

Bi-County Collaborative Student Handbook



****Revised November 18, 2024****

Bi-County Collaborative does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, homelessness, disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, age, veteran or military status, ancestry, or genetic information.

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Message from Executive Director

Welcome to the Bi-County Collaborative (BICO)! Thank you for selecting BICO to partner with you and your home school district to educate your child. For 50 years BICO has collaborated with parents, guardians and caregivers, school districts and many outside agencies to respond to the needs of children with disabilities.

This handbook has been prepared to share Bi-County Collaborative's Vision, Policies, and Procedures. The Policies that are outlined in this Student Handbook meet Federal and State Regulations. Those specific to Bi-County Collaborative have been developed after review of the Student Handbooks of a representative group of our Member School Districts. If your student attends a Bi-County Collaborative Program that is located in a host school district (ex. Bellingham, Plainville, etc...) it is important to note that this handbook is supplemental to the Student Handbook of the school in which our program is located. It is our belief that the majority of our students will have success in following basic school rules and policies when they are clearly explained and reinforced by both school staff and parents/guardians.

Parents and guardians are vital to the learning process. Student progress is more evident when families and program staff work together toward common goals for the children; therefore, we welcome and encourage ongoing communication between home and school. The standards based, high quality academic instruction as well as the therapeutic support and resources offered in our BICO Programs combine with parents' unique knowledge of their children to generate positive outcomes for students.

It is our hope that you will find the staff and services of Bi-County Collaborative to be responsive, to provide guidance and direction, and to provide a foundation upon which to build your child's future. Together, our combined efforts will "make it possible."

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jeanne M. Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeanne" being more prominent than the last name "Sullivan".

Jeanne M. Sullivan, M. Ed
Executive Director

Overview of Bi-County Collaborative

Mission Statement

Bi-County Collaborative (BICO), in partnership with families and communities, is an innovative and responsive organization that works to ensure that students are confident and successful as learners and citizens in an ever-changing global society, through effective, efficient, and purposeful education of the whole student.

Vision Statement

To offer a continuum of services to every student and provide them with numerous and appropriate opportunities that address and support their individual needs.

Core Values

We believe:

- In educating the whole student: academically, socially, and emotionally, to build independence and self-advocacy.
- Our success comes from the collaboration between students, parents/ caregivers, staff, and districts.
- In recognizing the impact of disabilities while maximizing opportunities for learning and growth.
- That all students must have the curriculum and instruction that will meet each individual's goals and prepare them for life after school.
- In a safe and positive learning environment to support the physical health of all students.
- In frequently assessing progress to provide technology, communication, and professional development
- In opportunity to provide transition-based learning in preparation for adulthood.
- In fostering lifelong learning for students, staff, and stakeholders.
- In embracing diversity, change, development of resilience, and shared decision making.

Statement Of Purpose

The BICO is a multi-purpose educational collaborative formed under the provisions of Mass. Gen. Laws c. 40, section 4E. Bi-County Collaborative is a public entity, governed by a Board of Directors, with each school committee appointing a representative to the Board. The Operating Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity, consists of member district's designated Special Education Administrators.

Bi-County Collaborative is made up of twenty member school districts in Bristol, Norfolk and Worcester Counties. Member school districts are Attleboro, Bellingham, Blackstone-Millville Regional, Easton, Franklin, Hopedale, King Philip Regional, Mansfield, Milford, Norfolk, North Attleboro, Norton, Plainville, Seekonk, Swansea, Tri-County Vocational, Uxbridge, Walpole, and Wrentham. BICO also provides programming to many students from area non-member school districts.

Functions and Services & Areas of Expertise

BICO provides a variety of services designed to develop and deliver quality special education programs.

- Student Referrals - All student referrals to Bi-County Collaborative programs are made by the special education administrator of the school district where the student resides or that is responsible for the delivery of special education services.
- Special education programs for students (ages 3-22) with autism, emotional and neurological disabilities, developmental disabilities, intellectual impairments, language disorders, and multiple disabilities.
- Specialized Instruction - Programs offer individualized goals, specialized instruction, and unwavering support. Every Bi-County Collaborative program is focused on maximizing each student's academic, social, and life-skills success. Based upon a student's abilities, particular needs, and Individualized Education Program (IEP), the student will follow one of the two program pathways.
 - Intensive Continuum - Bi-County's intensive continuum programs deliver specialized instruction and support for students with intellectual, physical and medical needs. Multi-sensory instruction, assistive technology, and total communication support are integral to each program. Using the award-winning Unique Learning System curriculum, with modifications as necessary, academics are aligned with Common Core Standards. Instruction is individualized based upon each student's strengths and ongoing assessment of progress.
 - Therapeutic Continuum - Bi-County's therapeutic programs are focused on delivering solid academic content to students whose social, emotional, and/or academic delays have compromised their success in the general educational setting. All classroom environments are predictable, safe, and supportive with a focus on therapeutic strategies to promote success. Students enter this pathway with a goal of reentering their home district or progressing on to the next least restrictive setting, and diploma acquisition.
- Therapy Services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language therapy, vision therapy, and adapted physical education services are provided per each individual student's IEP.

- Interim Alternative Education Assessment settings in accordance with IDEA.
- Clinical Supports - BICO offers psychological/psychiatric consultation and evaluation through a Clinical Resource Team.

General Procedures & Policies

Attendance / Absence From School

In order for students to be successful, it is important that they be present and ready to engage in the school day. Parents or guardians should report a student's absence by calling the teacher every day that the student does not attend school. If the teacher is not contacted by the parent/guardian, a staff person will contact the parent/guardian to verify the student's absence.

If there is an unexplained absence for three (3) consecutive days or more, the sending school district will be notified and documentation from a physician may be required.

An excused absence/tardy/dismissal includes the following:

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Requirement</u>
Health related absence/appointment*	Verified document from medical professional
Court appearance	Court document
Religious Holiday	Parent/Guardian note
Bereavement/family funeral	Parent/Guardian note
Approved School Activity (i.e. field trip)	No document needed
Pre-approved college visits (juniors/seniors only)	Parent/Guardian note
Suspensions	No Document needed

**Bi-Collaborative Collaborative requires that a doctor's note must be provided if your child is ill for more than five days or if there are repeated absences for illness.*

Procedures Governing Make-Up Work:

1. Responsibility for Missing Assignments:

Students are responsible for completing any incomplete or missing assignments, including course assignments, tests, projects, and other related work. Teachers will provide these assignments to students when necessary.

2. Teacher Communication:

Teachers will actively communicate with students and/or their parents/guardians regarding incomplete work, missing assignments, or unsatisfactory performance. This communication will occur through telephone calls, e-mails, or written notes.

3. Due Dates for Make-Up Work:

Teachers will assign a due date for any make-up work, typically one week from the student's return to school, during which students can earn full credit for their assignments.

4. Letter Grade Adjustments:

At the teacher's discretion, a letter grade may be lowered for an assignment if the student misses it and fails to meet the established make-up work requirements. However, students are always encouraged to take advantage of extra help during class and support periods to complete all assignments.

Absences and Impact on Grading:

1. Excessive Absences:

If a student is absent from school or class for 12 or more days in a quarter, their final grade may be lowered by one letter grade for the term, at the discretion of the teacher and administrator.

2. Impact of 20 or More Absences:

If a student is absent from school or class for 20 or more days in a quarter, they will not receive credit for the term, unless there are exceptional circumstances that are reviewed by the administration.

Backpacks/Bookbags

Backpacks or book bags are to be left in assigned areas during the course of the school day. Students will have the opportunity to access their book bags and backpacks during scheduled breaks.

Cell Phones And Electronic Media

Capturing Photos or Video Images

Students are not allowed to capture photos or video images of any person(s) in the school building at any time. This includes film and digital cameras, laptops, the video component of a phone, photo or video recording, or through use of any other technology used to capture photos or record video images.

Exceptions will be made for certain students fulfilling the requirements of coursework or an educational activity where such activity is assigned by the teacher.

The secret use of audio recording devices is illegal in Massachusetts. (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 272, sect. 99). Videotaping with audio and/or audio recording a class or individual without the permission of everyone involved is a criminal offense with severe penalties. Students engaging in such activities will be subject to disciplinary, and possibly legal, action.

Cell Phones

Cell phones can have a negative impact on the educational environment and the safety of students and staff. Although we have come to rely on them, cell phones are a distraction to the education of students, may become the source of disciplinary issues in school and may interfere with school or district emergency procedures, among other things.

Student cell phones are not allowed in Bi-County Collaborative Programs at any time. In order to assure compliance with this policy, Students will be asked to turn their cell phones in to school staff at the beginning of each day; the teacher will label and lock cell phones up and return them to the student at dismissal.

Program Directors reserve the right and authority to make exceptions to this policy as aligned with programmatic design, for example, if a cell phone is part of the instructional program as directed by the teacher, listed in the IEP as an instructional tool or needed for medical reasons.

Every Bi-County Collaborative program has a program phone; and every Program Director has a work cell phone. Parents/guardians who are concerned about communicating with their child in the event of an emergency during the school day may call their child's program or Program Director or the Collaborative's Central Office.

Other Forms of Electronic Media

Video phones, laptops, personal electronics, sound, photo and video capturing devices, which include but are not limited to laptops, gaming devices, MP3 players and iPods, are not to be visible nor in use during the school day. These must be turned off and kept out of sight during the school day and will follow the same procedures as the cell phone policy above.

Exceptions can be made for certain students fulfilling the requirements of course work or educational activity where such activity is assigned by the Teacher.

Critical Incidents - Emergency Preparedness, Fire, Lockdowns, Shelter in Place, and Evacuation Drills

Emergency Preparedness and Support

Our primary goal is to protect the safety of our students and staff. Safety procedures for BICO Programs are developed in collaboration with school security staff, local law enforcement, emergency management, and public health officials and are reviewed regularly. These plans include procedures to respond to critical incidents and school system personnel practice these drills regularly. The main objective is the protection of the students and staff members. When a critical incident or threat occurs, the specific actions taken during an emergency depend on the nature of the incident (ex. one or more schools may evacuate, lock down, or initiate a shelter-in-place response, according to the nature of the incident or threat). School administrators have a variety of "tools" to use and have received training on how to work with each of these. The ability to remain flexible is a key component of each school's plan and of district-wide preparations. In addition to the information contained in our critical incident plans, Bi-County Collaborative staff and students will follow specific directions from public safety officials.. Individual student behavior and health care plans are located at the program as well.

