

THE GIFFORD SCHOOL

Admissions Handbook

**2022-2023
Day Program
Summer Program**



Purpose of Admissions Handbook

This Admissions 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 contact Kristi Penman, Director of Admissions, at 781-899-9500 or email admissions@gifford.org, with any questions regarding our Admissions Procedures.**

Please note that this Admissions Handbook, as well as other Gifford School manuals, policies and procedures may be modified, amended, revised or rescinded at any time at the School's discretion, and they are not intended to give rise to contractual rights or obligations.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 upon request.

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

At the first meeting, parents are given a packet of materials including our Parent Handbook, detailing school policies, code of conduct and program expectations. In this meeting, the student, parent(s) and sometimes the district liaison participate in an informational interview with the Admissions Director and tour the school grounds and facilities. During the student interview meeting, prospective students will have the opportunity to see all areas of the school, meet and interact with staff and students. In addition, students may participate in an additional school visit and attend several classes to help in their decision-making process. At times, parents choose to visit the school initially without their child to make to determine fit from their perspective prior to committing to bringing their child for an interview.

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 their 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.

Gifford does not provide emergency placements. However, in the event of emergency placements, the program shall make provision for a complete physical examination of the student within 30 days of admission.

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 new 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 and Dental 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 Acceptable Technology Use Policy (signed by student and parent)
12. Student rules form acknowledging understanding of school rules and policies found in the Parent/Student Handbook
13. A copy of the approved school calendar

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
(Both the Health Examination and Dental Exam are tracked yearly through the student's annual Registration packet.)

Gifford provides a copy of the Parent-Student Handbook to all parents and guardians as part of the admissions process, as well as annually at the start of each new school year. This information is also available any time upon request in our main office and is available on-line at www.gifford.org. Parents/guardians are required to sign off on the Permissions & Releases form in the Student Registration packet that they have received a copy of the Parent-Student Handbook.

The Parent-Student Handbook covers policies and procedures regarding our therapeutic model, daily schedule and routine, discipline and behavior support, physical restraint, suspension, termination, dress code, activities related to daily living skills, emergency procedures, reporting of child abuse/neglect, and our termination policy. Parents are also notified in writing annually at the start of each new school year of the availability of the Parent Student Handbook upon request at the school and on the website.

For more information about the admissions process or about The Gifford School, please contact our Director of Admissions, Kristi Penman, at 781-899-9500 or admissions@gifford.org. 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.

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.

Social Learning

Gifford has a Consultant Speech and Language Pathologist who is here 10 hours a week, working to assist with the integration of best practices for speech and language interventions, including the Social Thinking curriculum, in our classrooms. Our Speech and Language Consultant works with teachers and clinicians to ensure that students' needs are being met throughout the day across all areas of the program. Social skills intervention happens in real-time situations throughout the day, in classrooms, group activities, and during lunch, so that students can learn from experiences in the moment and begin to generalize these skills.

In addition, Gifford has a full-time Speech and Language Assistant who work with students individually and in small groups, as needed, to improve students' social pragmatic skills.

Occupational Therapy

Gifford has two licensed Occupational Therapy Consultants who are here for a combined 12 hours per week. Our OT Consultants observe students and meet with both students and teachers to design comprehensive individualized plans that are implemented in the students' milieu by our staff. Our OT Consultants offer their expertise to teachers and staff to implement sensory supports where needed throughout our school setting.

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

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.

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.

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.

Policies & Procedures for Behavior Support

The Gifford School provides a written statement of the rules, policies and procedures for the behavior support of students. 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.

The following statement contains a description of the safeguards for the emotional, physical and psychological well-being of the population served; measures for positive responses to appropriate behavior; and definition and explanation of behavior support procedures used in the facility including, where applicable:

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.
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.
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.
 - A variety of safety habits through Safety-Care behavioral safety training
4. Training requirements for program staff include:
 - 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 Counselling 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've 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 parent calls regarding behavior and intervention.
 8. Procedures for making both oral and written notification to the parent include:
 - A call or email from the Case monitor 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 principals.
 9. Procedures for the use of time out include:
 - Asking the student to sit in a designated area that provides brief, physical separation from the classroom or activity.
 - 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.

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

Physical Management

In order to maintain the safety of the milieu and to prevent injury, staff members may need to physically manage, or physically hold a student. The Gifford School uses physical management only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have

proven to be unsuccessful, or deemed to be inappropriate. Students are physically held with extreme caution to prevent or minimize any harm to the student and only when their behavior represents an imminent risk to themselves or others.

