

THE GIFFORD SCHOOL

Parent/Student Handbook

2020-2021



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Purpose of Parent-Student 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-Student Handbook, as well as other Gifford School manuals, policies and procedures may be modified, amended, revised or rescinded at any time at the School's discretion, and they are not intended to give rise to contractual rights or obligations.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 age twenty (typically grade 3 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. Students who are most successful while at Gifford are those who, together with their families, actively engage in the Gifford Program.

Students referred to Gifford must be found eligible for special education services and on an approved Individualized Education Plan. Gifford students are of at least average intelligence and can manage an academically and behaviorally based day school setting. Gifford works with students diagnosed with learning difficulties that may be based in neurological, social, emotional or behavioral issues. Students enrolled at Gifford experience poor self-image, difficulty forming personal attachments, expectation of a negative response from the environment, language processing disabilities, and a limited repertoire of social behaviors and problem-solving skills.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

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. In this meeting, families participate in an informational interview with the Admissions Director and tour the school grounds and facilities. During the tour, families are given the opportunity to meet and interact with staff and current students. 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.

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

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.

PRIVATE PAY

The Gifford School will inform, in writing any party other than a local school district, responsible for placement of a student, that said party is financially responsible for any costs incurred as a result of any placement not made pursuant to the requirements of 603 CMR 28.00.

Intake Process

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

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 which contains:*

1. Student and Family Information sheet
2. Permissions and Releases Form
3. Student Records Policy Acknowledgment
4. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Parent Handbook of policies and procedures, including our policies on physical restraints (signed off in Permissions & Releases)
5. Providers/Agency Involvement Page
6. Health Record
7. Permission for Medical Treatment
8. Medication Information (current medications)
9. Prescription Medication / Special Procedure Order Form (must be signed by BOTH licensed prescriber and parent/guardian)
10. Over-the-Counter Medication Order (must be signed by BOTH licensed prescriber and parent/guardian)
11. Student rules form acknowledging understanding of school rules and policies found in the Parent/Student Handbook
12. Student Acceptable Technology Use Policy and Remote Learning Device Loan Policy (signed by student and parent)

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)

Gifford provides a copy of the Parent-Student Handbook to all parents and guardians as part of the registration packet annually, and/or upon request in our main office. Parents/guardians are required to sign off in the Permissions & Releases form that they have received and read this handbook. The Parent-Student Handbook covers policies and procedures regarding runaways, physical restraint, suspension, termination, snow days, emergency procedures, reporting of child abuse and medication administration. Parents are also notified in writing annually of its availability at the school and on the website.

For more information 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.

Gifford does not provide emergency placements.

Termination Policy

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 clear and specific 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

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 an 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.** In the event of an emergency termination, the Gifford School will provide immediate notification to DESE through electronic submission of a Form 2 using the departments WBMS as required under 603 CMR 28.09 (12)(b).

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.

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.

Program Access

The Gifford School provides all students with equal access to services, facilities, activities and benefits. The Gifford School reviews participation requirements for all elements of its program to ensure that students are not excluded on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness.

Description of Physical Space

The Gifford School adequately maintains each classroom/instruction area with respect to number of students, sizes and ages of students, and the students' specific educational needs, physical capabilities, and educational/vocational activities. The school provides students with the facilities, equipment, technology, materials, and supplied needed to fully engage in special education and related services specified on the IEPs of enrolled students. All areas of the campus, including but not limited to, floors, ceilings, and walls are clean, well-maintained, and free from safety hazards.

Curriculum and Instruction

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 English Language Learners (EL's)

The Gifford School acknowledges it is responsible to serve and is willing to accept students who are English learners (ELs) into its program. The Gifford School is committed to affording students who are ELs equal opportunities to access and participate in the program's services, activities, and other benefits as all other students. Additionally, The Gifford School is committed to working with each student's public school district to implement necessary program

modifications and support services to identify and effectively serve students who are ELs. Students at The Gifford School will receive all the protections afforded by the state laws (M.G.L. c.71A, 603 CMR 14.00) and the federal laws (Title IV) in this area.

The Gifford School serves students who are ELs by implementing the following procedures:

- Unless the student's IEP specifies otherwise, students who are identified as ELs shall receive sheltered content instruction (or instruction through a different research-based EL program that meets the requirements of the law) by Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) endorsed teachers, and additional instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) by a licensed ESL teacher. The Gifford School will also work with the sending school district to ensure implementation of any other program modifications and support services determined to be necessary for the student to have equal opportunities to access and participate in the program and make progress towards achieving *English proficiency*.
- If a student has been enrolled at The Gifford School that has not been identified as a student who is EL, and appears to not yet be *English proficient*, The Gifford School will request an evaluation be done by the sending school system. The student's TEAM will convene to discuss the results of the evaluation and collaboratively decide on the appropriate program modification and needed support to be implemented. It is the **district's** obligation to determine if a student qualifies as EL and follow all requirements for Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of ELs.