If you have questions about your child or about your school's safety and support responses, please contact your Bi-County Collaborative Program Director.

Fire, Lockdowns, Shelter in Place, and Evacuation Drills

Lockdown and evacuation drills will be held periodically throughout the school year. School Staff will support students in becoming familiar with the protocols outlined by the school administration, the local police department, and other safety officials. Full cooperation with these procedures is necessary and expected at all times. The Collaborative staff will ensure that students who cannot understand or follow emergency protocols independently have a plan in place providing for their safe exit from the building where such exit is required.

Dress Code

At Bi-County Collaborative, we believe in creating a safe and inclusive environment where all students feel valued and respected. Our dress code policy is designed to balance the need for a positive learning environment with a recognition of students' social and emotional needs. This policy encourages self expression, cultural diversity, and promotes a sense of belonging among students, while maintaining an appropriate and respectful appearance.

1. **Respect for Diversity:** Our dress code policy celebrates the diversity of our student body and encourages students to express their unique identities. We

- respect and honor cultural, religious, and gender diversity. Clothing, hairstyles, and accessories reflecting cultural and religious practices are permitted, and no student will be discriminated against based on their appearance.
2. **Gender-Neutral Policy:** Our dress code is gender-neutral, ensuring that all students can dress comfortably and authentically regardless of their gender identity or expression. Students are free to wear any clothing that aligns with their gender identity.
 3. **Guidelines for Appropriate Attire:** While we promote self-expression, there are a few guidelines to maintain an appropriate learning environment:
 - a. **Modesty:** Clothing should cover private body parts appropriately and not be overly revealing.
 - b. **Safety:** Clothing and accessories should not pose any safety risks to students or others.
 - c. **Disruption:** Attire that contains offensive language or symbols, promotes violence, or causes disruption is not allowed.
 - d. **Decency:** Clothing should not display hate speech, discriminatory messages, or explicit content.
 4. **Comfort and Health:** We understand that students' comfort is essential for their social and emotional well-being. Our dress code allows for comfortable and weather-appropriate clothing choices to ensure students can focus on their studies without discomfort.
 5. **Individuality and Self-Expression:** Students are encouraged to express their individuality through clothing choices. This includes wearing clothing that reflects their personal interests, hobbies, and talents, such as sports jerseys, artistic attire, or club-related clothing.
 6. **Sensitivity and Empathy:** Teachers, staff, and administrators will be trained to handle dress code violations with sensitivity and empathy. We will strive to educate students about the importance of the policy and encourage open dialogues to address any concerns.
 7. **Student Involvement:** We value student input and will involve them in the review and modification of the dress code policy to ensure it aligns with their social and emotional needs.

Consequences for Dress Code Violations:

Any dress code violation will be addressed with a focus on education rather than punishment. Our approach is to understand the underlying reasons for the violation and educate students about the importance of adhering to the policy. Repeated or intentional violations may result in discussions with parents/guardians to find suitable resolutions.

Empowered Digital Use Policy

Bi-County Collaborative seeks to provide state-of-the-art technology-based education and training to all of our special education students and Collaborative Staff, by integrating technology into all Collaborative Programs, Support Services and Administration. The Collaborative will foster a nurturing and dynamic learning environment, conducive to the acquisition of skills required to access, utilize and apply technology and assistive technology so that individuals will successfully perform in the classroom, in everyday life and as life-long learners in our increasingly technological world.

Using digital devices, whether personal or school owned, as well as the Collaborative Network is a privilege. When students and staff use the network and devices in accordance with Bi-County Collaborative Guidelines, they will retain that privilege.

General Guidelines:

- Digital devices, software, and networks shall be used in school for educational purposes and activities.
- An individual's personal information (including home/mobile phone numbers, mailing addresses, and passwords) and that of others shall be kept private.
- Individuals will show respect for themselves and others when using technology, including social media.
- Users shall give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work.
- Users shall report inappropriate use of technology immediately.
- All use of the Internet must meet legal and ethical standards.
- Use of the Internet for commercial purposes, illegal activity or political lobbying is prohibited.
- All users must use appropriate classroom behavior and protocol during time on computers, including:
 - No eating or drinking while using computers
 - Not utilize social networking sites while in school
- Users may not use another individual's network account.
- Users may not download executable files or applications
 - Standard copyright procedures must be observed

Bi-County Collaborative Staff will:

- Provide educational focus for Internet research.
- Guide students toward appropriate materials and deal professionally with either accidental or willful access to educationally inappropriate material.

Students will:

- Be responsible for good behavior on school computers and in use of the Internet
- Utilize the internet and other forms of electronic communication as directed by program staff
- Conduct themselves appropriately so as not to destroy or compromise the integrity of technological systems
- Users are expected to respect the rights, privileges and privacy of others; the following are not permitted:
 - Use of obscene language
 - Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
 - Harassing, insulting, or attacking others
 - Using another's password or any form of computer hacking
 - Trespassing in another's folders, work or files
 - Intentionally wasting limited resources
 - Recording, copying or importing sounds that are profane abusive, obscene, or not appropriate for school
 - Writing or drawing anything profane, abusive, obscene, or not appropriate for school
 - Touching another student's computer or related item unless instructed to do so by program staff

Access is a privilege - not a right. Access entails responsibility

- Site managers/teachers reserve the right to revise these guidelines at any time
- The privilege of Internet access will be denied to any user who violates Empowered Digital Use Policy
- Additional disciplinary actions shall be determined in conjunction with school officials and may include action by law enforcement agencies.

Holiday Activities

BICO Collaborative is an extension of the public schools and as such, follows practices governing the separation of church and state. Parents have the primary responsibility to promote their child's religious, cultural and social growth and participation. Our principal purpose is education. All holiday activities must support this objective and be respectful of the rights of each individual. With these thoughts in mind, the following guidelines are provided:

1. All BICO program holiday activities must be consistent with what is occurring in a comparable general education class (i.e. start and duration of celebrations).
2. Holiday activities should be planned and have clear, appropriate connections with curriculum.

Incomplete Grade Policy

- Students are responsible for completing any incomplete or missing assignments.
- Teachers are responsible for providing the incomplete or missing assignments to the students. (i.e., course assignments, tests, projects and other related work)
- Teachers will communicate (via telephone, e-mail, and/or in writing) with students and/or parent/guardian regarding incomplete work, missing assignments, or unsatisfactory course/class work.
- Teachers will assign a due date to which full credit can be earned (typically one week from returning back to school). At teacher discretion, a letter grade may be dropped for credit earned for the assignment.
- Students always have the opportunity to work with staff during class and support periods for extra help with all assignments.

Lunch Program Including Free And Reduced Lunch Program

Currently, Massachusetts Law grants universal free school meals for all students. Please note that even though meals will be free for all, it is very important for families **who feel they may qualify** to still complete the Household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals for the current school year. You can view and complete the application here: <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>

Media Access To Students

Any member of the public news media wishing to interview, photograph, or video-record on BICO premises must first obtain written consent from the Executive Director or his/her designee. Students will not be interviewed, photographed, or video-recorded by the media on Bi-County premises without the written consent of their parent/legal guardian.

Observation Protocol

The Bi-County Collaborative welcomes visits from stakeholders including: school district personnel, parents/guardians of current students and families whose student has been referred to our programs. In general, all visitors must comply with the policy applicable to that school building, as well as BICO policies. When visiting, all visitors must enter at the main lobby of the school in which programs are located and must follow sign-in procedures at the school. This could include showing your identification, signing in a log and obtaining a visitor's pass" which must be worn in a visible location during the visit.

We are bound by federal and state confidentiality laws, and therefore, visitors' consideration of the special needs and confidentiality rights of students in our programs is necessary. This protocol is intended to ensure the privacy of all students.

During school hours, our programs are focused on the serious work of educating and caring for our students. All staff are dedicated to meeting both the immediate and long-term needs of our students. In order to insure a pleasant and informative visit that is minimally disruptive to our classrooms, the following guidelines are recommended for all visitors:

- Programs are shown by appointment only and the observer must be escorted by a Collaborative Staff Person. All observers are required to complete a Classroom Observation Agreement. Upon arriving at the program, please follow the security protocol of the school you are visiting and wait for our escort at the agreed upon meeting place.
- Observations are scheduled for the purpose of gaining a sense of the milieu and facility in which the program is located, and a general sense of the structure and daily activities of the program; please do not ask questions about students in the program.
- Sometimes, due to students' special needs, they may encounter difficulties in the classroom; visitors may be asked to step out of the classroom; please respect the staff's request.

If you wish to have a lengthy conversation with teaching staff, and/or have many detailed questions, please arrange for a separate appointment outside of school hours in which the Program Director and teaching staff can sit and speak with you at length.

Personal Property And Valuables Of Students

The Bi-County Collaborative will not assume responsibility for personal items brought to school by students. Items of value should be left at home.

School Closings And Delayed Openings Due To Inclement Weather Or Emergency Conditions

In the event of inclement weather or emergency conditions, all Bi-County Collaborative Programs follow the school closings of the school district where they are located. If the school district cancels school, the Collaborative program(s) within that district will also be canceled. If the district delays school or releases early, the Bi-County Collaborative program(s) will also have a delayed start or earlier dismissal.

In general when a sending school district is closed due to inclement weather, the students from the sending district will not be transported. In that case, parents who deem it safe to do so, have the option to transport their child to/from school.

A copy of the annual Bi-County Collaborative school calendar is available on the Bi-County website – <https://bicounty.org/events/>.

School-Home Communication

Regular communication between home and school is crucial for the welfare and safety of our students and the effective delivery of special education services. To support this, we encourage the use of the Parent Square app – <https://www.parentsquare.com/>, which facilitates seamless communication between classrooms and homes. In addition to the app, we also recommend phone calls and meetings to maintain positive and open lines of communication.

