



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

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LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Welcome to Rising Tide Charter Public School (Rising Tide) and to this August 2016 edition of the Student Handbook. Communication between school and home is crucial to the success of students in schools, so we provide this Student Handbook to help students and parents understand the expectations of our school community.

Early adolescence and adolescence is a time of rapid growth and change for students and can be challenging for both parents and children. Frequently, adolescents change their communication patterns with parents; children want to create their own place at school and do not always tell their parents everything that is going on at school. It is important for parents to respect the child's desire to grow up; however, it is crucial for parents and the adults at school to communicate effectively. All the adults in a child's life need to work together, on the same team, to support the growth and development of the child so that the child can grow into a responsible, self-sufficient individual.

All of the staff members at Rising Tide work to create a safe environment where students can try new things without fear of teasing or failure. We also encourage students to treat one another with respect and honesty, and to take increasing responsibility for their actions. In addition, we encourage students to accept each and every person as a unique individual and a significant part of the community. Of course, secondary school students are still young and might need adult support as they are navigating their growth and development. We count on parents to alert their child's Advisor if the child is experiencing difficulty, just as the Advisor will contact parents if the school has concerns about the child. We also ask for parents' support in discipline situations involving your child. All of the adults at Rising Tide understand that students make mistakes. If parents and school staff members join together, we can create "teachable moments," where students can make mistakes, discuss the mistakes with school staff members, and learn from the mistakes.

Students, please read this Student Handbook carefully. The program at Rising Tide is centered upon Honesty, Trust, Respect and taking Responsibility. As you move from grade five through grade twelve, Teachers will expect you to take more and more responsibility for yourself, so that you can graduate from Rising Tide as a young adult, ready to speak for yourself and take ownership for your own learning. This Student Handbook describes what you can expect from the school, and what the school expects of you.

Jill S. Crafts
Head of School

MISSION

The Rising Tide Charter Public School will provide a strong academic program rooted in the history of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Our students will harvest opportunity from the practice of language, the reasoning of mathematics, the analysis of science and the reflection of history. We want children to hone skills through rigorous studies, but skills alone do not make a whole education. The Rising Tide Charter Public School will also cultivate within its students a sense of belonging to our community, a tie with those who have come before them and a seed of continuity between the Plymouth of today and the Plymouth of tomorrow. The Rising Tide Charter Public School will graduate capable and prepared young adults who have already sown within themselves a sense of place and belonging that will be the bounty of the future, whether they remain among us or venture from our harbor.

GOALS

- To foster in each student a love of learning and high achievement through encouragement to continuously improve in the acquisition of basic skills through work on integrated projects that reflect life's real challenges.
- To create a safe, supportive environment where each person treats others with respect, and where a student can try new things and take risks without fearing teasing or failure.
- To encourage each student to grow and take increasing responsibility, both academically and socially.
- To create and develop in each student an awareness of the diversity both within and outside of the Rising Tide community and encourage tolerance, acceptance, and celebration of differences.
- To create a close community of students, Teachers, parents and community members who work together to encourage students to develop into successful students and, later, into successful members of their local communities.

SCHOOLWIDE OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARK SKILLS

Communicator

Receptive Skills
Expressive Skills

Investigator

Inquiry Skills
Innovation Skills

Self-Directed Learner

Self-Awareness Skills
Skills in Taking Responsibility

Community Steward

Skills in Awareness of Others
Collaboration Skills

GUIDING QUESTIONS

All Grades: Who am I?

Grade Five: What is my place in the community?

Grade Six: How can I connect with others?

Grade Seven: How can we face challenges?

Grade Eight: How can we take responsibility for ourselves and one another?

Grade Nine: How can we recognize and demonstrate courage?

Grade Ten: How can we recognize and demonstrate integrity?

Grade Eleven: How can we be mindful of and prepare for the future?

Grade Twelve: What is my place in the world?

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Open communication is the most effective way to clarify a question, resolve a concern, or prevent a misunderstanding from developing into a problem. Rising Tide faculty and staff members welcome hearing any questions or concerns in the interest of creating a safe and supportive environment in which each student can thrive.

School Contact Information

Rising Tide Charter Public School
www.risingtide.org

Middle School Building
6 Resnik Road
Plymouth, MA 02360
phone: 508-747-2620
fax: 508-830-9441

Upper School Building
57B Armstrong Road
Plymouth, MA 02360
phone: 508-747-1889
fax: 508-747-0669

Communication from Home to School

During the school year, the school office in each building is open weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and the school phones will be answered during this time. Outside of these times, and occasionally during office hours, callers will be directed to an automated system and will need to choose an extension in order to reach a Teacher or staff member directly. Callers are encouraged to leave a voice message if unable to speak with someone immediately. The school day can be very busy, but school staff members will respond to questions or concerns in a timely manner. The Business Office of the school is in the Middle School building.

Each child is assigned an Advisor, an individual who is also a Teacher at the school. The Advisor is the primary communication link to the school for a student and his or her family. Parents/Guardians should first contact the child's Advisor for any questions or concerns regarding their child. Student/Advisor/Parent Conferences occur twice a year, but parents/guardians may request a meeting at other times with a student's Advisor if specific concerns arise. Parents/guardians should also keep the Advisor, as well as the appropriate school staff, informed of any of the student's needs. It is helpful for the Advisor to know if a student is working through particular challenges outside of school. While the Advisor is the primary communication link between families and the school, the Advisor is able to arrange for communication with other Teachers and school leaders.