Language Translation Support for Parents/Guardians

The Gifford School is committed to working with the sending school district to ensure important information is provided to parent(s)/guardian(s) who request communication in a language other than English. When requested by parent(s)/guardian(s), Gifford ensures that information is provided to them in a language that they understand, either through written translation of documents or through oral interpreters. If a request is made by a parent/guardian, we will work with the sending school district to have important information translated into the requested language in a timely manner. In addition to all required documents (consent forms, IEPs, progress reports, incident reports, etc.), this includes all information that is typically provided to parents in English, such as school announcements and notices. Gifford maintains important information in the student record that has been translated or interpreted for parent(s)/guardian(s) who request translation support. Additionally, when translation supports are requested, we will collaborate with the sending district to have an interpreter present at Team meetings to translate information and ensure understanding by the parent/guardian.

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 programs - These trips are a regular part of the program and allow students access to museums, theatre productions, sporting events and other community resources.
- "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 music studio, 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 off campus trips.

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, and families are invited to attend.
- 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 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 the student (if applicable), parent(s)/guardian(s), school districts, and state agencies (if applicable) in November, February, April and June. Progress Reports describe a student's progress towards all annual goals and objectives in the most recently issues and consented to IEP. The student's team leaders and teachers, with input from staff members who see the student on a regular basis, complete these reports. The Gifford School maintains evidence in each student’s record of when and to whom the program sent copies of the Progress Reports.

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 School do not receive formal grades. In the Middle School and High School, students earn grades in each academic class and elective on a trimester schedule. In academic classes, grades are effort-based and a weighted average of class participation and homework completion. Additionally, students must earn at least 65% attendance. For each elective course taken, students receive a “Pass (P)/Not Pass (NP)” grade based on attendance and participation. The academic grading scale is as follows:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	65-69
NP (Not Pass)	<65
Inc.	Incomplete

“Honors” status is earned with a grade of 80% or higher. “High Honors” requires 90% or higher.

Opportunities to improve or maintain grades include: consistently attending all classes, completing/making up missing homework assignments, attending study hall or extra help periods, and other individual supports and interventions developed by the student’s team.

Grade Reports are sent at the end of each trimester term. At the end of each academic year, cumulative credits are calculated and added to each High School student's transcript.

High School Credits

The Gifford School operates on a trimester schedule, with students in grades 9 through 12 earning 1.0 credit for each full-time class passed per trimester. A full-time class meets daily (e.g., English Language Arts, Mathematics, etc.). In general, High School students can earn a total of 6.0 credits per term and 18.0 credits per year. Gifford does not calculate a Grade Point Average (GPA).

Homework Policy

Homework is designed to be at a student's independent work level in order to provide skill practice and to help avoid frustration. If a student has difficulty with homework, the student should be encouraged to discuss it with the teacher at school.

In the Lower School, students earn rewards for homework completion. In the Middle School and High School, all students are expected to complete homework on a regular and consistent basis as part of their class grade. Minimally, students are assigned homework four nights per week, rotating academic courses on a nightly basis. Supports available to students include previewing homework, homework groups, study skills classes, and extra help in small groups or one-to-one.

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.

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 least restrictive 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.

Independent Study, Directed Study, or School-to-Work Programs

At the Gifford High School, students may participate in school-to-work or independent study programs provided such a program is discussed and agreed upon by a student's IEP Team.

To participate in a school-to-work program, Gifford requires a written document agreeing to performance standards and detailing all aspects of the student's role at the work site. This letter must stipulate that:

- an initial two-week trial period will occur to determine if a long-term placement meets the student's goals;
- the program is specifically designed to provide the student with exposure and introductory training in the field;
- Gifford will evaluate the student on-site and solicit feedback from the placement on the student's progress;
- the student is required to keep a daily log of activity as part of the experience; and
- the work site supervisor keeps a clear time sheet of the student's participation in the school-to-work program.

To participate in an independent study program, a student's IEP Team must determine the precise parameters of such a program including content, time period, and evaluation tools. The Head Teacher and Education Director will be responsible for coordinating and supervising the implementation of any independent study program for a student. The Head Teacher will maintain time sheets, meet regularly, and verify a student's successful completion of an independent study.

To participate in a directed study program, a student's IEP Team must determine the precise parameters of such a program including content, time period, and evaluation tools. The Head Teacher and Education Director will be responsible for coordinating and supervising the implementation of any directed study program for a student. A Special Educator will design the curriculum and assessments to be used. The Head Teacher will maintain time sheets, meet regularly, and verify a student's successful completion of an independent study.

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, mathematics, and science. 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 support, 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 needed.

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. 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 or guardians. 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

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 as 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.

THERAPEUTIC BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Goals of Therapeutic Behavior Support

Gifford's approach to behavior support balances rules and structure with positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. The goals of Gifford's behavior support system and training 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 support should promote competence, change, and healthy personal development.

The Gifford School has a behavior support policy and procedures that are in compliance with all regulations under 603 CMR 46.00, as well as state and federal education requirements, regarding appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention during the school day. The behavior support policy and procedures are provided to all staff annually, either during orientation or within one month of their hiring, in conjunction with focused training opportunities. Additionally, the school's behavior support policy and procedures are made available to parent(s)/guardian(s) of enrolled students at the start of each schoolyear or the time of their acceptance.

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 support 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, a form of punishment or behavior support. No student shall be denied a meal for any reason other than medical prescriptions.

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. Staff are also required to participate in "Safety-Care" behavioral safety training. 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 support policy and training emphasize 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 support policies and practices are implemented and monitored by the school's Principal and Assistant Principals, and their designees. All behavior support and physical management policies are reviewed annually.