These personal communication methods help build strong relationships and ensure that parents/guardians and staff are effectively connected. We also encourage parents/guardians to keep program staff informed of any changes at home or in other environments that may impact their child's school day. By staying informed, our staff can better anticipate and address any challenges students may face, using interventions that are appropriate to the situation.

Transportation/Van Policy

Transportation to and from Bi-County Collaborative programs is the responsibility of the sending district. Questions and concerns regarding transportation should be directed to your sending school district.

While being transported, students are transported to school under the authority of the sending school district. Students are subject to all school district and Bi-County Policies and Rules, as if they are in the program.

Incidents occurring while students are being transported on the van/bus will be addressed by the transportation provider to your child's school district. In general, Bi-County Collaborative Program Directors are also notified of the incident. Your school district in conjunction with the transportation provider will decide consequences of misconduct occurring during transit to and from school. Program Directors, in coordination with the sending district, will respond to incidents in accordance with the student code of conduct.

Any incidents and/or misconduct occurring during the school day on Bi-County Collaborative vehicles will be addressed by the Program Director in accordance with the Collaborative's Discipline Policy.

The following rules and responsibilities are considered to be standard expectations regarding the conduct expected by students and have been developed to ensure safety and reasonable behavior on the bus. Students violating any of these rules will receive a written warning from the transportation provider and as needed by as well as school officials.

Responsibilities of Students

1. Students are transported under the authority of the driver are to follow the directions of the driver and/or staff.
2. Students will be on time for pick-up at home and departure from school.
3. Students will use acceptable language, vulgar language is prohibited.
4. Students will converse in normal tones.; loud or vulgar language is prohibited.
5. Students will act in a courteous manner.
6. Students will refrain from excessive mischief.
7. Students will refrain from violating safety procedures
 - i. Standing while being transported, not using a seat belt, getting off the bus other than at one's stop.
 - ii. Students will not extend their hands, arms or heads from the vehicle.
8. Students will not open or close the vehicle windows without permission of the driver.
9. Students must refrain from damaging the vehicle and will keep it clean.
10. Students will refrain from eating/drinking on the bus.
11. Students will not smoke/vape on the bus.
12. Students will sit in available seats or as assigned by the driver/program staff.
13. Students will enter and exit the van vehicles at their designated stops only.

Responsibilities of Parents

The responsibility of transporting students to and from school each school day requires the cooperation of the parents/guardians of students transported. Parents are requested to:

- Cooperate with school authorities, officials and drivers in promoting efficient client service.
- Recognize that for students shall be picked up and returned to their designated stops only.
- In cases where circumstances arise in which the parents/guardians take students home from school or decide to drive them to school, arrangements should be made directly with the transportation provider before the vehicle begins its afternoon run.
- If a student will be absent from school, parent/guardian should contact the transportation provider as soon as possible.
- Any changes to pick up or drop off destinations must be made in writing to and approved by the sending school district for approval.

Health And Wellness

Overview

Because of the age group and physical limitations of our student population, susceptibility to childhood diseases and infection is a real concern. The potential for illness to be readily transmitted exists when staff and students work in close contact and share common work and play equipment. Although we do make a sincere effort to regularly disinfect commonly used objects, the best possible protection from illness is to keep your child home when symptoms of illness are present. Here are some guidelines for you to follow:

- **Fever:** Keep your child at home if they have a fever of 100°F (38°C) or higher. They should be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to school.
- **Contagious Illnesses:** If your child has a contagious illness, such as the flu, strep throat, or pink eye, they should stay home until they have been on prescribed medication for at least 24 hours and their symptoms have improved.
- **Vomiting or Diarrhea:** Keep your child at home if they have vomited or had diarrhea within the past 24 hours. They should only return to school once they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
- **Persistent Cough or Breathing Issues:** If your child has a persistent cough or difficulty breathing, they should stay home, especially if these symptoms disrupt their ability to participate in normal school activities.
- **Rashes:** If your child develops an unexplained rash, keep them at home until a healthcare provider has determined that the rash is not contagious.
- **Runny Nose or Sore Throat:** While mild symptoms like a runny nose or sore throat might not always require staying home, if they are accompanied by other symptoms like fever, fatigue, or body aches, your child should rest at home until they feel better.

Please notify the teacher or school nurse if your child contracts a communicable disease. A written physician's approval may be required for the child to return to school.

If your child develops symptoms during the school day or if we feel they should not be in school, you will be notified to take your child home. The nurse may recommend a doctor's visit before the student returns to school.

Any questions regarding health policies should be referred to the school nurse in your child's program or school, or the Collaborative's nurse manager.

Please notify the teacher or school nurse if your child contracts a communicable disease. A written physician's approval may be required for the child to return to school.

If your child develops symptoms during the school day or if we feel they should not be in school, you will be notified to take your child home. The nurse may recommend a doctor's visit before the student returns to school.

Any questions regarding health policies should be referred to the school nurse in your child's program or school, or the Collaborative's Leader.

Concussions

Please notify your health care provider and the school nurse if your child experiences a concussion. Massachusetts regulations require middle and high schools to have policies and procedures on the prevention, management and return to academic and athletic activities for students who sustain a concussion or head injury. These policies are to ensure recovery and prevent further injury to the student. Bi-County Collaborative's Concussion Policy is available in the BICO Employee and Student Health Manual, which is posted on the BICO website. This document provides an overview of the updated guidelines and policies as per DESE and DPH regulations. For any specific questions or concerns, please contact the school nurse or the Collaborative's school nurse leader.

Health Insurance

Every uninsured child and teen in Massachusetts can obtain health care coverage at little or no cost. Programs available depend on family income, and services are accessible regardless of immigration status. MassHealth provides comprehensive health benefits, including doctors' visits, prescription drugs, dental services, counseling, and more. For more information, parents/guardians should call or visit the website:

MassHealth 1-800-841-2900 or CMSP 1-800-909-CMSP (2677)

[MassHealth Connector – https://www.mahealthconnector.org/](https://www.mahealthconnector.org/)

Homemade Baked Goods

To provide a safe environment for students with food allergies or dietary restrictions, homemade foods should not be shared in the classroom. Store-bought baked goods with ingredient labels are acceptable, as they allow us to better manage the safety of our students.

Immunizations

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) sets immunization requirements to ensure that students are protected against vaccine-preventable

diseases. These requirements align with the guidelines set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

Key Immunization Requirements as of the 2024 School Year:

- **Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten:**
 - DTaP/DTP/DT: 4 doses
 - Polio: 3 doses
 - Hepatitis B: 3 doses
 - MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella): 1 dose
 - Varicella (Chickenpox): 1 dose
 - Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b): 1 to 4 doses
 - PCV (Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine): 1 to 4 doses (age-dependent)
- **Kindergarten through Grade 6:**
 - DTaP/DTP/DT: 5 doses (or 4 doses if the fourth dose was given after the fourth birthday)
 - Polio: 4 doses (or 3 doses if the third dose was given after the fourth birthday)
 - Hepatitis B: 3 doses
 - MMR: 2 doses
 - Varicella: 2 doses
- **Grades 7 through 12:**
 - Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis): 1 dose
 - Polio: 4 doses (or 3 doses if the third dose was given after the fourth birthday)
 - Hepatitis B: 3 doses
 - MMR: 2 doses
 - Varicella: 2 doses
 - Meningococcal:
 - 1 dose for Grade 7
 - 2 doses for Grade 11 (second dose required for entry into Grade 12, unless the first dose was given after the 16th birthday)

Important Notes:

- Immunization requirements apply to all students, whether attending public, private, or charter schools.
- Homeschooling students are not required to meet school immunization requirements.
- Students who are not in compliance with immunization requirements may be excluded from school until they meet the requirements.

For the most accurate and updated information, it's recommended to refer directly to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health or the DESE website.

In Massachusetts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) have established guidelines for physical examinations to ensure the health and well-being of students. These exams help in the early detection of any health issues that might affect a child's ability to learn or participate in school activities.

Key Physical Examination Requirements:

Entry to School (Kindergarten or First Grade):

A comprehensive physical examination is required before entry into kindergarten or first grade, whichever comes first. This exam must be conducted within 12 months prior to the start of the school year.

Physical examinations are required at least once during the following stages:

- Kindergarten or First Grade (Entry)
- 4th Grade
- 7th Grade
- 10th Grade

1. New Entrants to School:

- a. Students entering a school in Massachusetts for the first time, regardless of the grade, must provide documentation of a physical examination conducted within the previous 12 months.

2. Sports Participation:

- a. Students who participate in school sports are required to have a physical examination annually. The exam must be completed within 13 months of the start of each sports season. Students may not participate in sports if their physical exam has expired during the season.

3. Students with Chronic Conditions:

- a. Students with chronic medical conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) may require more frequent physical exams or additional documentation, depending on the school's policies and the student's health care provider's recommendations.

Documentation:

- The physical exam must be documented by a licensed healthcare provider and include a complete assessment of the student's health.
- Parents/guardians should submit the completed physical examination form to the school's health office.

Exemptions:

- Exemptions to these requirements may be granted for religious reasons or if a parent or guardian presents a statement from a healthcare provider explaining why the examination cannot be done.

These requirements ensure that any health issues that could affect a student's learning or participation in school activities are identified and managed appropriately. For specific details or updates, it's best to consult directly with your local school district or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Food Allergies

Food allergies can be severe and occasionally life threatening. If your child has a food allergy, please indicate on the enrollment form and notify the school nurse. The foods most likely to cause allergic reactions include peanuts, tree nuts, dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Reactions can range from mild skin irritations to severe anaphylactic shock and even death.

Managing food allergies in school is a shared responsibility among students, parents, school staff and health care professionals. Our efforts aim to:

- Minimize the risk of allergic reactions of students with known food allergies while at school;
- Ensure that all information provided by parents of allergic children is provided to the appropriate school staff;
- Foster cooperation and communication between parents and school staff in determining effective strategies to minimize an allergic reaction while in school;
- Educate school staff, students and their families about food allergies and ways to reduce the risk of an in-school exposure.
- Develop and implement Individual Health Care Plan to address student's diagnosis.

