging discrimination based on sex or disability, **the family may notify the School Principal and/or the Executive Director at 781-899-9500, and/or** file a written grievance with the School Principal who will respond within two weeks.

## Student Rules (NEW)

**High School students are expected to sign an acknowledgement form indicating understanding of school rules. This form is in the annual re-registration packet.**

Rules are established school-wide in order to guarantee clear and simple structure for the students and to promote predictable and consistent responses on the part of adults. Our belief is that learning and growing can only take place in a safe and respectful environment. All staff members should work to promote these ideals and should be seen by the students as consistently enforcing the rules.

It is important that students understand that there is a defined set of behavioral expectations which will be enforced by staff. Each student is obligated to follow the directives of any Gifford staff member, and likewise, each staff member is expected to intervene with any student observed breaking a rule. Student rules are established by the Team Leaders as a group. If need be, this group can change the rules.

1. **Disrespect, Verbal Abuse, Teasing and Profanity-** Abusive, derogatory or disrespectful language including profanity is unacceptable.
2. **Physical Violence and Threats-** Physical violence has no place at The Gifford School. Violent behavior or harassment of any type is not acceptable or permitted. Threats of violence and throwing of any objects at another person are taken seriously. **Please refer to Gifford's [Anti-Hazing and Anti-Bullying Policy](#).**
3. **Property Damage and Stealing-** Students are not to steal, deface or destroy property belonging to another student, staff member or to the School. Restitution is expected.
4. **Personal Appearance/Dress Code- Cleanliness, personal appearance, and proper dress are important in setting the pattern of school and social conduct. Students whose personal attire or grooming distracts the attention of other students or staff from their schoolwork, shall be asked to make the necessary alterations to such attire or grooming before entering the classroom or school community. While the school attempts to be accepting of various styles/fashions of dress, some are inappropriate for our school environment. Students are expected to maintain attire that does not disrupt our schools learning environment. Thus, students should adhere to the following examples of appropriate dress:**
  - **Shoulders should be covered by a minimum of a one-inch strap, unless the remainder of arms is covered.**
  - **No undergarments should show at any time, including boxer shorts.**
  - **The midriff should be covered at all times.**
  - **Skirts and shorts should not go above fingertips.**
  - **Items of clothing with inappropriate graphics will not be permitted, including lewd or vulgar slogans/pictures, alcohol or drug references, sexual**

**innuendoes, or any graphic that may interfere with the educational process**

- **Outdoor jackets, hats and sunglasses are not to be worn in the classroom.**

5. **Contraband-** Items that the Gifford staff feels compromise a safe and healthy environment are not to be brought to school. Items such as weapons, pornography, incendiaries, drugs, alcohol, etc. will be confiscated and secured by staff and will only be returned to a parent. If not collected within 30 days, items will be disposed of.
6. **No Smoking-** In compliance with the Laws of the Commonwealth, there is no smoking on school property or on any off-campus activity.
7. **Drugs and Alcohol-** Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden on school property. Inappropriate discussions of drugs and alcohol are also not allowed. Possession and/or use of drugs, alcohol or contraband, are not permitted for any reason while at Gifford. Use of drugs, alcohol or any related behavior anywhere-anytime that results in a student's inability to participate in our program positively, also may result in a violation of our "Safe School Policy." Violation of our drug and alcohol policy could have several other results. In addition to suspension (which brings together parents and school personnel), we may notify and file a report with the Weston Police Department. Gifford staff members are not detectives; therefore, it is our policy that suspicion caused by actions or information from others may lead to an assumption of guilt. We may allow a student who violates the safety policy to continue on probation. In some cases, a student who violates the drug and alcohol policy may be required to have a drug evaluation and urine screening. While drug education is available at Gifford, drug evaluations, drug counseling and urine screening must be obtained and paid for privately.
8. **Passing and Boundaries-** Students are to be in common areas and in eyesight of staff. Students alone in parking lots, at the pond, in our neighbors' yards or in office areas are out of bounds. Students outside of class are expected to have a pass.
9. **Runaways-** Students may not leave campus unless accompanied by a staff member. Students who leave campus without permission will be considered runaways.
10. **Bikes and Cars-** Students should not come to school or leave school in any vehicle other than their school cab or their parents' vehicle.
11. **Visitors-** Visitors are asked to check in at the reception area. All visitors should have an arranged appointment. Staff and students cannot be expected to interrupt their school day to spontaneously conference with parents, friends or other visitors.
12. **Buying, Selling, Trading-** In order to reduce misunderstanding and promote a reasonable sense of security, students should not buy, sell or trade any items amongst themselves. Loaning articles of clothing also falls under this category. School staff cannot be expected to legislate this type of commerce.

13. **Technology-** iPads, MP3 players, and personal video game systems may be used for cab rides, but we expect them to be turned in upon arrival at school. Any other equipment must be cleared through teachers first.
14. **Valuables-** Items such as: jewelry, money or expensive clothing or accessories should be left at home. Gifford will not be responsible for any missing or damaged items.
15. **Absences and Truancy-** Regular attendance is expected. If a child is going to be absent from school, we ask that parents call or email the school by 9:00 a.m. A message can also be left on Gifford's answering machine at any time.
16. **Classroom Behavior-** Students are expected to adhere to accepted rules of classroom behavior as well as each teacher's rules concerning his or her classroom. It is important that all students, teachers and their belongings be shown respect.

**UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT WITH THE GIFFORD SCHOOL'S  
STUDENT RULES**

**STUDENT RULES may be found in the Parent/Student Handbook, which every family receives annually. This form must be signed by all students entering or in the High School program.**

I have received and reviewed **The Gifford School's Parent/Student Handbook** in full, and I understand and accept the rules it outlines for students.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_