Policies & Procedures for Behavior Support

1. Methods for preventing student violence include:
 - Structure, clear limits, and positive reinforcement for positive behavior.
 - Utilizing a variety of restrictions in an attempt to contain disruptive or dangerous behavior.
 - Early intervention whenever possible, utilizing a variety of de-escalation strategies through Safety-Care behavioral safety training.
 - Ongoing discussion amongst staff about individual student behavior and/or concerning group dynamics.
 - Threats of violence are taken seriously, and will result in disciplinary and/or clinical intervention.

2. Methods for preventing self-injurious behavior & suicide include:
 - High levels of student supervision & therapeutic support.
 - Utilization of a variety of de-escalation and non-violent physical intervention strategies through Safety-Care behavioral safety training.
 - Immediate communication of high-risk statements or gestures to clinicians for safety screening.

3. Alternatives to physical restraint include:
 - Providing time and space to an escalated student when there is not imminent risk of harm to others.
 - Controlling the environment of a potentially unsafe student.
 - Proximity control.
 - Redirection and access to familiar coping mechanisms.
 - A variety of safety habits through Safety-Care behavioral safety training.

4. Training requirements for program staff include:
 - Behavior as Communication: Understanding the Meaning Behind the Behavior
 - Gifford's Hierarchy of Response training.
 - Safety-Care behavioral safety training.
 - Safety-Care physical management training.

5. Reporting requirements and follow-up procedures include:
 - Communication amongst staff members before the use of a counseling area break.
 - Utilizing the Counseling area log to track student behavioral data.
 - Utilization of the behavioral point sheet in order to reflect and track behavioral incidents and interventions.
 - Communication to parents of behavioral interventions of significance during the day through case monitor calls.

- Communication and brainstorming amongst staff in daily meetings in order to improve supports if possible.
6. Timelines for receiving and investigating complaints regarding behavior support policies include:
 - Immediate notification of a program leader or administrator when a complaint has been received.
 - Follow-up to the person making the complaint by the end of the school day if possible, but not after 24 hours from receiving the complaint.
 7. Procedures to be followed to implement behavior support reporting requirements include:
 - Allowing time at the end of every class period to provide students with the points they have earned, and give feedback on their performance.
 - Logging student name, time of arrival, specific behavior, strategies attempted, and time dismissed from a counseling area break.
 - Discussion in afternoon staff meetings to determine necessary communication to parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding behavior and intervention.
 8. Procedures for making both oral and written notification to the parent include:
 - A call or email from the student's case monitor or team leader on the same day if possible, but not exceeding 24 hours, to report the details of the behavior, the antecedents, and the intervention.
 - Formal written notification following behaviors and programmatic responses of a more significant nature are sent by the principal or assistant principal.
 9. Procedures for the use of time out or counseling break include:
 - Asking the student to sit in a designated area that provides brief, physical separation from the classroom or activity while maintaining supervision.
 - A check-in between the student and the intervening staff that allows a reflection on the behavior, a commitment to change it, and a brainstorm of strategies and supports that can support the commitment.
 - Breaks should be brief, allowing the student to return to interactions with the group as soon as possible.
 - Possibility of a peer mediation to further ensure the success of the student if appropriate.

NOTE: Meals shall not be withheld as a form of punishment or behavior support. No student shall be denied a meal for any reason other than medical prescriptions.

NOTE: For employees hired after the school year begins, behavior support training must be provided and completed within one month of the date of hire for the employee.

Physical Restraint

The Gifford School follows all regulations under 603 CMR 46.00, as well as state and federal special education requirements, specific to physical restraints occurring during school hours, and only administers physical restraint in emergency situations of last resort when needed to protect a

student and/or member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Extreme caution is used in order to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

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, Safety-Care personal safety and de-escalation strategies, and Collaborative Problem Solving 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.

Copies of the Gifford School handbooks and regulation 603 CMR 46.00 are available at the main office.

Specifically,

1. The Gifford School engages parent(s)/guardian(s) and students about restraint prevention and use through a variety of forums commencing at the interview and admissions process. Communication about restraint prevention and use continues following acceptance with the distribution of our student and parent handbooks, ongoing dialogue with staff and school leadership, Parent Support Groups, debriefing sessions with students involved in a hold, and meetings with the student's TEAM at the request of any TEAM member.
2. The Gifford School utilizes Safety-Care behavioral safety training and physical management as our sole method of physical restraint. Safety-Care physical management provides staff with a variety of physical restraint techniques to ensure that the safest, least restrictive hold is used to manage student behavior in an emergency situation including: a one-person (child) stability hold, a two-person stability hold, and a chair stability hold.