Parent responsibilities:

- Notify the school of the child's allergies.
- Provide emergency contact information.
- Provide medical documentation from the child's health care provider.
- Provide a list of foods and/or ingredients that would cause a life-threatening reaction.
- Provide an order for epinephrine by a licensed provider as well as any other medication needed. Deliver medication(s) to school in original pharmacy-labeled container(s).
- Collaborate with the school nurse and school staff to develop an Allergy Action Emergency Plan (AAP) and/or Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP).

- Meet with the classroom staff to review AAP and/or IHCP.
- Educate child in the self-management of their allergy as age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate including
- Provide a medical alert bracelet/necklace for the child. Provide a photo of the child (when appropriate).

Bi-County Collaborative cannot guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy-related event while at school. The above guidelines, as well as the protocol developed for students with food allergies, were created to minimize the risk of life-threatening reactions of allergic students while in school.

Medication Policy

Administering Medicines to Students

In accordance with Mass. Gen. L. c. 71, sect. 54B, and 105 CMR sect. 210.000, prescription medication cannot be dispensed without a written order from a licensed physician and written consent from a parent or guardian. Over-the-counter medications, with the exception of Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen, and medicinal substitutes such as nutritional supplements, will not be dispensed without a physician's order or parental consent, as deemed necessary by the school nurse. Required orders and consents must be renewed as necessary and at the beginning of each academic year.

All medications must be in the original container, properly labeled, and delivered to the school nurse by a responsible adult. No more than a thirty (30) day supply will be accepted at one time. Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet or a locked box in a refrigerator in the nurse's office. Only the program nurse or school nurse will dispense medications, except for medications that may be self-administered, following M.G.L. Chapter 71 Section 54B.

Self-Administration of Prescription Medications

1. Students may self-administer prescription medication provided that certain conditions are met.
2. The school nurse may permit self-medication of prescription medication by a student provided that medication safety requirements are met:
 - a. An agreement is established among the student, school nurse, and parent/guardian specifying the conditions for self-administration.
 - b. The school nurse develops a Medication Administration Plan to ensure safe self-administration. The school nurse evaluates the student's health status and abilities and deems self-administration safe and appropriate. As necessary, the school nurse shall observe initial self-administration of the prescription medication;

3. The school nurse evaluates the student's health status and abilities, deeming self-administration safe and appropriate.
4. The school nurse is assured that the student can identify the appropriate medication, knows the frequency and time of administration, and follows the self-administration protocols.
5. Written authorization from the parent or guardian is provided unless the student has consented to treatment under M.G.L. c. 112, § 12F.

Diastat Guidelines

The administration of Diastat in the school setting is seen as an emergency medical intervention. As such, the nurse will administer the Diastat per physician guidelines and notify the Parent/Guardian. Emergency "911" will be called if the child is unstable in any way or if we are unable to reach the Parent/Guardian. A staff member from the child's program will accompany him/her to the emergency room and await the arrival of the Parent/Guardian.

The child receiving Diastat is to be observed for four hours following the administration of the medication. The child will likely sleep for a few hours and would do best in his/her own bed, under parental supervision. Close monitoring of breathing pattern and skin tone is indicated. The classroom setting is not conducive to on-going emergency medical assessment.

Use of Diastat in any Bi-County Collaborative program will require the following:

- A doctor's order from the prescribing physician to include specific guidelines and clear directions for administration of Diastat to the child.
- A signed parent permission form to administer the medication.
- Medication to be provided intact in original packaging and identified with the child's name.

Medication Delegation

Bi-County Collaborative is registered with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for the purpose of medication delegation for field trips. This registration provides for the school nurse leader to delegate the administration of prescription medication to another responsible adult. Delegated staff members are required to attend a medication delegation class yearly.

Code Of Conduct

Promoting Positive Student Conduct

Bi-County Collaborative is committed to promoting positive student conduct. Our programs, in conjunction with classroom rules, positive behavioral interventions, behavior support plans, and clinical interventions, are designed to maintain safety and foster a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Throughout the school day, students are taught to take

responsibility for their behavior and to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for the school environment.

- We encourage each student to contribute positively to the school community by learning the necessary skills and by aligning their behavior with the following expectations:
- Exercise self-control and use courteous language.
- Seek help from staff to resolve conflicts with peers.
- Dress and groom appropriately.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and be a role model.
- Be polite, cooperative, and respect the rights and feelings of others.
- Act considerately to avoid disrupting others.
- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect, understanding their perspective.
- Take responsibility for school property, including keeping the grounds clean.
- Support the learning process by attending classes regularly, being on time, and coming prepared.
- Listen carefully to instructions and participate in class activities.

The following are examples of prohibited on school grounds, transportation vehicles, and at school-sponsored activities and may result in disciplinary action (list is not exhaustive):

- Fighting
- Assault
- Bullying, including cyber-bullying
- Discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment
- Making threats
- Profanity/obscene language
- Defacing school property or the property of others
- Disrespectful behavior
- Leaving school grounds without authorization
- Smoking/Vaping
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages
- Possession and/or use of drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Possession of dangerous weapon

Certain violations may result in a long-term suspension or expulsion under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H 1/2. These include:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event

- Possession of a controlled substance while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- An assault on a school administrator, teacher, paraprofessional, or other staff person
- A felony charge or conviction

Other violations of the code of conduct may subject a student to disciplinary action up to and including mediation, detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ³/₄.

School Building Student Code Of Conduct

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as identified in the school district handbook, unless otherwise determined through the special education TEAM process. State and federal special education and civil rights laws require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation TEAM to be eligible for special education or whose program is described in an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP will indicate whether the student is able to conform his/her behavior to the regular discipline code or if a modification is required. If a modified disciplinary code is required, it will be written into the IEP.

Behavior Support Plans

In addition to IEP accommodations, some students may also have an individualized behavior support plan. Behavior support plans are data driven, and are based on functional behavior assessment and/or direct assessment and analysis of behavior data. Plans identify specific challenging behaviors for decrease as well as positive alternative behaviors for reinforcement. Plans are reviewed and amended as needed.

Drugs /Alcohol

In Massachusetts, it is against the law for students to have, use, sell, or share alcohol or drugs—whether they are prescription, over-the-counter, or illegal—on school property or at school events. At Bi-County Collaborative, we take this very seriously and will not tolerate any drug or alcohol use.

If a student is suspected of being involved with drugs or alcohol:

1. Immediate Action: If a student is thought to be using or has drugs or alcohol, the Program Director or their designee will search the student. If any substances are found, local police, parents/guardians, and the student's home school will be notified.
2. Disciplinary Measures: The school will take appropriate actions, which may include suspension or expulsion.
3. Health Assessment: If a student is suspected of being under the influence, they will be sent to the school nurse. The nurse will assess whether the student is intoxicated or

under the influence of drugs. If they are, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up their child.

4. Emergency Situations: If a student is incoherent or unable to function properly, the school will call emergency services (911) for help.
5. IEP Team Review: The IEP Team will meet to review the student's behavior support and intervention plans and decide if the student can continue in their current school setting.

Possession Of Firearms Or Weapons

At Bi-County Collaborative, we follow Massachusetts law regarding weapons in schools. Here's what you need to know:

1. Possession of Dangerous Weapons: A student can be suspended or expelled for having a dangerous weapon at school or during school events. Dangerous weapons include items like guns, knives, bombs, or similar devices, as well as items that could be used as weapons, like slingshots, firecrackers, brass knuckles, and more.
2. Immediate Action: If a student is found with a dangerous weapon, or if they seem to pose a danger to themselves or others, the local police and school principal will be notified right away.
3. Removal of Weapons: If a student has a dangerous weapon, Bi-County Collaborative staff will take it away immediately and inform a supervisor. The supervisor will notify the Executive Director, and a written report of the incident will be made.
4. Consequences: Violating the weapons policy can lead to out-of-school suspension or expulsion and may also result in changes to the student's educational placement or termination of services.

It's important to keep our school safe, so please ensure that your child understands the seriousness of this policy.

Search And Seizures

At our school, lockers, desks, the email system, and other school property (i.e. computers) belong to the school. This means that students should not expect privacy when using these areas, and the school can check them at any time for any reason.

If a staff member thinks a student might have something related to a crime or a school rule violation in their personal belongings (like a backpack or cell phone) or on their person, they may search those items. A student can also agree to a search if they choose to.

For students under 18, parents will be informed about any search within 24 hours after it happens.

If a student refuses to allow a search, it could lead to suspension from school. In cases where a search is related to finding evidence of a crime or illegal items, the police may be contacted.

During a suspension, students must stay off school grounds and cannot participate in any school activities.

Student Discipline And Due Process

The Program Director has the authority to exercise discretion in determining the consequences for a student who has violated disciplinary rules. Students will receive the appropriate level of due process consistent with Massachusetts and federal law, as described below.

Definitions

In-School Suspension: the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Short-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Long-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense as outlined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H 1/2, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed, except in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H 1/2.

Expulsion: the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H1/2.

Written Notice: written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, or email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

Principal: Program Director or designee for disciplinary purposes.

Superintendent: Executive Director or designee for disciplinary purposes.

Opportunity To Make Academic Progress

Any student who is serving a short-term suspension, long-term suspension or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan. M.G.L. c. 76, § 21.

Due Process For M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h ¾ Offenses:

ANY OFFENSE OTHER THAN: POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS WEAPON; POSSESSION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE; ASSAULT ON STAFF; AND/OR FELONY MATTER

All school principals and principal's designees and the Superintendent and Superintendent's designees when acting as a decision-maker at a disciplinary hearing or appeal to consider student discipline for violations of school rules other than offenses involving drugs, weapons, assaults on school staff and felony offenses, shall, when deciding the consequences for the student, consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The principal or designee shall not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed, and their use and results documented, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4(b). This applies to all school rules violations, which is conduct that falls within the scope of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4. This does not apply to conduct that falls within the scope of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H1/2.

Bi-County Collaborative does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, homelessness, disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, age, veteran or military status, ancestry, or genetic information.