Gifford engages parents, guardians, and students about restraint prevention and use through:

- Our interview and admissions process
- Our Parent/Student handbook
- Ongoing communication with staff and school leadership following acceptance to Gifford
- Parent Support Groups

Gifford utilizes Safety Care Training to train all program staff members in physical management techniques, as well as a wide range of other de-escalation and prevention strategies for the purpose of preventing student violence, and preventing self-injurious behavior and suicide. Safety-Care techniques include engineering the classroom environment, specific safety habits, safety monitoring, and safety through physical positioning and proximity. The actual physical management techniques that we employ through Safety-Care are therapeutic and non-punitive, used only to stop dangerous behavior and to allow the student to regain control of him/herself. The Safety-Care training is conducted only by Gifford staff who have been certified by Safety-Care as trainers for our school.

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

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

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

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.

Intervention Procedures

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

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. When a student has been physically held:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The report is then sent by the Principal to the student's parents or guardians and sending school system, and is postmarked no later than three working days following the restraint. If the hold lasts longer than 20 minutes, the Principal will submit a report and a log of all physical holds on campus for the past 30 days to the Department of Education within five days.
4. At any point in the reporting process, either verbal or written, parents are encouraged to notify the Principal or his designee regarding any questions, concerns or complaints regarding the decision to restrain, or the restraint itself.
5. The Principal will also conduct a weekly, monthly, and annual review of all restraints that occur at Gifford, with the intent of looking at data and documentation to potentially improve the training needs of staff, and the services provided to students.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all steps of the reporting requirements are fulfilled when necessary. In the event of any serious incident or injury requiring DESE notification, the Principal shall notify the Executive Director, complete an internal review of the circumstances and ensure that all procedures have been followed appropriately.

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

hold, the Executive Director and/or the Principal will investigate the matter in accordance with established procedures. The 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 the Department upon request.

The Gifford School follows all state regulations regarding physical management, including the requirements of DESE regulations 603CMR 46.03(3). A copy of these guidelines is available by 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 on pages 24-25 of this handbook.

Positive Reinforcement / Point and Level System (new)

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.

Counseling Break

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

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

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

Counseling breaks should be as brief, allowing a student to return to interactions with the group as soon as possible. While in the Counseling Area, a student must be continuously observed by the supervising staff, and staff shall be immediately available to the student at all times.

Supervising staff members should individualize their response to the student to ensure optimal benefit. Counseling breaks lasting longer than 30 minutes are approved by the Principal or their

designee based on the individual student's level of agitation. A time out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed and has given indication of their preparedness to return to the community.

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

Suspension

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

The determination to suspend a student is made by the 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 (new)

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

A program administrator is responsible for sending immediate notification to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and all appropriate parties using a phone call and Form 2 for the following circumstances. A program administrator will respond to any further requests for information. Emergency notification procedures apply to ALL students enrolled in the program, including Massachusetts' students, out-of-state students and privately funded students.

- Whenever a student runs away;
- Whenever a student is administered medication in an emergency situation;
- In case of emergency termination, such as circumstances in which the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/herself or others (A written termination summary explaining the reasons for the emergency termination is sent to the parents, the student (if over 14 years of age), local administrator of special education, officials of the appropriate human service agency and the Department.);
- The death of a student;
- The hospitalization of a student (including out-patient emergency room visits) due to physical injury at school or previously unidentified illness, accident or disorder which occurs while the student is in the program;

- The filing of a 51-A report with Department of Children and Families against a school staff member for possible or suspected abuse or neglect of a student (see also Suspected Abuse and Neglect / 51-A Reports in the Clinical Policies and Procedures section of this manual);
- Any action taken by a federal, state or local agency that might jeopardize the school's approval with DESE;
- Any legal proceeding brought against the school or employee arising out of circumstances related to the care or education of students in the school; and
- Any motor vehicle accident causing student injury
- Emergency notification to all parties is made for any other incident of a serious nature that occurs to any student.

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 first aid by a certified instructor in emergency first aid. In addition, the school maintains adequate first aid supplies, including but not limited to band aids, gauze, adhesive tape hydrogen peroxide or other cleaning solutions and ipecac 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 to the School before the beginning of the school year. The annual health record is filed in the student's master file and in the Health Office. Current emergency medical forms are also filed in the Main Office for emergency purposes. Every attempt will be made to ensure students' privacy.

The annual health record must include:

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

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

Vision/Hearing/Postural Screening

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

Health Care Program Staff and Hours

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

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

Illness or Injury During School Hours

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

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

Health Care in the School Nurse's Absence

In the School Nurse's absence, administrators are trained to provide first aid and health assessment and respond to medical emergencies. In some cases, such as field trips, team leaders or other staff may be designated to provide first aid or medication administration. The School Nurse provides training and relevant health care information to designated staff members who may be called on to assist students with health needs and treatments specific to identified conditions.