3. The Gifford School does not employ seclusion, mechanical restraints, chemical restraints, or prone restraints under any circumstances.
4. The Gifford School uses physical restraint only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate. Up until the point where the determination is made to intervene physically, staff employ a variety of de-escalation techniques including, but not limited to: providing time and space to the agitated student; using the Safety-Care Help, Prompt, and Wait Strategies; referencing individual behavior support plans; employing Collaborative Problem Solving strategies; structuring the environment; and escort to a safer location.
5. Gifford's Principal will conduct periodic review of all restraint data and documentation occurring during the school day on an individual, weekly, monthly, and annual basis. Records of these reviews of restraint data and documentation, including members of review teams convened by the principal to assess each student's needs and progress, are maintained in a logbook by the principal. Annual restraint data is uploaded to DESE by the deadline established by the Department. The periodic review of all restraint data and documentation is used to identify patterns such as students who have been restrained multiple times within a week or other timeframe, school-wide evaluation of restraint procedures, and to potentially improve the training needs of staff.
6. All staff shall receive Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training annually, or within one month of the date of hire for new staff, culminating as their certification as a "specialist" through QBS, Inc. No staff shall use physical restraint without this training and "specialist" designation. This in-depth training focuses on understanding challenging behavior, incident prevention, incident minimization, physical safety protocols, physical management techniques, and post-incident procedures. Following their successful completion in Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training, staff will understand the importance of de-escalation strategies and other alternatives that may preclude the need for restraint, the physical and psychological risks involved with physical management, the clear criteria for the use of physical intervention, and the types of permitted physical restraints to be used to maintain safety when needed. Supplemental information and training related to student behavior, physical restraint, and the Gifford School's policies and procedures related these topics include: the Gifford School's Hierarchy of Response training; Collaborative Problem Solving; and review of the school's handbooks.
7. Select program staff members (7 total) are trained and certified annually as trainers for the school in Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training. This intensive training consists of Safety-Care's full curriculum that includes regulatory and policy issues, understanding challenging behavior and its contributing factors, incident prevention such as personal safety habits and creating a supportive and safe environment, incident minimization and recognizing antecedents to dangerous behaviors, and de-escalation strategies. The curriculum also includes in-depth sessions on physical safety

practices, physical management techniques, and post-incident procedures. These sessions describe the potential risks of physical management, the clear criteria for the use of physical intervention, and the importance of debriefing an incident in order to collect and analyze data related to the use of holds. The Safety-Care training delivered to direct-care staff during orientation, or within one month of their hire for new employees, is conducted only by those select staff who have been certified by Safety-Care as trainers for our school.

8. 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. A copy of the restraint report is also maintained in the student's master file (SMF). At any point in the reporting process, either verbally or in writing, parents are encouraged to notify the Principal or designee regarding any questions, concerns or complaints regarding the decision to restrain, or the restraint itself. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all steps of the reporting requirements are fulfilled in accordance with school policy and DESE regulations. In the event of any serious injury to a staff or student resulting from the use of restraint, the Principal will notify the Executive Director, conduct an investigation to gather all information related to the incident, and submit a Restraint Injury Form to DESE within three working days.
9. In the event of a complaint regarding a physical hold, the Executive Director and/or the Principal will review the complaint and conduct an immediate investigation of the restraint in question. This investigation will include a review of the circumstances of the restraint (precipitating factors, behavior of the agitated student, de-escalation strategies used, type of stability hold employed) and interviews of the staff directly involved in the hold and those who acted as witnesses. The Executive Director and/or Principal will also interview the student involved in the restraint. The Principal or Executive director will respond to the complaint with any findings within 24 hours.
10. The Executive Director and/or the Principal will maintain an on-going record of all instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by parent(s)/guardian(s) or the Department upon request.

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. However, when a student is no longer able to make meaningful progress, and a variety of strategies have been unsuccessful in addressing the problem, termination may be the conclusion. 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**. Please read more about our [Termination Policy](#) in the Admissions section of this handbook.

Positive Reinforcement / Point and Level System

Gifford's approach to behavior support 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 have the opportunity to earn 0-3 points in a variety of different areas during each period of the school day. While some of these areas may be more general in regards to a student's ability to follow directions, interact with others, and meet expectations of the program, many of these target areas may be tailored to the specific IEP goals of the individual. The goal of assessing points during the day is to allow feedback to students that helps them recognize their areas of need, develop strategies for improvement, and identify the progress they achieve in those areas over time. 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 support 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

LOWER SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	
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	CRITERIA FOR PASSING	
		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.

Student Separation Resulting from Behavior Support

The Gifford School follows all regulations under 603 CMR 46.00, as well as state and federal special education requirements, specific to student separation resulting from behavior support. If a student is separated from the group or program activities:

1. The student shall be continuously observed by a staff member and staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times.

- Student Initiated: 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.
- Staff Initiated: 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.

2. Approval for a time-out or counseling break for more than 30 minutes must be obtained by the Principal or designee and is based on the student's continued agitation.

- Counseling breaks should be as brief, allowing a student to return to interactions with the group as soon as possible.
- 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.
- Following the initial approval, staff must continue to obtain the approval of the Principal or designee at every 30-minute interval if a student remains agitated during separation. At this point, administrators and team leaders will communicate to develop a plan or alternative interventions that support the student's de-escalation and reintegration into the community.

3. The time out or counseling break shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

- Once a student has calmed and made minimum commitments for safety, the attention should be on returning the student to the group or program activities. If further counseling or work focused on their social/emotional/behavioral goals is required, such as peer mediation, staff should explore pursuing that work at times where the impact to the student's participation in scheduled activities is minimized.
- Staff will enter into the counseling area logbook the time when the student separation from the group has ended.