Contacting Teachers

Teachers at Rising Tide want to respond to questions and concerns in a timely manner. Each Teacher has a phone extension with a voice mailbox, and callers can leave a voice message at any time. It can be difficult for Teachers to receive phone calls, or make phone calls, during school hours, as they spend the majority of their time in front of students. Parents/guardians can expect to hear back from Teachers within 24 hours. For safety and the protection of student privacy, Teachers are not permitted to discuss personal issues about students over email with anyone, including other staff members and parents/guardians.

Contacting Students

If a parent/guardian needs to contact a child during the school day, the parent/guardian must call the front office of either school building. Students are not permitted to have or use mobile phones at school. In order to limit the number of interruptions in the school day, school staff will only deliver essential messages from a parent/guardian to a student. With the exception of events beyond the control of a parent/guardian, any change to dismissal or after-school plans should be determined before the start of the school day.

Delivery to Students

In working to fulfill the mission of the school to graduate capable and prepared young adults, we ask parents/guardians to refrain from delivering student homework or other materials to the school that the child has left at home. It is important for students to learn to take responsibility for their own homework and materials. Any homework or other materials delivered during the school day will be shared with the student's Advisor rather than the Teacher or the student to enable the Advisor to follow up with the student about taking responsibility. Exceptions will be made when a child has asked for a parent to deliver work to school for logistical reasons, such as when a project may be too large to bring on the bus; in such cases, the student should notify his or her Advisor in advance.

Emergency Dismissal

If a student does need to leave school early for an emergency, a parent/guardian should contact the office in the appropriate school building, stating the reason for the emergency dismissal, the time, and the name of the person who will be picking up the student. A Dismissal Slip will be given to the student to show to the Teacher or Advisor. For the student's safety, we ask that the person picking the student up come into the office to identify himself or herself and sign the student out. Except in the case of an emergency, parents/guardians should not arrive at the school, without advanced notice, to dismiss a student.

Communication from School to Home

The Monday Memo, which contains calendar updates, announcements, and additional information that concerns Rising Tide students and parents/guardians, is emailed to families at the beginning of each week. The school website, www.risingtide.org, is an excellent place to learn about upcoming events and school activities. It is also important for students to take increasing responsibility for sharing school announcements and messages with their families.

Correspondence from the school, including letters, announcements, and report cards, will be mailed to the primary, or custodial, parent/guardian listed on the student's school registration form. If a non-custodial parent/guardian would like school correspondence sent to an additional address, the parent/guardian must submit a written request for access to the Student Record to the Principal of the appropriate building. Access to the Student Record may take up to 21 days.

Cancellation of School or Emergency Closing

Before the Start of the School Day

In the event that school must be canceled or delayed because of snow, unusual weather conditions, or emergency circumstances, announcements will be listed on WCVBTV 5, WHDHTV 7, and FOX 25 television stations and websites. When possible, announcements will also be sent by email and posted on the front page of the school website. Although Rising Tide is not a part of the Plymouth Public School District, Rising Tide follows the same school year calendar as the Plymouth Public Schools, and the Town of Plymouth provides bus transportation for Rising Tide students who reside in Plymouth; therefore, Rising Tide will not be in session if the Plymouth Public School District cancels school. Please do not call the Police Department, Fire Department, or the Rising Tide office.

During the School Day

In the event of a school closing or unscheduled early dismissal after the school day has begun, Rising Tide will utilize a desktop calling system to notify families by telephone. When possible, announcements will also be sent by email and posted on the front page of the school website. Unless otherwise specified, all students who normally ride the bus will be sent home by bus. Students who normally are driven to school will be held until a parent/guardian or the regular carpool driver arrives.

Emergency at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station

In the unlikely event of an emergency at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, all schools within the Emergency Planning Zone, the area approximately ten (10) miles around the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, have emergency plans. If there is such an emergency, Rising Tide will utilize a desktop calling system to notify families by telephone. When possible, announcements will also be sent by email and posted on the front page of the school website. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will also be sending alerts to the general public. If necessary, students from Rising Tide will be moved to Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School, located at 940 County Street in Taunton, MA. Parents/guardians will be able to pick up their children at Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School.

ATTENDANCE

Daily Attendance

Student attendance is extremely important to both students and Teachers at Rising Tide. As a school with high academic standards, we value regular and timely attendance at school, as it is critical to a connection within the school community as well as successful academic achievement.

According to M.G.L. c.76, § 1, all children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) must attend school. In cases of excessive absences, truancy, tardiness, or early dismissals, the school will contact the parent/guardian and attempt to work with the family to improve attendance.

If a student reaches five (5) unexcused absences or misses two (2) or more periods on five (5) separate days, the school will send written notification to the parent/guardian requesting a meeting to discuss the child's attendance. In the event of excessive tardies or dismissals, a meeting will also be requested. If a parent/guardian does not comply with the state's mandatory requirements concerning attendance, school staff may need to file a Failure to Send Complaint with the district court, a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) petition with the juvenile court, or a 51A for neglect with the Department of Children and Families.

Excused Absences

Excused absences, tardies, and dismissals will be granted for medical, dental, or legal appointments; illness; religious observances; and family emergencies. Additionally, starting in the fall of a student's junior year, he or she can miss two (2) days per semester in order to visit colleges.