Emergency Removal Under M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h ¾

A principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. In such a case, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student.

The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of: (1) the emergency removal; (2) the reason for the emergency removal; (3) the disciplinary offense; (4) the basis for the charge; (5) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension; (6) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing; (7) the date, time, and location of the hearing; and (8) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate.

Before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent, the principal must provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal that complies with either the short-term due process or long-term due process set forth below, as applicable, and must provide the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing.

Additionally, the principal is required to render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of notice of the decision for short-term suspension or long-term suspension at set forth below, whichever is applicable.

A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

In-School Suspension Under M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h ¾

Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will provide oral notice to the student and parent of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent. On or before the day of suspension, the principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the In-School Suspension, including the reason and the length of the In-School Suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth in 603 CMR 53.10(4), if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. Students have the right to appeal an In-School Suspension that will result in their

in-school or out of school suspension for more than ten (10) school days in a school year and may be utilized as an alternative to short-term suspension.

Short-Term Suspension Under M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h ^{3/4}

Except as provided in cases of In-School Suspension or Emergency Removal, a principal may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing.

The principal shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language: the disciplinary offense; the basis for the charge; the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension; the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing; the date, time, and location of the hearing; the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate; and, if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing: the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b), and the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

At the principal's hearing, the student and parents (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining consequences for the student.

The principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice. If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent/executive director and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect. Students shall have no right to appeal a short-term suspension.

Long-Term Suspension Under M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h ^{3/4}

The student and parents will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of school suspension.

Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the Student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the principal will also notify the student and parent of the following rights: (1) in advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; (2) the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense; (3) the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; (4) the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; and (5) the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

At the hearing, the student will have the rights identified in the written notice, and the principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a Long-Term Suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: (1) identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; (2) set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal; (3) identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; (4) include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21; and (5) inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent/executive director or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension.

Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the

following information stated in plain language: (1) the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the Long-Term Suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent/executive director an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and (2) that the Long-Term Suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

A student who is placed on Long-Term Suspension under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾ following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the Long-Term Suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension. The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension as identified above.

The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which: (1) identifies the disciplinary offense and the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; (2) sets out the key facts and conclusions reached by the superintendent; (3) identifies the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; and (4) includes notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's

decision. The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

Due Process For M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h Offenses:

POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS WEAPON; POSSESSION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE;
ASSAULT ON STAFF; AND FOR M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ OFFENSES:
FELONY COMPLAINT AND/OR FELONY CONVICTION

Short-Term Suspension Under M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h or 37h ½

The student will be given oral notice of the violation with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond thereto, prior to the principal's imposition of a short-term or interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending formal proceedings. Upon imposition of a short term or interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less, pending further disciplinary proceedings, the student and parents will be provided with written notice of the suspension, the date and time of the formal disciplinary hearing, the right to have representation, and the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

Long-Term Suspension Or Expulsion Under M.G.L. C. 71, § 37h or 37h ½

The student shall be notified in writing of the charges, an opportunity for a hearing, the right to have representation, and the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, the principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have committed an offense under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H. A written decision will be issued after the hearing.

The student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long term suspension or expulsion from school to the Superintendent. When the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½, the student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½.

Discipline Of Students With Disabilities

In addition to the due process protections and rights afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or whom the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services.

A suspension of longer than ten (10) consecutive school days, or a series of short term suspensions that exceeds ten (10) school days and constitute a pattern of removal, are considered to constitute a potential disciplinary change in placement.

Prior to a suspension that would result in a disciplinary change in placement of a student with a disability, the building administrators, the parents and relevant members of the student's IEP/504 Team will convene to determine whether the violation for which the student is subject to a disciplinary change in placement was caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or was the direct result of a failure to implement the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.

If the Team determines that the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the policies and procedures applicable to all students except that students eligible for special education services shall be entitled to a free appropriate public education as of the eleventh (11th) day of disciplinary exclusion in the school year.

If the team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the team will conduct a functional behavior assessment or review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan, and the student will not be suspended for the violation found to be a manifestation of his/her disability.

Regardless of the manifestation determination, the Team may place the student in an interim alternative setting (as determined by the Team) up to forty-five (45) school days if:

1. The student was in possession of a dangerous weapon on school grounds or at school sponsored events;
2. The student was in possession of or using of illegal drugs on school grounds or at school sponsored events;
3. The student engaged in solicitation of a controlled substance on school grounds or at school-sponsored events; or
4. The student inflicted serious bodily injury to another at school or at school-sponsored events.
5. The interim alternative setting must enable the student to participate in the general curriculum, progress toward the goals in the IEP, and receive the special education and related services contained in the student's IEP. The interim alternative setting must also provide services and modifications designed to address the behavior giving rise to the removal and to prevent the behavior from reoccurring. At the conclusion of the forty-five (45) school day period, the student shall be returned to his/her previous placement unless the parent (or student if 18+ years of age) consents to an extension of the interim alternative setting or an Order is obtained from the Bureau of Special Education Appeal authorizing the student's continued removal.

If the conduct does not involve a dangerous weapon, controlled substance, or serious bodily injury, the school may remove the student to an interim alternative setting for forty-five (45) days only: 1) with parental consent; or 2) by obtaining authorization from a court or BSEA Hearing Officer. In order to obtain an order from the court or BSEA Hearing Officer, the

school must prove that maintaining the student's placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

The parent shall have the right to appeal the Team's manifestation determination, the imposition of a disciplinary change in placement, and the student's placement in an interim alternative educational setting. The student will remain in the disciplinary placement imposed by school authorities pending a decision on the appeal or until the expiration of the disciplinary sanction, whichever comes first.

Planned Terminations

- **Meeting Notification:** If there's a need to meet about your child's IEP (except in emergencies), the school will notify the local education agency (LEA) and arrange a meeting. This meeting is important for planning and developing a termination plan for your child.
- **Advance Notice:** You will receive a notice about the meeting at least 10 days before it happens. This notice will be sent to you, your child (if they are over 14), the LEA, and any relevant human service agency.
- **Meeting Purpose:** During the meeting, everyone will discuss and create a written termination plan. This plan will outline your child's specific program needs, both short- and long-term educational goals, and any recommendations for follow-up or transitional services.
- **Explaining Procedures:** The school will clearly explain the termination process to you, your child, the LEA, and any involved human service agencies.
- **Implementation Timeline**:** The written termination plan will be put into action at least 30 days after the meeting, unless everyone agrees to start sooner.

Emergency Terminations

1. **Immediate Action:** If a student is seen as a threat to their own safety or the safety of others, the school will take immediate steps to address the situation.
2. **Notification:** The school will quickly inform:
 - a. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
 - b. The student's parents or guardians, as well as the local school district and any state agency involved in the student's care, through both phone calls and letters.
3. **Emergency Meeting:** The school will give the public school district the chance to hold an emergency TEAM meeting to discuss the situation.
4. **Enrollment Status:** The program will not end a student's enrollment right away. The local public school district must take responsibility for the student before any termination occurs.
5. **Extension:** If the public school requests it, the program can wait up to two weeks before ending the student's enrollment. This gives the public school time to plan and hold the emergency meeting.

6. Longer Delay: If both BICO and the public school agree, the delay in ending enrollment can be extended beyond two weeks.

NO TOBACCO POLICY

In the interest of promoting healthy working conditions and protecting the safety of students, faculty and visitors, the Board of Directors of Bi-County Collaborative have created a smoke free environment for all of the programs. Therefore, the use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaporizers, by staff, students, and visitors is prohibited at all times in all school facilities, school grounds, at all school sponsored activities, including field trips, and on school vans.

In accordance with M.G.L., c. 71, § 2A, it is unlawful for any student enrolled in a public primary or secondary school in the Commonwealth to use tobacco of any kind on school grounds.

STUDENT RECORDS

Bi-County Collaborative recognizes that the official student record is maintained by the sending school district(s)/LEA responsible for student's placement. All requests for records or amendments to records should be sent to the sending school district/LEA. It is the policy of the Bi-County Collaborative to maintain student records of attendance, evaluation, exclusion (e.g. suspension) or withdrawal for each child in accordance with FERPA, 603 CMR sect. 23.00, and Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, sect. 34E and 34D during the time in which the child is enrolled in a Collaborative program. Student records are kept in a protected location, and treated in a confidential manner.

Once the student is no longer enrolled in a Collaborative program, all student records are returned to the sending school district. No student records are kept by the Collaborative once the student has withdrawn from a Collaborative program or graduated from school.

Bi-County Collaborative will provide access to the student record to the parent/guardian or to eligible students as soon as possible and within ten (10) days after the initial request.

The parent/guardian and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

Pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, Section 34E and 34D, and 603 CMR sect. 23.01(3), a parent/guardian of a student has the right to inspect his or her child's student record regardless of the student's age.

Under Section 23.07(2) (a) of the regulations, parents/guardians and "eligible students" (those fourteen or older or in at least ninth grade) have the right, upon request, to a copy of any

information in the student record. However, Section 23.01 (3) of the regulations permits a student eighteen or older to limit his or her parent's/guardian's right to a copy of some or all of the information in the record by submitting a written request to the principal or superintendent. A copy of such a request must be kept in the student record and honored by school officials.

Confidentiality of Records

Except where state and federal regulations specifically authorize access to third parties, including but not limited to director information, no individuals or organizations other than the Parent/Guardian, eligible students, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the Parent/Guardian or eligible student.

Access to Student Records for Non-Custodial Parents

In order to ensure that permitted parental access is provided as soon as possible, a parent/guardian should provide the Collaborative with a copy of any custody decree or agreement, parenting plan or any other court order, including a temporary restraining order, which specifies which parent(s) has physical and legal custody.

As required by Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. Any individual who by court order does not have physical custody of the student is considered a non-custodial parent for purposes of M.G.L. 71, § 34H, 603 CMR 23.07 and this policy. This includes parents who by court order do not reside with or supervise the student, even for short periods of time. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by M.G.L. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
2. The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered supervised visitation,
Or
3. The parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

(b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.00.