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 Principal. Staff members who witness grossly inappropriate or dangerous behaviors are to report this to the Assistant Principal or Principal, and complete an Incident Report. All interventions are attempted in house (referred to as structured alternative programs or in-school suspensions) unless 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 participate in a re-entry process 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. 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

In some cases, a student's behavior necessitates a longer period of suspension from school. An extended suspension is defined as: 3 days consecutive, or 5 days cumulative, or an ongoing pattern of suspension (10 days cumulative). 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.

Incident Reports

Serious behavior incidents such as a runaway, pulled fire alarm, dangerous or overly disruptive behavior, fighting, or destruction of property also 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.

Emergency Management 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

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.

Campus/Classroom Lockdown

Whenever there is an immediate threat of harm to anyone in the buildings, the Gifford School uses practices and procedures aligned with A.L.I.C.E (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate.) Given the situation and the information available, staff are trained to use their best judgement and guide the students to either lock and barricade their classrooms and designated spaces, or evacuate the building to designated spaces away from the campus. In the event of either response, Weston Police will be called to help ensure the safety of all of our community members.

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

All serious accidents must be reported immediately to the School Nurse and all appropriate parties. 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 will be completed following the Form 2 Checklist, that specifies required information and documentation needed for each Form 2 to be considered complete 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

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 that specifies required information and documentation needed for each Form 2 to be considered complete.

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

Advanced Notice of Proposed Program/Facility Change

The Gifford School submits all Form 1 requests through the Web-based Monitoring System (WBMS). The school Principal is responsible for making such notifications or for obtaining prior written approval from DESE. The school Principal for the 2019-2020 school year is Daniel Fuller.

The Gifford School will attach a narrative description that directly pertains to the school's notification or request for prior approval of the substantial change(s). The narrative will include a rationale for such change(s). With the narrative, all required documentation as set forth by DESE Form 1 instructions will be included. The Gifford School will also submit any additional documentation that justifies the request(s).

The Gifford School provides immediate notification to DESE for any unexpected building changes due to an emergency or for program closure.

The Gifford School provides fifteen (15) working day notice to DESE if there is a 20% decrease in enrollment of students based upon the last approved DESE staffing plan; a change in program ownership; a change in program name; or a vacancy in approved staff positions not filled by other licensed or waived staff that have a direct impact on service delivery to students.

The Gifford School notifies DESE and receives prior approval for the following:

- Changes to school buildings/physical facilities not due to an emergency, but are related to relocation, expansion and/or renovation of building(s), or program closure
- Increase or decrease in the ages of the students served OR a change in the gender of the students being served
- Before each 20% increase in enrollment of students, based on the approved enrollment in the most recently approved DESE staffing plan
- Before adding, eliminating or changing staff positions

Immediate Notification

The Principal, or another program administrator, is responsible for sending immediate notification to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of serious incidents through submission of a Form 2 through the WBMS. All appropriate parties will also receive immediate notification of serious incidents verbally and in written/electronic form including parents/guardians, the responsible school district's special education administrator, and any state agency involved in the student's care or placement.

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

The principal or another program administrator will provide immediate notification of the following serious incidents which occur during school hours:

- The death of a student;
- The filing of a 51-A report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or a complaint with the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) that is made against the program or a program staff member alleging abuse or neglect of any student;
- Any action taken by a federal, state or local agency that might jeopardize the school's approval with DESE;
- Any legal proceedings brought against the school or its employee(s) arising out of circumstances related to the care or education of any of its students;
- The hospitalization of a student (including out-patient emergency room and urgent care visits) due to physical injury at the program or previously unidentified illness, accident or disorder which occurs while the student is in the program;
- A student who has run away from the program;
- Any other incident of a serious nature that occurs to a student or staff in the program including, but not limited to, any police or media involvement, fire setting, and the possession or use of weapons, alcohol drugs;
- The emergency termination of a Massachusetts student pursuant to 603 CMR 28.09 (12)(b) at any time.

Program staff should immediately contact the principal or another program administrator to report any of the above incidents. At this point, the principal will lead an investigation to complete an incident report in a detailed narrative describing the events leading up to the incident, details of the incident, and any outcomes or follow up steps occurring as a result of the

incident. Other supporting documents generated by outside agencies (police, DCF, etc.) will also be collected for submission to DESE.

- The principal or another program administrator will follow the Form 2 electronic submission requirements included in WBMS, submit required information and documentation as stated on the guidance forms, and respond to any requests made by the Department for additional information until the Form 2 is complete and all required documentation is approved by DESE.
- *The principal for the 2019-2020 schoolyear is Daniel Fuller.

Runaway Procedures

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

The Gifford School's direct service staff are trained to administer CPR aid by a certified instructor. In addition, the school maintains adequate first aid supplies, including but not limited to band aids, gauze, adhesive tape, and saline wash shall be maintained and stored in a secure place out of the reach of students. First aid supplies are located and easily accessible in each major activity area, and written procedures for providing first aid are kept with the first aid supplies.

The school maintains health care procedures in all program areas. This includes a posting the telephone number of the fire department, police station, poison prevention center, hospital emergency room, and ambulance service serving the school in all educational facilities. In addition, the school maintains the procedures to be followed in the case of illness or emergency, including transportation methods and notification of parents in all program areas.

Procedures to be followed in event of fire or other emergency are also posted prominently in all program areas.