To be considered excused, the parent/ guardian must provide one of the following types of documentation within three (3) school days of the absence:

- A note, a phone call, or a visit to the school's front office from a parent/guardian documenting an illness for a tardy, a dismissal, or an absence of three (3) days or fewer (Dismissals related to illness must go through the School Nurse.)
- A physician's note verifying an illness for an absence of four (4) days or more
- A professional note verifying a medical, dental, or legal appointment
- A note from a parent/guardian documenting a religious observance
- A note from a parent/guardian documenting a family emergency (i.e. a funeral)
- A note from a college or university documenting a student's visit

Communication of Daily Absence

For the safety and protection of each student, it is essential for school staff to know the whereabouts of every student. Therefore, in accordance with M.G.L. c.76, § 1B, Rising Tide's attendance policy requires that parents/guardians contact the school on the day that a student is absent and provide a basis for the student's absence from school that day. Rising Tide also requires parents/guardians to contact the school if their child will be tardy or dismissed. In such cases of absence, tardiness, or dismissal, parents/guardians should leave a message on the Attendance Line before 8:00 am.

Attendance Line: **508-747-2620 x241**

If a parent/guardian does not call to notify the school of an absence, a school staff member is required to call the student's home to inquire as to the student's whereabouts. Furthermore, according to M.G.L. c.76, § 1B, Rising Tide is required to send home written notification if the parent/guardian has not contacted the school within three days of the absence.

Student Responsibility when Absent

If a student is absent from school, he or she is responsible for making up missed assignments in a timely fashion. Please see the later section on homework for a description of the school practice in regards to making up homework.

Planned Absence

Rising Tide strongly discourages families from taking students out of school for planned absences during the school year. Parents/guardians should plan family vacations during the scheduled school vacation times. Much teaching and learning occurs during the school day, and students need to be present to avoid falling behind and to maintain a connection to the school's community and curriculum. Teachers design learning activities and projects that can be difficult to replicate through make-up work.

For a planned absence, parents/guardians are required to write a letter of request to the Dean of Students of the appropriate building one (1) month prior to the proposed absence. Parents/guardians must specify the reason for the requested absence and the proposed dates of the absence. Rising Tide staff members are not responsible for tutoring students for work missed during planned absences. School work may or may not be provided in advance, at the discretion of the Teachers, as it is often difficult to predict exact activities and assignments in advance.

If the school calendar needs to be extended at the end of the year due to school cancellations during the school year, the time period for final exams, projects, and assessments will also be extended. Make-up times for final exams, projects, and assessments are not possible and will not be allowed. Families should not plan vacations immediately following the originally scheduled last day of school, as it is common for the school calendar to be extended.

Tardy Arrival and Early Dismissal

All students need to be at school on time, ready to begin the day. It is also required for all students to remain in school until the end of the school day. Missing partial school days has a cumulative impact on a student's attendance at school. A student will be considered absent for the day if he or she misses three (3) blocks at the Middle School or two (2) blocks at the Upper School.

Parents/guardians should make outside appointments for students after school or during school vacation time. Early Release days provide excellent times to make early afternoon appointments.

Participation in School Events after Absence or Early Dismissal

If a student is absent from school, or is dismissed early from school, he or she may not participate in any other school-related event, after regular school hours, on that day. School leaders may make an exception to this policy in the case of an excused absence.

Permanent Withdrawal from School

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 76, § 18, if a student who is 16 years or older withdraws from school prior to graduation, that student must obtain a withdrawal form from the front office. No student will be considered to have permanently left the school district unless an administrator from the school or school district has sent the parent/guardian notice within a period of ten (10) days from the student's fifteenth (15) consecutive absence in both the parent/guardian's primary language and English, inviting the student and his or her parent/guardian to meet with Rising Tide's Dropout Prevention Team prior to the student permanently leaving school, within ten days after the sending of the notice. The time for the meeting may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and with consent of the school, provided that no extension is longer than fourteen (14) days. This meeting shall be for the purpose of discussing the reasons for the student permanently leaving school and alternative educational or other placements.

TRANSPORTATION

Pick-Up/Drop-Off Authorization

The safety of students is the primary concern of staff members at Rising Tide. Parents/Guardians need to complete the Pick-Up/Drop-Off Authorization form each year. Rising Tide cannot release a student to an adult other than the custodial parent/guardian without written permission from a parent/guardian. School staff members are required to check the identification of adults who pick up students at school. Parents/guardians should notify the appropriate Principal, in writing, of any special custody issues involving a student. If any person is not authorized to pick up a student as a part of a court order, the school needs to maintain a copy of any written court orders in the student's record.

Bus

First Student Transportation, through the Town of Plymouth, provides bus transportation to and from Rising Tide for students who reside in Plymouth. Bus passes will be distributed within the first few weeks of school to students whose families have submitted a transportation application.

If parents/guardians have any questions regarding bus transportation, they should call the dispatcher at First Student Transportation, at (508) 830-4144. If any problems arise with bus transportation, it is important for parents to also call the school. We can only help resolve a situation if we know about any concerns. Parents should keep in mind that Rising Tide draws students from all neighborhoods of Plymouth, the largest municipality in Massachusetts by area; bus stops need to be more spread out than elementary bus routes in order for students to arrive at school in a timely manner.

Permission to Ride a Friend's Bus

All students who wish to ride the bus are required to have a bus pass. If a student wishes to ride the bus home to a friend's house, the student must have a bus pass and a note from a parent. Please note that First Student may limit this privilege due to space on a particular bus, particularly on Early Release days. The school cannot issue bus passes to students who have not submitted the transportation application, or are not eligible for a pass because they are not Plymouth residents.