Emergency Medical Treatment

All serious accidents and emergency medical situations are reported to the School Nurse and administrator on duty. The Nurse will attempt to contact the student's parents and, if appropriate, have parents take responsibility for procuring treatment. If, in the assessment of the Nurse and senior staff, the student should receive immediate medical attention, emergency medical services will be accessed through 911. In a life-threatening situation, 911 will be accessed immediately, followed by notification of the Nurse, administrator and parent/guardian. A staff member from

Gifford will always accompany a student to the hospital. Unless otherwise directed, the student will be taken to Newton-Wellesley Hospital Emergency Department.

Flu Season

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

Alcohol or Drug Intoxication

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

Non-Smoking Policy

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

Medication Administration (NEW)

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

Prescription Medications

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

- Written parent/guardian consent, release forms and emergency contact numbers are on file and renewed annually.
- Written physician's order, 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. Emailed medical orders are considered written orders as it includes a digital signature. Faxed medical orders signed by a physician are also 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 physician'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 prescribing physician will submit a written report to the School detailing the necessity for the medication, staff monitoring requirements, potential side effects and the next scheduled clinical meeting or series of meetings with student.
- Written consent is obtained from the parent to administer anti-psychotic medication or, if the parent does not give consent, the referral source shall be notified and judicial approval sought.
- No anti-psychotic prescription shall be administered for a period longer than is medically necessary, as determined by the prescribing physician.
- The school receives **an original written order** from the prescribing psycho-pharmacologist authorizing the administration of anti-psychotic medication during school hours. Staff providing care to the student who is receiving anti-psychotic medication are instructed in the nature of the medication.
- Students age 12 and older demonstrate that the prescribing provider has informed them as to treatment risks and potential side effects.

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

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

PRN Medications

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

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

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

- **Inhalers:** With written, parent/guardian consent and physician's order, inhalers may be locked in the nurse's office and be self-administered as needed by student after review of student competency by School Nurse. **Under very limited circumstances, and with prior approval by the School Nurse, a student may be allowed to carry an inhaler *in***

addition to keeping one in the Health Office.

- **EpiPen:** With written parent/guardian consent and signed physician's orders, an EpiPen will be administered to the student whose name appears on the prescription label and may be given by any staff member, as needed, in the event of a bee sting or other serious allergic reaction. In the event that use of an EpiPen is necessary, emergency medical services will also be accessed through 911. **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 physician's order and signed parent consent on file. **Only** the School Nurse may administer over-the-counter medications as needed and as indicated in the written physician's order and approved in the signed parent consent. Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Tums, Pepto Bismol, Bacitracin, Caladryl/Benadryl Lotion and cough drops are kept in supply in the nurse's office. Parents must supply any other over-the-counter medications. Students are not allowed to carry or self-administer over-the-counter medications.

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

Storage of Medications

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

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

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

accepted.

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

Activities of Daily Living

Students are working on developing their independent life skills in all aspects of the Gifford School. They receive support and instruction in developing organizational strategies, time management skills, positive social relationships, as well as distress tolerance and self-regulation strategies. They actively work on building a self-esteem and an understanding of their strengths as well as challenges. Focus on these core life skills is embedded across all areas of our curriculum.

In the Gifford High School, students participate in life skills and transition classes which focus on skills such as banking, budgeting, job interviewing skills and resume development. High school students also focus on better understanding their individual learning style and independently accessing support/accommodations to meet their learning needs. In addition, High School students have weekly opportunities to volunteer at community organizations, such as Buddy Dog, Sunrise Senior Center and Land Sake Farm.

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 the family's needs. Planned Termination is the conclusion to a process in which the team has developed and implemented a variety of strategies to address a problem but a student is no longer able to make meaningful progress at The Gifford School. Some reasons for Planned Termination include: an

ongoing inability to follow the program, a pattern of behavior that indicates need for services beyond what Gifford can provide, and the lack of a positive working relationship with parents/guardians that interferes with a child's ability to make progress.

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

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

Emergency Termination

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.**

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

Student/Family Grievance Policy

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

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 Code of Conduct

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-Bulling Policy** in our Parent-Student Handbook and on our website: www.gifford.org
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.
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 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.

Parent Involvement

The school involves parents in numerous ways. Parents are invited to join the Parents' Advisory Group (PAC), which shall advise the school on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of the students in the program.

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.