School health care policies and procedures also include procedures for informing parents or the Department of Social Services, if appropriate, of any medical care administered to their child other than basic first aid. For students in the Department of Social Services care or custody, an Educational Surrogate Parent shall not have authority to consent to routine or other medical care. For such students, consent shall be obtained consistent with the applicable Department of Social Services requirements. For a more detailed explanation of any health policies, please contact Gifford's Health Office.

Annual Physical Examination

Each student is required to submit an updated record of a yearly physical examination, as well as an annual dental 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 annually required 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;

- Licensed prescriber's order¹ and signed parental consent for any standing prescription or PRN medications that are prescribed to be administered during the school day;
- Licensed prescriber'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

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. 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.

¹ Licensed Prescriber means a health care provider who is legally authorized to prescribe medication pursuant to M-G.L c. 94C and applicable federal laws and regulations.

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.

Student Allergies

Every precaution will be taken to prevent exposure of a student to a specific known allergen. An alternative menu and alternative seating are available for students to protect students from exposure to known allergies. The school nurse will compile a list of current students with known allergies and review the list with administrators, team leaders, kitchen staff, and other relevant staff on a regular basis.

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. All students will be required to have a flu shot by December 31st, 2020. Please refer to Massachusetts Department of Public Health for exemptions.

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. **Under no circumstances is a student allowed to carry or self-administer prescription or over-the-counter medication.**

Prescription Medications

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

- Written parent/guardian consent, release forms and emergency contact numbers are on file and renewed annually.
- Written licensed prescriber's order, or in very limited circumstances (for example if a student is on an antibiotic), the prescription label will suffice but must be followed by a written order within 24 hours. Faxed medical orders signed by a licensed prescriber are accepted.
- If there is a change in medication, dose or time given, the School Nurse will send a new consent form home for parent/guardian's signature **and** a new licensed prescriber's order form home for signature.

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 licensed prescriber 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 licensed prescriber 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

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 licensed prescriber'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;

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

- **Inhalers:** With written, parent/guardian consent and licensed prescriber'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 licensed prescriber'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. *Under very limited circumstances, and with prior approval by the School Nurse, a student may be allowed to carry an EpiPen in addition to keeping one in the Health Office.*
- **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

Over-the-counter medications are given only with a written licensed prescriber's order and signed parent consent on file. The School Nurse will administer over-the-counter medications as needed and as indicated in the written licensed prescriber's order and approved in the signed parent consent. Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Tums, Bacitracin, Tecnu Poison Ivy and Oak scrub and anti-itch lotion, Calagel, and cough drops are kept in supply in the nurse's office. Parents must supply any other over-the-counter medications along with a licensed prescriber order. Students are not allowed to carry or self-administer over-the-counter medications.

Storage of Medications

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 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 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. 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.
8. The Board of Health may inspect at any time.

Standard of Conduct and ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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 Policy

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.

Each year, Gifford Middle and High School students receive a copy of the Anti-Hazing Law (M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19) and the school's Anti-Hazing Disciplinary Policy approved by its Board of Directors. Students are expected to confirm their receipt and understanding of these documents by signing an Annual Statement of Acknowledgement which is then maintained in their student master file. Furthermore, the Principal certifies the school's compliance with this regulation by submitting the Anti-Hazing Report to the Department by the October 1st deadline each year.

If a student is found to have organized or actively participated in the hazing of another student, that student may be required to forfeit membership in relevant programming and athletic teams for a period of ninety school days. The student will also face the possibility of school suspension for up to 3 days.

Anti-Bullying Policy

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

Please see bullying reporting form at the end of this section.

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 support

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 or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also

available at the Superintendent's office.

SAMPLE BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:** _____
Please note: Reports may be made anonymously but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

2. Check whether you are the **Target of the behavior** **Reporter (not the target)**

3. Check whether you are a: **Student** **Staff member (specify role)** _____
 Parent **Administrator** **Other (specify)** _____

Your contact information/telephone number: _____

4. **Information about the Incident:**
Name of Target (of behavior): _____
Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): _____
Date(s) of Incident(s): _____
Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____
Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

5. **Witnesses (List of people who saw the incident or have information about it):**
Name: _____ Student Staff
Other _____
Name: _____ Student Staff
Other _____
Name: _____ Student Staff
Other _____

6. **Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Use additional space on back if necessary.**

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

7. **Signature of Person Filing This Report:** _____ **Date**
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously)

8. **Form Given to:** _____ **Position:** _____ **Date**

Student Records and Attendance Policies

Student Files

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

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, 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

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

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. The Gifford School does not adhere to any religious practices.

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

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

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

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 Involvement and Parent Advisory Committee

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 support techniques.

Parents are invited to join the Parents' Advisory Committee (PAC), which shall advise the school on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of the students in the program. Gifford's Clinical Director, Peter Rosenmeier, coordinates the Parent Advisory Committee.

Parent(s) or guardian are required to notify the school principal of any changes in a student's legal status and of the results of all judicial and administrative proceedings concerning the student. The principal will disseminate this information to appropriate personnel.

Visiting hours at the school are from 8:30 to 2:30. Parents of enrolled students who are interested in visiting should contact the Assistant Principal. Each student is assigned a Case Monitor who is the liaison for weekly communication between the parent/guardian and school.