Riding the Bus from the Upper School to the Middle School at Dismissal

Any Upper School student involved in an after-school activity at the Middle School building may ride the bus from the Upper School to the Middle School at the regular dismissal time. Students without a bus pass may use this shuttle between school buildings. Any Upper School student using this shuttle must observe the Middle School practice of not using mobile phones or headphones in the Middle School carpool area.

Carpool

All drivers must use extreme caution when driving on school grounds. Each school building has a traffic pattern that must be followed by all community members. Each traffic pattern includes a carpool lane for drivers for arrival and dismissal. To ensure the safety of every student, all drivers must drop-off and pick-up in the designated zone. It is unlawful for drivers to idle their vehicles on school grounds. During routine arrival and dismissal times, drivers may not park on the road, or on the property of neighboring businesses or organizations, and enter either school building to dismiss a student a few minutes early to avoid the carpool line. Such actions create an unsafe traffic situation, and are unfair to all other families who are working together within a system that is designed for safety. Name signs, for display in the windshield of each car, are distributed to carpool drivers at the Middle School building within the first few weeks of school; the use of these signs supports the safety and efficiency of the carpool traffic.

Middle School

In the morning at the Middle School, if cars are in the carpool lane before the student entrance is closed, students will be admitted into the student entrance. If school has begun and the student entrance has been closed when cars arrive in the morning, adult drivers must come in to the school office entrance with the students to sign in the students.

Upper School

There is only one entrance at the Upper School. Students use the same entrance if they arrive after school has begun.

Dismissal

At the end of the school day, or when after-school activities have ended, parents/guardians need to pick up students on time. School staff members have additional school responsibilities once the students are dismissed, including meetings, planning, and assessment; staff members also have their own family responsibilities once the school day is over.

After-School Pick-Up

After-school programs, such as clubs, theater productions, and interscholastic athletics, occur on a weekly basis throughout the school year. If students are involved in after-school programs, these students' parents need to follow the same guidelines for pick-up that are described in the preceding Carpool section. It is important for families to know that these programs are often run voluntarily by dedicated Teachers, and essential for parents/guardians to respect the time of these Teachers by picking up students on time. Failure to pick up a student on time may impact the student's ability to remain in the after-school program.

Student Drivers

Due to a limit in parking spaces, student parking permits at Rising Tide are reserved as a senior privilege. Not all eligible students receive a space, so parking spaces are distributed through a lottery each semester, with priority being given to participants in the Senior Internship Course. Students assigned a parking permit through the lottery are required to pay a parking fee. Student drivers must follow the traffic pattern of each school building and park only in designated student parking spots. The Student Parking Policy and Student Parking Permit Application are available in the office of the Upper School building.

Permission to Ride with a Student Driver

In order for a student to leave school property with a student driver, a parent/guardian should send a letter to the school to confirm such transportation plans. It is the responsibility of the students and each family to follow the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Walkers

Any student who walks to or from school must have permission from a parent/guardian, and do so at his or her own risk. Parents/guardians are required to send a note with a student to confirm such arrival or dismissal plans. If a student plans to walk to or from school on a regular basis, the student's parents/guardians are required to submit a letter about such plans. If a student elects to be dismissed as a walker, the student may not ride the bus between school buildings at dismissal time.

Riding Bicycles to School and Bicycle Helmet Policy

Any student who chooses to travel to and from school by bicycle, inline skates, scooter, or skate board must have permission from a parent/guardian and do so at her or his own risk. Parents/guardians are required to write a letter to the school to confirm such transportation plans.

Massachusetts law requires that a bicycle helmet be worn by a person 16 years of age or under who is riding as an operator or passenger on a bicycle, inline skates, a scooter, or a skate board. The bicycle helmet must meet the standards for helmets established by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. All students, regardless of age, are encouraged to wear a helmet.

Changes in Transportation Plans

For any changes in a student's regular transportation plans, parents/guardians need to send a note to the school with the student. The note should state the reason for the change of transportation plans, and, if the student will be picked up in carpool, the name of the person who will be picking up the student. A Change in Dismissal Slip will be given to the student to show to staff members at dismissal.