(c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.

(d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after twenty-one (21) days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access to set forth in 603 CMR 23.07.

(e) The school must delete the electronic and postal address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order, which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L.71, § 34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

ANTI-HAZING

The Bi-County Collaborative forbids hazing in any form. Should an alleged instance of hazing occur, the provision of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 269, Sections 17-19 shall be adhered to (see below). Any student who has engaged in hazing shall be subject to disciplinary action. Any employee who has engaged in hazing shall be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.

M.G.L. Chapter 269, Section 17 - HAZING

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both."

The term "hazing" 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. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

M.G.L. Chapter 269, Section 18 – FAILURE TO REPORT HAZING

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined above and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself

or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

M.G.L. Chapter 269, Section 19 – ISSUANCE TO STUDENTS

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations

governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

Organizational Policies and State / Federal Regulations

Bullying Prevention And Intervention Policy

Bi-County Collaborative is committed to working with students, staff, families, and the community to prevent issues of violence. This plan shall apply to students and members of the school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, custodians, bus drivers, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, and educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
2. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
3. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
4. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
5. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Leadership

Plan Development

Through input from the following constituent members, the Bi-County Collaborative is committed to create structures within its programs that promote supportive school environments to reduce barriers to learning. Input from the following members of the Collaborative community was sought in the development of this plan:

- Leadership Team (consisting of):
 - Executive Director
 - Program Directors
 - Director of Clinical Services
 - School Nurse Manager
- Staff (Professional and non professional)
- Parents
- Operating Committee (member Special Education Administrators)

- Out-of-District Placement Coordinators (member school districts)

Input from these constituents was sought at committee meetings, information and planning sessions, a parent focus group meeting, and through a public comment period where the “draft” Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was posted on Bi-County Collaborative’s website for public viewing and comment. Letters were sent to all parents and staff by mail informing them of the posting of the plan on the website and the call for public comment. Special Education Administrators were notified through email.

Program Directors in conjunction with the Executive Director are responsible for the implementation and oversight of this plan.

Assessing Needs and Resources

It is the intention of the Bi-County Collaborative to enhance its capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of this process Bi-County will conduct the following:

The Leadership Team together with the Positive School Climate (Bullying Prevention/Intervention) Committee have identified current programs in place throughout the organization that address the social and behavioral well being of our students. Current programs identified include: CPI, Health Curriculum (proposed), Project Teammate, Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS), Circles, EduGames. Various techniques are utilized, including the development of pragmatic skills, social skills, modeling, social stories, and other team building activities that are embedded within programs and services.

- The Leadership Team will assess the effectiveness of these programs through the monitoring of bullying incident reporting data at regularly scheduled weekly Leadership Team meetings. The Leadership Team will assess the outcomes of those incidents, and develop/modify/critique the action plan as a result of those incidents that work to prevent reoccurrence.
- In addition to the monitoring of bullying incident reporting data, all behavioral incidents reports are reviewed by Program Directors and the Executive Director to identify those behaviors that may be characteristic of bullying. Such incident reports are directed to the Director of Clinical Services, Board Certified Behavior Specialists (BCBAs), and psychological consultants for follow up and to design intervention plans to address those behaviors.
- Individuals within the organization have participated in “train the trainers” program conducted by Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Commission (MARC). These individuals include special education teachers, school adjustment counselors, behavior specialist, and Program Directors, and make up the Positive School Climate Committee. These trainers will conduct training sessions for all staff, parents and administrators in

bullying prevention and intervention. As embedded members of the organization, these individuals will be key to the organization's monitoring and observation of issues related to bullying so that interventions and treatment plans may be executed proactively.

- Bi-County Collaborative Board of Directors approved the "Bullying Prevention and Intervention" policy on September 16, 2010.

Planning and Oversight

If a reported incident of bullying occurs the following actions will be taken.

- A. Staff will report in writing any bullying incident to their Program Director or designee using the Bi-County Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form.
- B. The report will be reviewed and signed off by the Program Director and Executive Director.
- C. Tracking of reported incidents will be conducted by the Program Directors with noted attention given to targets and aggressors.
- D. Analysis of bullying incidents and their resulting outcomes will be conducted by the Bi-County Collaborative Leadership Team as incidents occur, as well as in weekly Leadership Team meetings. During the review process consideration will be given to the need for action and prevention plans and/or supports for the needs of targets and aggressors.
- E. Professional development will be provided by Bi-County Collaborative's Positive School Climate Committee and will include positive school climate and bullying identification and prevention techniques. Information will be shared with all staff when they convene in September of each school year. Subsequent training will take place either in further staff meetings or classroom meetings.
- F. With input from trained staff, the Leadership Team will identify age and ability appropriate curriculum by January 2011 with implementation to begin/continue immediately thereafter.
- G. Should the development or implementation of any portion of this plan affect the Board approved Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy the Executive Director will bring it to the attention of the Board of Directors for consideration.
- H. As a result of the bullying plan and policy, the student handbook will be modified by June 2011 and posted on Bi-County Collaborative's website.
- I. The Positive School Climate Committee will identify parent training opportunities.

Priority Statements

The Bi-County Collaborative expects that all members of the Bi-County Community treat each other in a civil manner with respect for individual differences. Bi-County Collaborative is committed to providing all students and staff 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.

At Bi-County Collaborative, we understand that members of certain student groups such as gay/lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, homeless and our students with disabilities may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing in our own programs or in our host school environments. Bi-County Collaborative will take steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations and provide its students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Bi-County Collaborative will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, on school transportation, or in school related activities. We will promptly investigate 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.

Training And Professional Development

Annual Staff Training

Bi-County Collaborative will provide annual training on bullying prevention and intervention to all staff at the mandatory Orientation meeting held in September of each year. This training will include, but not be limited to:

- Review of the Bi-County Collaborative's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Plan
 - Specifically including: procedures for reporting and analyzing bullying incidents, steps Program Directors will take upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and the location of the policy on the Collaborative's Website
- Overview of bullying prevention curricula

Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be trained by the Program Director or by a trained member of the Collaborative.

Ongoing Professional Development

Professional development will be offered to staff to build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. This training will be site based and delivered through staff meetings and/or classroom meetings by trained staff members who received extensive training through MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Commission). The content of the trainings will include the following:

- Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying.
- Developmentally 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 cyber bullying; 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' Individual Education Program (IEP)s, with particular focus on students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or whose disability affects social skills development. Program Directors, in conjunction with the Out-of-District Placement Coordinators, will ensure and be responsible to ensure this topic is addressed by the Team and changes are made to the Individual Education Program (IEP) as appropriate and in accordance with input from the IEP Team.

Written Notice to Staff

The Board Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention along with this plan will be available to Bi-County Collaborative Staff on the Collaborative's Website. Collaborative Staff will be notified as such during the annual training to be held at the beginning of each school year.

Access To Resources And Services

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families and others are addressed. If a student has been identified as a target or as an aggressor the following supports will be made available.

Identifying Resources

Bi-County Collaborative educational programs offer support to students in a protected environment with small class sizes (4-10 students) with a low student to teacher ratio. All staff members are highly trained to work with students with disabilities. In addition to teaching and therapy staff, students also have access to counseling through the Collaborative's school adjustment counselors. Many students who attend Bi-County programs also receive services through private agencies outside of the Collaborative. Collaborative staff members routinely work with families to solicit releases to directly communicate with outside providers and with this authorization communication is established between the school program and outside providers. Should a student require additional counseling or agency resources Bi-County staff members work closely with families to identify need, and to provide access to community resources.

- Bi-County Collaborative has identified resources for families of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or any disability which are available to staff through their Program Directors.
- Built into Bi-County Collaborative programs are home visits, which may be conducted if parents need additional supports/information.
- Also available to parents, through District request are extensive home services offered through our Applied Behavior Analysis Home Services program.
- Program Directors and/or School Adjustment Counselors work with families to identify needs and to make connections to outside agencies, either directly or through the sending school district.

Counseling and other Intervention Services

As indicated above, counseling and positive behavior support services are available for all students at the Bi-County Collaborative. Should behavioral incident reports or bullying incident reports indicate a need for further counseling supports, the Program Director will make an immediate referral to one of the Bi-County School Adjustment Counselors and/or Behavior Specialists. Additionally, positive behavioral support plans may be developed or modified based upon incident reporting through the intervention support of the Program Director. It is at the discretion of the Program Director, teaching staff, and school adjustment counselors as well as behavior specialists to develop a plan for involving and providing information to parents about bullying behaviors and steps they may take outside the school day.

- Should acts of bullying occur, staff will identify common times students are together and work to separate students whenever possible.
- The identified aggressor will receive increased adult supervision.
- Program Directors will refer students to counseling as appropriate.
- School Adjustment Counselors, along with Program Directors will work with families to identify an action plan with a built in re-evaluation period.
- The need for a behavior management plan will be assessed and implemented as needed.
- If the bullying behavior becomes a pattern, it will be addressed in the student's Individual Education Program (IEP).

Students with Disabilities

As a special education service provider, Bi-County Collaborative staff is sensitive to the needs of its students and families. Program Directors have made available to staff the DESE Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2011-1: Bullying Prevention and Intervention. Together with the Out-of-District Coordinators, Program Directors will direct the IEP Team to consider the student's social skills and identify behaviors that affect the student's learning, the learning of others, and the student's ability to interact with others in positive ways.

During the evaluation process, the IEP Team will gather data and information relative to a student's social skills. That data will be used as a source for discussion of potential student supports.

Referral to Outside Services

Staff will refer students to an outside agency as warranted. The determination will be made on an individual basis.

Academic And Non-Academic Activities

- The Leadership Team in conjunction with the Positive School Climate Committee will assess current instruction on bullying prevention in each grade and begin implementation promptly.
- Self-advocacy will be taught to all students at all levels to know their disability and how to have a voice.

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, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber-safety, 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.

Each year, classroom staff will instruct students in age appropriate and developmentally appropriate language to recognize bullying and to take the necessary steps to respond to and report to such acts.