Parents/guardian are notified of your student's case monitor prior to the first day of school.

Student / Family Grievance or Appeal

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 legally protected categories (race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness) they **may notify School Principal Dan Fuller, and/or Executive Director Wil Fredian at: 781-899-9500**, and/or file a written

grievance with the School Principal who will respond within two weeks with a resolution/determination. The parent or student shall have the right to appeal the decision regarding a complaint, to the Executive Director. The parent or student shall notify the Executive Director, in writing, of their request for an appeal no later than five school/working days following the date of the determination. The Executive Director shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three school/working days of receipt of the appeal. At the hearing, the student or parent shall have the right to oral and written testimony and shall have the right to counsel. The Executive Director shall render a decision on the appeal within five school/working days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision with regard to the complaint.

The registration packet also includes a Parent Handbook of policies and procedures, 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.

Student Rules

**SIGNATURE REQUIRED on Registration Forms*

High school and middle school students are expected to sign an acknowledgement form indicating understanding of school rules, and parents of lower school students are expected to review these rules with their students and sign on their behalf. 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. **Proper Dress-** Cleanliness, personal appearance, and proper dress are important in setting the pattern of school and social conduct. Dress that is provocative and glorifies themes of sex, violence, drugs or alcohol is prohibited. 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.
 - 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
 - Sunglasses are not to be worn indoors.
 - Students may be asked to remove outside jackets.

School leaders reserve the right to make determinations on any of the above expectations on a case by case basis, using their best judgement on what is appropriate for the Gifford school setting.

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 (lighters and/or matches), 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 **of any kind, or with any device** 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 (NEW)-** iPads, MP3 players, and personal video game systems may be used for cab rides, but we expect them to be put away or turned in upon arrival at school. Any other equipment must be cleared through teachers first.
14. **Cell Phone Use -** Cell phones are not to be used during the school day. Students are encouraged to lock cell phones up with their Homeroom Teacher at the start of each day to be returned upon dismissal. If a student opts to maintain possession of their cell phone, it must be turned off and put away. If observed using a cell phone, progressive disciplinary measures will be taken including verbal warning, an expectation to turn the cell phone over to a designated staff member to be returned at the end of the school day, all the way up to requiring a parent to retrieve the student's cell phone from school.

We will not tolerate any unlawful use of the school's technology network and the intentional sabotage or diverting of the network will not be tolerated and will lead to immediate consequences
15. **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.
16. **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.

17. **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.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

This policy governs computer and Internet use, electronic devices, and information management.

The Gifford School continues to strive to provide its students with the best possible opportunities and the best possible environment in which to learn. Some of The Gifford School's goals are to promote educational opportunities and excellence by facilitating resource sharing, communication, and innovation. To help meet these goals, we have provided a state of the art school-wide computer network with Internet access. The Internet offers vast, diverse and unique resources to the students and staff.

Along with the privilege and advantages associated with computer use and access to the Internet, come added responsibilities and risks. Among them is the availability of material that may not be considered appropriate or of educational value in the context of the school setting. The Gifford School has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. We will be continually fine-tuning our network to provide maximum security. Security measures implemented by The Gifford School comply with Federal and State laws and regulations regarding Internet use. However, on a global network, it is impossible to control the quality of all materials published there, and an industrious user may discover materials that are controversial or inappropriate. The Gifford School believes that the importance of access to the valuable information available on the worldwide network far outweighs the risk that users may produce material that is not consistent with its educational goals. As such, students will be instructed on proper use of the Internet and regulations will be posted clearly in classrooms and offices.

The guidelines provided here are to help make you aware of the responsibilities you and your child will acquire, and for you to give your student permission for computer usage. If a student violates any of these conditions, their access to the Internet, and potential future computer use will be reviewed by the school's administrators. The signatures required (attached separately in in Registration Forms) are legally binding and indicate that the parties who signed have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their significance. If your child is to use the Internet in school, this agreement must be signed. Please keep in mind that students are representing The Gifford School while online and agree to do so in a respectful and responsible manner.

Any questions regarding this policy should be forwarded to Wil Fredian, Executive Director, at The Gifford School.

Purpose

The purpose of networks provided by academic institutions are to allow access to the Internet and to support research and education by providing unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. Use of another organization's network or resources must comply with the rules set forth by that network or organization. Transmission of any material in violation of any national or state regulation is prohibited. This includes (but is not limited to): copyright material, threatening hateful or obscene material, or material protected by trade secrets.

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in restrictive action being taken.

Students will be informed of the policy and proper use of the network at group meetings. The school and system administrators will decide on what constitutes inappropriate use, and their decision is final. Also, the system administrators may restrict users from access at any time as deemed necessary or recommended by administration or team leaders.

GoGuardian

The Gifford School reserves the right to monitor, access and observe the use of technology on its network and technology resources such as Gifford provided email and the Google Suite for Education through the use of GoGuardian tools. We have adopted GoGuardian online services to support the students' Chromebook use and help keep your child safer and more scholarly online.

It may be helpful to know that over 10,000 other schools use GoGuardian to protect 5.5 million students across the world, and the [Global Educator Institute](#) has endorsed the GoGuardian Teacher product.

How are we using GoGuardian?