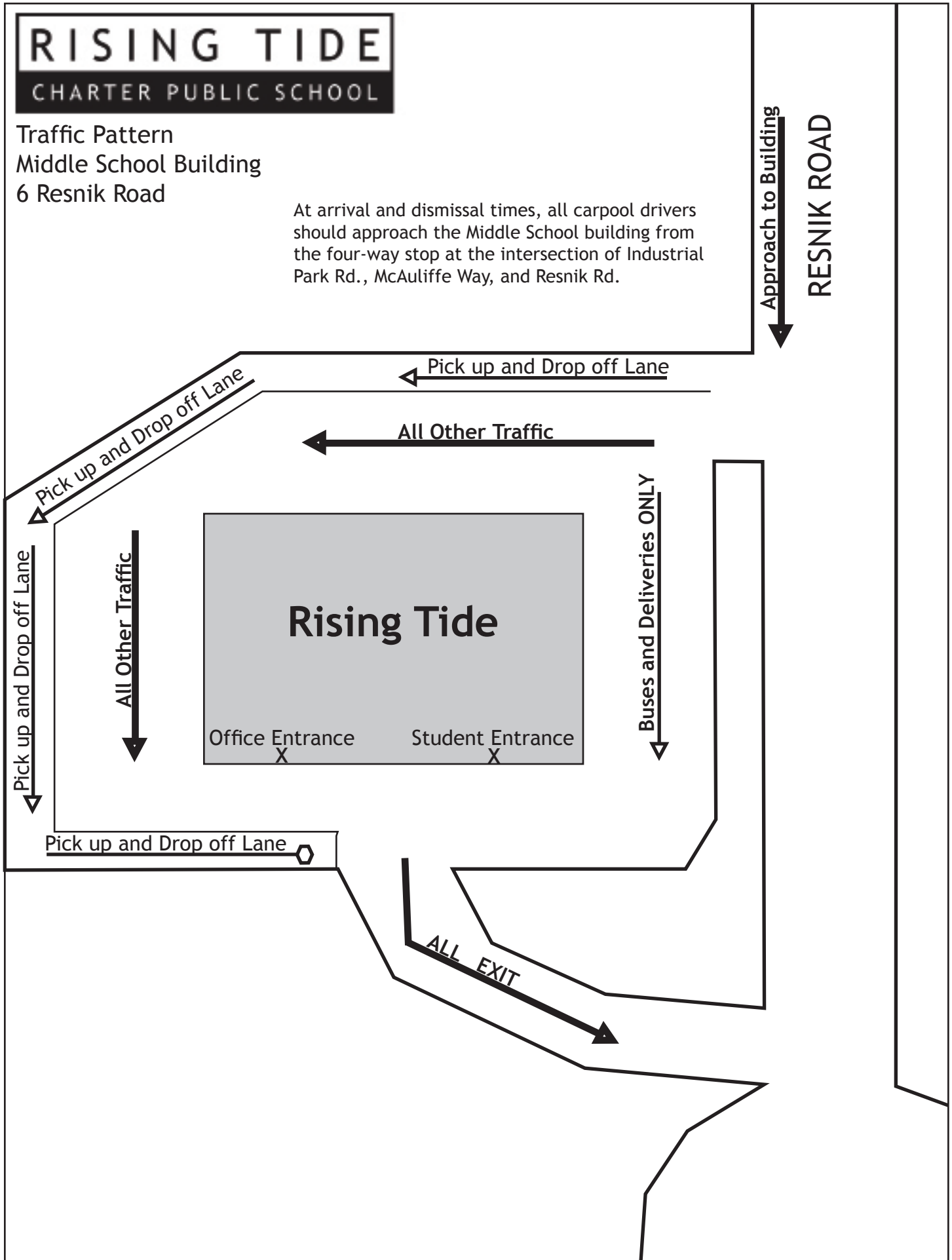
With the exception of events beyond the control of a parent/guardian, any change to dismissal or after-school plans should be determined before the start of the school day. If unexpected events have occurred, parents/guardians may also call the school office by 11:00 a.m. the morning of the change, and a Change in Dismissal Slip will be given to the student.

RISING TIDE

CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

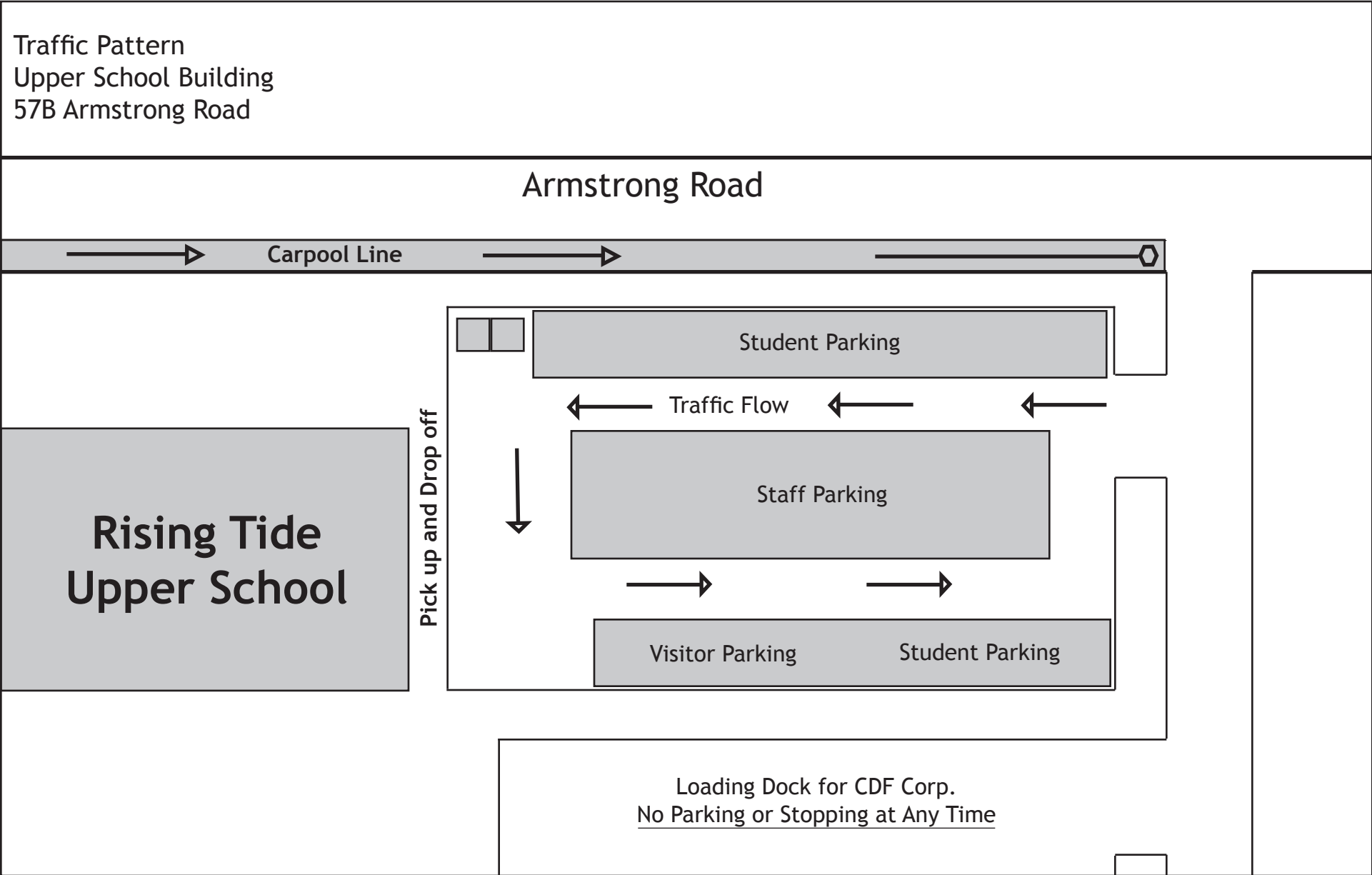
Traffic Pattern
Middle School Building
6 Resnik Road