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;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;

- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely;
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Policies And Procedures For Reporting And Responding To Bullying And Retaliation

Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

1. Reporting by staff. It is the Bi-County Collaborative's expectation that the host school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, contracted staff, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation s/he has witnessed or become aware of to the School Principal and/or Program Director or designee. The Program Director or designee shall immediately inform the Executive Director of Bi-County Collaborative, School Principal or designee of the host school, and Special Education Administrator or designee from the sending school district.
2. Reporting by students, parents or guardians, and others. Bi-County Collaborative expects students, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Program Director or designee. An individual may make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation using the procedure at the host school or that of the public day school. However, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

1. Safety. Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Program Director 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, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The Program

Director or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary. Additionally, the Program Director 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.

2. Obligations to notify others.

a. Notice to parents or guardians

- i. The Program Director or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the alleged target and the alleged aggressor of a report of bullying or retaliation once a pre-investigation of events has been conducted. If either the alleged target or alleged aggressor attends the host school, the Program Director or designee will notify the School Principal of the host school, and Special Education Administrator or designee of the sending school district. If the alleged target and alleged aggressor attend different schools, the Program Director or designee receiving the report shall inform the Program Director of the other program or Principal of the other student's school, who shall notify the student's parents of the report and procedures.

b. Notice to another school district

- i. If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district and Bi-County Collaborative is the first to be informed of the bullying or retaliation, then the Program Director or designee must, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action.

c. Notice to law enforcement

- i. At any point after receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, or during or after an investigation, if the Program Director or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that the incident may involve criminal conduct, Program Director or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. In addition, if an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, Program Director or designee will notify local law enforcement if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

Investigation

The Program Director or designee in collaboration with host school administration, as warranted, shall investigate promptly a report of bullying or retaliation, giving consideration to

all the circumstances at hand, including the nature of allegations and ages of students involved. The following are general guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. The guidelines will be adapted as necessary to respond appropriately to the complaint.

Pre-Investigation: Even before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, Collaborative personnel in collaboration with host school administration will consider whether there is a need to take immediate steps to support the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. In taking any such action, however, the rights of both the alleged target and alleged aggressor must be considered.

Written statement of the complaint: The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gathering information from the complainant, including such matters as: what specifically happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the events occurred (date, time of day), and where the events occurred.

It is helpful to have these facts in writing. If age appropriate, the complainant may be asked to put the complaint in writing and to sign and date it. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to write a complaint, the investigator will record the allegations, read them to the complainant to confirm accuracy, and ask the complainant to sign the document. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to sign, the investigator may sign and date the document her/himself.

Interviews: Once the allegations of the complainant are established, the investigator will gather other evidence, which often involves interviews of the alleged aggressor and/or other witnesses. If appropriate, the investigator should remind the alleged aggressor and witnesses that retaliation against persons whom they believe might have reported the incidents or cooperated with the investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of the complainant and the other witnesses will be maintained to the extent practicable given the Collaborative's obligation to investigate and address the matter. The names of individuals involved will not be released to other parties.

Determinations

The Program Director or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Program Director 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 Program Director or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Program Director or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The Program Director or designee will 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. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. **Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Program Director 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.**

Response to bullying

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building
 - a. Upon the Program Director or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the Program Director or designee may consider include:
 - i. offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curriculum;
 - ii. providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with school adjustment counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
 - iii. implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
 - iv. meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
 - v. adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
 - vi. making a referral for evaluation.
2. Taking Disciplinary Action
 - a. If the Program Director 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. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the student's individual behavior plan and/or Individual Education Program (IEP).
- b. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.
 - c. If the Program Director or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.
3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others
- a. The Program Director 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 Program Director 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.
 - b. Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Program Director 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 Program Director or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

Collaboration With Families

- A. Parent education and resources. Bi-County Collaborative parents will be eligible to attend local training through their sending districts as sponsored by the local PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations. In addition, Bi-County Collaborative parents will be notified by classroom teachers when students are receiving curriculum instructions around this topic. Parent training will also be offered by the Bi-County Collaborative and individual parent training will be provided by Bi-County Collaborative on a case specific basis.
- B. Notification requirements. Each year at the beginning of the school year either through the registration packet or the student handbook, Bi-County Collaborative will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety, as well as the student-related sections of the Plan and the Bi-County Collaborative's Internet and Network Acceptable Use Policy. Bi-County Collaborative will post the Plan and related information on its website.

Prohibition Against Bullying And Retaliation

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

1. on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored, on school transportation, or school--related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
2. 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 a school district or 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.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Definitions

Perpetrator, a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, and educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- I. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- II. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- III. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- IV. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- V. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Relationship To Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

Child Abuse And Neglect

In Massachusetts, the law (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 119, sect. 51A) requires anyone who works with children, like teachers, nurses, and administrators, to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect. If they believe a child under 18 is experiencing serious physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect, they must contact the Massachusetts State Department of Children and Families. Failure to report can lead to a fine of up to \$5,000.

Definitions:

- Abuse is when someone intentionally harms a child physically.
- Neglect is when a child does not receive essential things like food, care, clothing, shelter, or medical attention.

Reports of abuse or neglect are kept confidential and can only be discussed with staff members who need to know or authorized personnel from the Department of Children and Families.

Crisis Prevention Intervention Policy & Procedures

Bi-County Collaborative trains and prepares program staff to work with students with diverse needs. Through clinical consultation offered by clinical psychologists and psychiatrists, and the work of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), school adjustment counselors, therapists and special education teachers, our programs utilize positive behavior support plans, therapeutic interventions, and instructional strategies to respond to crisis situations.

Due to the nature of the disabilities of our students, they can become agitated, dis-regulated and sometimes out of control. Students may make threats, attempt to hurt themselves or others. The safety of all BICO students and staff is our utmost priority and all incidents are taken seriously. Staff follow Crisis Prevention Intervention procedures to support students in these situations.

Upon gaining knowledge of a student becoming threatening or dangerous to him/herself or others:

- 1) Staff report incidents to the Program Director, school adjustment counselor and/or other clinical staff.
- 2) The school adjustment counselor and/or other staff support student and other involved individuals
- 3) A decision is made as to the seriousness of the situation with consideration to the student's history, previous behavior, current stressors, etc.
- 4) An incident report is written to document the event and parents are notified. Depending upon the seriousness of the incident, parents may be asked to pick up their son/daughter and have them evaluated for risk by the local crisis team and/ or a mental health service provider.
- 5) If the student is not safe to be transported by car, an ambulance will be called.
- 6) When appropriate a re-entry meeting is held with the student, parent, and staff to determine safety and to determine if any programming changes are needed.

When a student is acting in such a way as to present imminent danger to themselves or to others, BICO Program Staff will implement Non-Violent Crisis Prevention Intervention Strategies. BICO has staff who are certified trainers who provide training in Non-Violent Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) on an ongoing basis. For a complete description of BICO's Crisis Prevention Intervention Policy and Procedures, please see the Employee and Student Manual for Health and Safety posted on our website at www.bicounty.org

Communication and Documentation of Incidents

Regular communication between program staff and parents/guardians is an essential component of our work together. In the event of an incident all attempts are made by program staff to contact parents/guardians personally by phone and/or in a home/school notebook so

that the incident may be properly reviewed and discussed. All such incidents and interventions are documented using the Collaborative's Incident Report form.

Reports are written by the staff members involved in the incident, reviewed by the Program Director and the Program Director for Clinical Services. Incident reports are mailed to parents/guardians, sent to school districts, and copies are retained in the Collaborative's Student File.

Interventions used to manage student behavior are designed with the guidance of therapists, behavior specialists, clinical psychologists, special educators and Program Directors. Measures are taken to ensure that the least restrictive course of intervention is utilized. Positive behavior support plans and interventions are reviewed and updated on a regular basis by program staff. These plans may include the need to separate the student so as to provide an opportunity to de-escalate and stabilize behavior.

Documentation of Time-Out

When a student's behavior requires separation in a room apart from the group or program activity, such as time out, BICO staff follow the Crisis Prevention Intervention Policy & Procedures which includes the following:

- A staff member will be present and the student will be observed at all times,
- If a time out area has a door it will remain opened, it will not be locked,
- The space will be clean, safe, and appropriate for the age of the student,
- The time out will be documented in the student's behavioral data log.
- Documentation will include the date, length of time out (start and end time), behavior preceding the need for time out, and staff member(s) observing the student during the time out.

- **Time-Out May NOT Exceed 30 Minutes without Approval**

For a time-out to exceed 30 minutes, based on the student's continued agitation, approval from the Program Director or School Adjustment Counselor must be obtained. Staff members involved contact or have someone else contact their Program Director or School Adjustment Counselor for guidance in the further management of the situation. The Program Director or School Adjustment Counselor may decide to contact the Parent to confer on the matter.

Time-Outs which exceed 30 minutes are documented in an Incident Report. The Incident Report form shall include the date, time, and location of the time-out, the specific behavior preceding the time-out, follow up procedures and all requirements noted above.

Restraint Prevention & Behavior Support Policy & Procedures

Bi-County Collaborative (“BICO”) seeks to ensure that every student is free from the use of physical restraint that is inconsistent with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.00. Physical restraint is an emergency measure of last resort. It may be administered only when necessary to protect a student and/or school community member from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. When, based on this standard, physical restraint is necessary, staff will strive to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint. A separate policy, BICO’s Crisis Intervention Policy and Procedures, provides a description of alternatives to physical restraint as well as methods to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide, including de-escalation techniques and individual crisis planning.

Definitions to consider:

Mechanical Restraint: the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student’s freedom of movement. The term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, and are used for the specific and approved positioning or protective purposes for which such devices were designed.

Medication Restraint: the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. Medication prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized by the parent for administration in the school setting is not medication restraint.

Physical Escort: A temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of including student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

Physical Restraint: direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Program Director: under this policy, BICO’s Program Director or designee serves in the capacity of “Principal” as that term is used in 603 C.M.R. 46.00.

Prone Restraint: A physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student’s body to keep the student in the face-down position.

Seclusion: involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined below.