We have chosen GoGuardian Admin and GoGuardian Teacher services to:

- Help protect students against harmful and inappropriate online material
- Help students stay “scholarly” and more focused when learning online
- Helping assess students' progress towards class assignments [only if your school has GoGuardian Teacher]
- Facilitating communication between teachers and students during class time [if your school has GoGuardian Teacher]

When and how does GoGuardian operate?

GoGuardian's web-based services operate on our school's managed Google Suite for Education Chrome accounts (i.e., when a student is logged into Chrome or a Chromebook with his/her school email address). The Gifford School enables teachers to use GoGuardian Teacher with students in their classes only during school hours from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

What are the school's responsibilities?

Gifford selected GoGuardian services to help our students stay safer and more scholarly online. We will work with students during class time to help teach them digital responsibility and safety. Additionally, we will train teachers about how to operate GoGuardian and about our policies and procedures to help protect student privacy.

What are my parental/guardian and child's responsibilities?

We ask that students use their school-managed Google accounts and school-managed devices for educational purposes within the boundaries of [The Gifford School's Student Acceptable Use Policy](#).

When a student is off campus, parents are responsible for supervising internet access and usage. We encourage you to discuss rules for appropriate internet usage with your child, and reinforce

lessons of digital citizenship and safety with him or her. We also highly encourage you to report any potential cyberbullying or other sensitive issues to us.

What are my choices as a parent/guardian?

Your school/district may add language about choices that parents have regarding the use of GoGuardian Beacon in connection with their child, including any opt-out or Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (“FERPA”) rights. Please consult your school’s/district’s legal/policy team for this decision.

How does GoGuardian help protect my child’s privacy?

To help your child remain scholarly and safe online, GoGuardian collects certain personally identifiable information about your child. GoGuardian has consulted with privacy experts, participates in privacy organizations, is a proud signatory of the [Student Privacy Pledge](#), and has been awarded certifications by [iKeepSafe](#) for complying with both Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and California student privacy laws. For more detailed information about GoGuardian, you may visit GoGuardian’s [website](#), [Trust & Privacy Center](#), GoGuardian’s [Product Privacy Policy](#), and the COPPA Notice and Disclosure Form which can be found at this link: <https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule>

Network Etiquette and Rules

1. All students agree to use the computers and Internet in an appropriate manner as designated by the school. Each agreement must be signed by the student and a parent / guardian. Changes can be made at the discretion of the school at any time and will be communicated to parents / guardians in a timely manner. All regulations will be in writing, and any changes will be posted clearly in classrooms.
2. Students should not use software and / or Internet services such as proxy sites to attempt to by-pass the school’s firewall or content filters.
3. Students should not purposely access material designated as **inappropriate** by the school. In the event ‘inappropriate’ material is accessed accidentally, the student must inform a staff member immediately. The school realizes that some material or sites may be accessed unintentionally. Students will not be held accountable if a staff person is notified immediately. Any delay in notification may be grounds for review and loss of privileges.
4. **Students should only use the Google Suite for Education or network login designated for their own use and not access other users’ devices, services, folders, materials, or interfere with the work of others.** Students should always sign in on their school issued accounts and access ONLY their own materials. No other student’s work should be accessed or altered. Students agree not to share passwords with others.
5. Students will only use school issued accounts including email and access to learning related services which includes but is not limited to email and all apps available in the Google Suite for Education. Students will *not sign up for any publication, information, or other service that requires use of a password or access code, or uses the name of the school*.

6. Students will be respectful of others and their private or intellectual property on the Internet as well as the Gifford network. Trademarked or copyright materials will not be used or copied without express permission from the legal owner.

Terms and Conditions of Use

By signing this Acceptable Use Policy, students and parents agree that the following actions are prohibited:

1. Use of Gifford IT services for commercial or political purposes.
2. Any illegal purposes or activities, to transmit any obscene, hateful, threatening or harassing material.
3. Transmitting or posting anywhere on the Web (web site / social networking sites / Blogs), any personal information about the school, himself or herself, or **any** member of the community. This includes cell phone texting, pictures, and recording (video and/or sound).
4. Signing up for any online service or anything requiring a reply mail.
5. Uploading or purchasing any materials or files, especially music/videos/images. Special requests can be made to staff and approved by the IT Department.
6. Using personal devices and or electronic equipment for personal use not related to education.
7. Using personal storage devices including flash drives. Any necessary transfers should be done by a staff member using approved Gifford systems.
8. Using any devices to host a hotspot or wireless access point or create any unauthorized access.
9. Using cell phones or other devices that can access personal accounts or the Internet on school grounds or at any school related event or trip at any time, unless under the supervision and with the permission of an administrator. This includes cameras and cell phones to take pictures, video, or record sound on school grounds or at any school related event or trip at any time unless under the supervision and with permission of an administrator.
10. Downloading or attempting to install any applications / files on any school issued device.
11. Altering any settings on a Gifford issued device that may negatively impact another user or the IT department.
12. Accessing ANY social networking, peer-to-peer, file sharing or shared gaming sites on ANY device over the Gifford School network, or on personal data accounts while on Gifford grounds without direct consent from a member of the administrative team.
13. Using the Internet, The Gifford School network, or printing out anything that *targets or bullies* another student, staff member or member of the Gifford Community. *To be determined by staff.*