At arrival and dismissal times, all carpool drivers should approach the Middle School building from the four-way stop at the intersection of Industrial Park Rd., McAuliffe Way, and Resnik Rd.





Carpool drivers will drop off and pick up students at the sidewalk in front of the school building. At dismissal time, carpool drivers will wait in the carpool line on Armstrong Road until the buses have departed the school parking lot; carpool drivers will then follow the traffic flow to pick up students at the sidewalk.



STUDENT RECORDS

Student Records

Each child's Student Record is protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and is kept in strict confidence by school staff. The Student Record consists of the transcript and the temporary record.

The school maintains each student's transcript for 60 years following the graduation, transfer, or withdrawal of the student. This transcript contains a student's name, address, telephone number, date of birth, parent/guardian contact information, course titles, grade level completed and the year completed.

The school also maintains a temporary record for each student, which contains information not included in the transcript record, such as evaluations by Teachers and standardized test results. This temporary record will be destroyed no more than seven (7) years after the graduation, transfer, or withdrawal of the student.

Access to Student Records

Access to Student Records for Parents/Guardians and Eligible Students

A parent/guardian or eligible student has a right to access a student's entire Student Record. Upon written request to the Principal of the appropriate building, the Student Record shall be made available to the parent/guardian or eligible student within two (2) working days following the request. The parent/guardian or eligible student may request copies of any part of the Student Record; upon written request to the Principal of the appropriate building, copies will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student within 10 days of the request.

Eligible Students

Any student who is 14 years of age or older, or who has entered grade nine, is an eligible student for rights of access to his or her Student Record.

Non-Custodial Parent

A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to a Student Record unless the non-custodial parent's access is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a). In order to obtain access to the Student Record, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for access to the Student Record to the Principal of the appropriate building. Upon receipt of the request, the school must immediately notify the custodial parent in writing that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the Student Record within 21 days. If a non-custodial parent's access to a student record is limited or restricted by a court order, the school requires a copy of any written court order.

A non-custodial parent will not be provided with Progress Reports, Report Cards, or other information about a student without submitting a written request for access to the Student Record; access to the Student Record may take up to 21 days.

Student/Advisor/Parent Conferences for Separated or Divorced Parents

Advisors will schedule only one Student/Parent/Advisor Conference during the conference times in November and April. Each parent/guardian is welcome to attend the conference. The student is the center of the conference, and all of the adults in the student's life must work together to support the growth and development of the student.

Student Records for Students who are 18 Years of Age

Any student who is 18 years of age or older has the legal rights of an adult and is able to assume full responsibility for his or her school life; however, the school will continue to send copies of all school communication to the parents/guardians of the student while the student attends Rising Tide.

Third Party Access to Student Records

Personal information about a student will not be shared with anyone other than the faculty and staff members whose access is necessary in the performance of their responsibilities at Rising Tide Charter Public School. Student Records will not be shared with any third party without written consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student; however, FERPA allows schools to disclose information from a Student Record under the following provisions:

- To comply with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena
- To comply with a request from state and local authorities within the juvenile justice system
- To communicate with appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- To comply with requests from federal, state, and local officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- To communicate with staff members of another school to which a student intends to transfer

Directory Information

The school designates the following personally identifiable information as Directory Information that can legally be made public: Student Name, Parent/Guardian Name, Student Address, Student Date of Birth, Student Grade Level Designation (e.g. grade 5, grade 9), Student Extra-Curricular Participation, Student Achievement Awards or Honors, Student Photograph, and School or District Attended by Student Before Attending Rising Tide Charter Public School.