Time-Out: a behavioral support strategy, developed pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(1), in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

Chemical restraint, mechanical restraint and seclusion are prohibited in all BICO programs

Neither 603 C.M.R. 46.00 nor this policy prohibits: (1) any teacher, employee or agent of BICO from using reasonable force to protect students, others or themselves from imminent, serious, physical harm; (2) any individual from reporting to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (3) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (4) an individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A.

Legal Standard for Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is considered an emergency procedure of last resort. This means that it may be used only when the student's behavior poses a threat of assault or imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others; and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

- Physical restraint may never be used for punishment.
- Physical restraint may not be used as a response to a student's property damage, disruption of school order, refusal to comply with rules/directions, or verbal threats, unless the above harm standard is also met.
- Physical restraint may not be used as a standard response for any student. No IEP or written behavioral plan may include physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior.

Safety and Physical Restraint

To ensure student safety, staff will review and consider a student's medical and psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavior intervention plans. Physical restraint will not be used when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not

limited to, communication-related disorders, asthma, seizures, cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, or risk of vomiting.

During a physical restraint, staff will continuously monitor the student's physical status, including skin temperature, color and respiration, and make certain that the student is able to breathe and to speak. Staff will use the safest physical restraint method available and appropriate for the situation, and will use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm. Whenever possible, another adult who is not a participant in the restraint will witness the administration of the restraint.

When physical intervention becomes necessary, staff members must provide positive psychological conditions, by employing the following suggestions:

- Remain calm;
- Provide one adult to communicate verbally with the student;
- Reduce confusion; and
- Practice non-verbal communication (quality of touch, a non-confrontational approach).

In any situation that requires physical intervention, staff members not directly involved with the situation must assume responsibility for maintaining order and reassuring other students.

In extreme situations, the student can appear out of control and reach a point where physical assistance cannot help. In this type of situation, staff members exercise movement deflection, and evasive tactics, until they can approach the student safely.

Extreme situations require the staff member to notify the Program Director, Director of Clinical Services, or Executive Director immediately. If a life-threatening situation develops (display of a weapon or placing a staff member in physical peril), contact the police immediately (dial "911").

Description of Physical Restraints Used in Emergency Situations:

- **Children's Control Position/Basket Hold:** Is designed to be used with children. You should consider using this position only with individuals considerably smaller than yourself.
 - Gain control of the child's arms from behind and cross the arms in front of the child.
 - The arms should be positioned high on the child and secured by locking one arm under the other. This will prevent the child from slipping through and will minimize any pressure on the child's chest or abdomen.

- Position yourself behind the child while maintaining close body contact and standing to one side. This position allows you to maintain a balanced stance while managing the child.
- **Team Control Position:** Is used to manage individuals who have become dangerous to themselves or others. Two staff members hold the individual as the auxiliary team member(s) continually assess the safety of all involved and assist, if needed. During the intervention, staff members who are holding the individual should:
 - Face the same direction as the acting-out person while adjusting, as necessary, to maintain close body contact with the individual.
 - Keep their inside legs in front of the individual.
 - Bring the individual's arms across their bodies, securing them to their hip areas.
 - Place the hands closest to the individual's shoulders in a C-shape position to direct the shoulders forward.

*(Taken from Non-Violent Crisis Prevention Intervention Manual, 2012 reprinted 2013) 30

Prone and Floor Restraints

Prone restraints are prohibited, except on an individual basis and when **all** of the following conditions, which require specific documentation, are met: (1) the student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff; (2) all other forms of physical restraint have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others; (3) there are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed physician; (4) there is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional; (5) the program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and the use of prone restraint is approved in writing by the Program Director; and (6) the program has documented all of the above before using prone restraint and maintains the documentation.

Floor restraints are prohibited unless the staff administering the restraint have received in-depth training in accordance with 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3), and these trained staff members determine that such method of restraint is required to provide safety for the student or others.

Duration of Physical Restraint

A physical restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer in immediate danger to himself or others, or the student demonstrates or expresses significant physical distress (e.g., difficulty breathing, sustained or prolonged crying, sustained or prolonged

coughing). If a student demonstrates or expresses significant physical distress, staff will release the restraint and seek medical assistance immediately.

For any student to be restrained for more than **twenty (20) minutes**, staff must obtain Program Director's approval. The Program Director's approval to extend restraint beyond twenty (20) minutes must be based on the student's continued agitation justifying the need for continued restraint.

The Program Director must also make an administrative or clinical decision about further steps to assist the student. These steps include, but are not limited to, contacting the parent/guardian, student's psychotherapist, or other medical or community help organizations.

Follow-up procedures will be implemented after the release of the student from physical restraint. These will include reviewing the incident with the student to address the precipitating behavior, reviewing the incident with staff who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and considering whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

Restraint Prevention Discussion

Regular home-school communication between program staff and parents is an essential component of our work together. BICO welcomes and encourages parents and students to engage in discussion to prevent the need for restraint. IEP Teams work together to establish positive behavioral intervention and support for students when appropriate. Functional Behavior Assessment is used to design positive behavior intervention and support plans and includes discussion and input from therapists, behavior specialists, teachers, clinical staff, program directors, parents, and students when it is appropriate. Measures are always taken to ensure the least restrictive course of intervention and prevent physical restraint except for emergency situations. Parents are an integral part of discussions regarding behavioral support and restraint prevention.

All physical restraints, regardless of duration, will be reported. There are no individual waivers permitted for restraint reporting requirements. BICO's restraint report form provides an opportunity for parents and students to request a meeting with an administrator to review the incident of physical restraint and/or provide comments.

Reporting with School and to Parents

The reporting process within the school and to the student's parents is as follows: The staff who coordinate the physical intervention assumes the responsibility to immediately verbally inform the Program Director. The teacher will make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parents or guardians within 24 hours of the restraint.

The staff member who coordinates the physical intervention:

- Completes the Physical Restraint Report form by the close of the school day.
- Report is to be emailed to the Program Director before the staff member leaves work for the day.

Program Director:

- signs report
- submits the report to the Program Director for Clinical Services and/or Executive Director or designee for signature
- Maintains a log of physical restraint reports by student and program. This log will be made available to parents/guardians and or DESE upon request.
- Reporting to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- The reporting process to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is as follows: BICO will report to DESE all restraints that result in injury to either a student or a staff member within three (3) working days of the restraint. BICO will also send the Department a copy of the records of physical restraints by the Program Director pursuant to 603 CMR 46.06(2) for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. Additionally, BICO will provide DESE with an annual report of its physical restraint use.

Office Staff:

- before placing the report in the student's file
- ensures that a copy of the report is sent to the parents/guardians by email or mail, postmarked no later than three (3) school working days following the use of restraint. In cases where parents are not living together, but have joint legal custody, each parent should receive a copy of the report; and;
- ensures that a copy of the report is sent to the Special Education Administrator of the school district that is responsible for the student's education plan.

Review of Restraints

Two types of administrative reviews will be conducted in regards to the use of physical restraint. The Program Director will conduct a Weekly Individual Student Review and a Monthly School-Wide Review. The principal or director or his/her designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the parent or the Department upon request.

A Weekly Individual Student Review will be conducted in regards to any student who has been restrained multiple times during the week. The Program Director will convene a review team to assess the progress and needs of any such student, with the goal of reducing or eliminating future restraint. This team will review and discuss the written restraint reports, analyze the factors that led to the restraint, consider the factors that may have contributed to the escalation of the student's behavior, and develop a written action plan.

A Monthly School-Wide Review will also be conducted by the Program Director. In this review, the Program Director will consider patterns of restraints, number of restraints, duration of restraints and any injuries caused by restraints. The Program Director will assess whether the restraint prevention and management policy needs to be modified and/or whether there is a need for additional staff training on restraint reduction and restraint prevention strategies.

Training Required

The Program Director will ensure that all staff receive training on BICO's Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures and the requirements for the use of restraint. This training will comply with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.04(2).

In-Depth Training

The Program Director will identify and authorize certain staff to serve as a school-wide resource to assist ensuring the proper administration of physical restraint. These identified staff will participate in an in depth training that complies with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3) and 603 C.M.R. 46.04(4).

Procedure for Receiving and Investigating Complaints

Any individual with concerns or a complaint regarding the use of physical restraint should report it to the attention of the Program Director, the Program Director of Clinical Services and/or the Executive Director. The Executive Director will order an investigation of the incident leading up to the physical restraint including a full review of the restraint report, physical techniques utilized, and of the space in which the physical restraint occurred. A final report will be provided to the Executive Director who will determine the necessary program modifications, remedial actions, or disciplinary actions to be taken. The Complainant will be notified of results of the investigation and proposed actions.

Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex - Title IX

The Bi-County Collaborative does not discriminate on the basis of sex and strictly prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, in any education program or activity that it operates, including in admission and employment. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; M.G.L. c. 151B; M.G.L. c. 151C; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5. The District's policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admissions, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

The Bi-County Collaborative has adopted and implements a Title IX Grievance Procedure to ensure the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. A copy of the Bi-County Collaborative's Title IX Grievance Procedure may be accessed on the school website on the About Us page under Documents and Resources using the following link <https://bicounty.org/resources/> or through the Office of the Title IX Coordinator.

For questions related to the Bi-County Collaborative's non-discrimination policy or grievance procedure, to make a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, please contact Laurie Cunningham, who serves as the Title IX Coordinator:

Laurie Cunningham, Title IX Coordinator
Bi-County Collaborative Public Schools
111 Robbins Rd Walpole, MA 02081
774-571-4150
lcunningham@bicouty.org

Inquires or complaints relative to sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, may also be directed to the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights:

U.S. Department of Education 8th Floor 5 Post Office Square Boston, MA 02109-3921
Telephone: (617) 289-0111 Facsimile: (617) 289-0150 Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Any employee or student found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with procedures set forth in Student Discipline section of this handbook and applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Staff members determined to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to professional discipline including possible termination of employment.

Parental Opt-Out Rights

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Bi-County Collaborative, through its curricula and instructional materials, promotes respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building principal regarding curriculum content and may submit a written request to the building principal to opt out of specific portion(s) of the curriculum that conflict with their sincerely held religious beliefs.