Parents/guardians or eligible students may elect to opt-out of the school disclosing Directory Information. Unless written refusal to allow the use of Directory Information is provided to the school, Rising Tide Charter Public School will assume it has permission to disclose Directory Information without prior written consent for the following reasons:

- Sharing a student's name, address, and household phone number in a family directory to be shared only with Rising Tide families
- Providing the names and addresses of students to a third party mailhouse if requested by the sending district from which a student is enrolled, in conformance with M.G.L. c. 71, s. 89g
- Sharing the student's name, address, and phone numbers with military recruiters, as required for public schools in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as well as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002
- Sharing the parent/guardian contact information with the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association to enable the association to keep families informed of state issues that could impact charter public schools

The school asks parents/guardians to complete an opt-out form each year; however, a parent/guardian or eligible student may modify any permission for the disclosure of Directory Information in writing at any point during the year.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Community Standards of Behavior

The Rising Tide Charter Public School community is a close and caring group of students, advisors, Teachers, staff, and parents/guardians. Members of the school community value their relationships with one another and strive to develop an atmosphere of trust, respect for differences, support, and understanding. Students, Teachers, and parents/guardians are partners in a small school community who are also connected to Plymouth and the surrounding region. Students are expected to behave responsibly and with consideration for the feelings of other students, Teachers, and staff. Students are also expected to take responsibility for their own behavior anywhere on or off campus as a part of the educational process. In order for a community to be healthy and for individuals to work well together, the Rising Tide Board and staff believe that the community should be centered around four strong principles: **Honesty, Trust, Respect, and Responsibility.**

In accordance with our Expectations for Conduct, the Rising Tide Charter Public School faculty and staff have devised certain Community Standards of Behavior for the school that will be upheld and enforced by every adult in the building. If each individual in the school takes responsibility for following these guidelines at all times, Rising Tide will be a safe community where each student and staff member can learn, grow, and contribute in a positive way to the school. The Community Standards of Behavior follow:

1. Members of the Rising Tide Community are expected to be forthright and honest in every situation, even when it feels difficult to admit mistakes.
2. Members of the Rising Tide Community have the right to be trusted in the school, but also have a responsibility to act in a manner that does not abuse the trust given to them by other members of the community.
3. Members of the Rising Tide Community are expected to act in a manner that is respectful to themselves and others; community members should also keep our shared space clean, and show respect to our buildings and the property of others.
4. Members of the Rising Tide Community are expected to take responsibility to do their best in the work of school, and for honoring and upholding the school guidelines.

Expectations for Conduct

Attendance at Rising Tide Charter Public School is a choice made by students and their parents/guardians. By choosing to be a part of the Rising Tide community, parents/guardians and students share responsibility with the school staff to uphold the Community Standards of Behavior.

Secondary school is a time of learning and growth; it is a time in a young person's life when all students should feel safe enough at school to try new things without fearing ridicule or failure. It is a time when many students are feeling uncertain of who they are or where they are going, when they need the care and understanding of sympathetic adults and the security of friendships. Secondary school is also a time when young people can make mistakes. It is important for each student to learn from mistakes so that mistakes are not repeated and the individual can continue to grow in positive ways.

In keeping with these philosophies, students at Rising Tide are encouraged to become good community members within our school community, our local community, and our global community. Parents/guardians and other family members are encouraged to help the adults in the school uphold these standards. If members of the school community work together to uphold the Community Standards of Behavior, fewer discipline problems occur and a strong sense of trust and community is developed.

The following are more detailed expectations for conduct that demonstrates the school's four core principles of Honesty, Trust, Respect, and Responsibility.

Honesty

Students are expected to demonstrate honesty, in both academic and personal matters. Integrity or honesty in all matters is the basic expectation at the Rising Tide Charter Public School. In the face of social pressures, truthfulness can sometimes be difficult to maintain; however, it is important to be honest. When a student admits to making a mistake, the admission is the first step in turning around that mistake and not repeating it. It is expected that when asked a direct question, even in a difficult situation, the student will tell the truth. Lying under any circumstances is considered a serious offense.

Cheating is the unauthorized having, giving, sharing, taking, or presenting information and/or material by a student. Plagiarism is using the words, data, ideas, or opinions of someone else without giving credit to that person in the form of footnotes or references. Cheating and plagiarism, acts of dishonesty, are serious academic offenses and will not be tolerated at Rising Tide. Teachers expect to trust the word of every student at Rising Tide; when a student hands in work, a Teacher assumes that the work has been completed by that student to the best of his or her ability. If a student claims to have completed work that he or she has not done, this is a serious breach of the trust that the Teacher had in the student and is a form of cheating. It is also cheating to help another student to be deceptive. In some classes, working together with a classmate or classmates is acceptable and can encourage cooperative learning; however, if only one student in the pair or group is doing all the work for others in the group, this type of group work can be harmful to students and can also constitute cheating.

Trust

Trust, an outgrowth of honesty, is essential to relationships that hold the community together. School staff leave many specific rules unstated, trusting in the honesty and good judgement of students. It is also important for students to trust in the good judgement of staff, as all adults in the community are working together in the best interest of the students. All community members benefit from a trusting environment.

Being untruthful compromises trust within the community and has a negative effect upon students and school staff. Dishonesty abuses the trust given to the individual by other members of the community, and cannot be tolerated by the school. Issues of dishonesty, such as asking to go one place and actually going to another place, violates the trust provided by the community and can necessitate greater restrictions upon that individual's freedom within the school.

Respect

Each member of the community is encouraged to be helpful and supportive of other members of the community and show respect for others at all times.

Kindness

All Rising Tide students are expected to treat others with consideration both inside and outside the classroom. Students' treatment of one another must be respectful at all times whether or not an adult is present. Students are also expected to treat any adults who enter the school, including Teachers, staff members, parents/guardians, and visitors, with respect. Rising Tide encourages students, staff members, and parents/guardians to accept, tolerate, and welcome differences.

Respect for the School Community

Kindness and consideration also extend from the treatment of others in the community to caring for and taking care of the school and its facilities. Students need to take care of their belongings, but also be careful and respectful of the belongings of others. Willfully taking what belongs to others, or intentionally damaging what belongs to another person undermines the trust of the community and is considered a serious offense.

Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Bullying, Hazing, and Discrimination

Teasing another student or students will not be tolerated and will be considered a serious offense. Putting down or ridiculing another person is not acceptable. These offenses - teasing, put-downs, ridicule - constitute harassment and are punishable offenses. The Rising Tide community abhors and prohibits bullying, hazing, ethnic, racial, sexist, or gender orientation abuse, or any sort of cruelty, and regards such acts as serious disciplinary offenses. Rising Tide has non-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-sexual harassment, and no hazing policies, as well as a bullying prevention and intervention plan, listed later in this Student Handbook.

Responsibility

It is important for students to learn to take responsibility for their learning and for their actions. It is the responsibility of the student to do his or her best in class, complete homework, and come to class prepared. Students are also expected to work cooperatively with others, respect everyone's learning time, and communicate with adults openly and honestly.

Everyone makes mistakes, but in order for a person to learn from mistakes, he or she must take responsibility for his or her actions by recognizing his or her role in a situation. School staff members hold students responsible for their behavior at school, when they are traveling to and from school on the bus, and at school functions off campus. Rising Tide students represent their school and their family at all times, and are expected to behave responsibly at all times and in all places.

Safety

At Rising Tide, the staff carefully oversees students; however, there will be times when students are in situations at school where there are no adults present or where there are many students and only a few adults. It is very important that students take responsibility for their actions, whether or not adults are present, so that everyone in the school can be safe. Students are expected to follow the Community Standards of Behavior at all times. If a few students violate the guidelines, it may result in a loss of privilege for all students. Freedom is a privilege and students need to show that they are ready for this privilege.

Whereabouts

In the interest of safety, as well as honest communication, students must keep adults in the school accurately informed of their whereabouts at all times when under the school's jurisdiction. It is expected that each student will remain in the school building or on the school grounds until his or her last commitment of the day. Each student is expected to be in his or her assigned location at all times, unless given specific permission by a staff member to go elsewhere.

Public Displays of Affection

Each individual at Rising Tide is responsible for creating an environment where students, Teachers, parents/guardians, and visitors feel comfortable anywhere in the school. Public displays of affection are considered private behavior and do not belong in the school environment. Each person has a right to have his or her own personal space, without fear of interference; therefore, students are encouraged to refrain from touching one another in any way, for the safety and comfort of all individuals.

School Bus Standards of Behavior

Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege; when students are riding on a school bus, the expectations for conduct are the same as when the student is at school. It is particularly important that students are quiet and respectful of each other and the driver while riding the bus because the health and safety of everyone on the bus is a serious concern.

SUPPORT OF STUDENTS

Advisory Program

The Advisory Program is central to the structure of supportive relationships at Rising Tide. Each Rising Tide student has a faculty Advisor, who is also a Teacher at the school. Each Advisory group acts as a small community within the grade level and the school, and each grade level has a team of Advisors who work together throughout the year to support the personal and academic growth of the students. Advisory Teams collaboratively develop and implement a Grade Level Advisory Curriculum connected to the grade level Guiding Question that addresses orientation to the school, student skills, community building, wellness, and service learning.

Primary Advocate for Student in School

The Advisor is the primary advocate for each student at school. The Advisor works to help each student become responsible for his or her own learning. If a student has any concerns or challenges - academic, extracurricular, or social - the student should communicate with his or her Advisor.

Advisors work with other Teachers, School Nurses, Counselors, Deans of Students, and Principals in supporting the growth of each student. If any other staff member has concerns about a student, or has praise about a student to share, the staff member will consult with the student's Advisor. If the student has good news to share, or has any concerns, the student should communicate with his or her Advisor. If a student has any disciplinary issue, his or her Advisor will always be involved in attempting to resolve the issue.

Primary Contact between School and Home

The Advisor is the primary communication link to the school for a student and his or her family. Parents/guardians are able to communicate with other Teachers and school leaders, but should first contact the student's Advisor for any questions or concerns.

Student/Advisor/Parent Conferences

Student/Advisor/Parent Conferences are held after the first and third academic quarters and are mandatory for students and parents/guardians. The Advisor will contact parents/guardians to schedule the conference. Advisors will schedule only one Student/Parent/Advisor Conference for each Advisee during the conference times in November and April. The student is the center of the conference, and all of the adults in the student's life must work together to support the growth and development of the student. These conferences are designed for reflection upon and open communication about a student's successes and areas for improvement.

Health and Nursing Services

The School Nurse Practitioner works with the School Nurse to oversee the health services in each school building during school hours. It is important for students and parents/guardians to communicate with the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse about any student health concerns or illness to ensure the safety of each individual and the entire school community.

Illness or Accidents During the School Day

In the event of illness or accident during the school day, the School Nurse Practitioner, School Nurse, or another qualified staff member will give appropriate care, and will notify parents. If a student needs to be dismissed due to illness or injury, the parents/guardians must assume the responsibility for transporting the student home. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, an approved adult on the emergency list will be contacted. If no approved adult can be reached, the student will remain in the nurse's office of the appropriate building until contact is made.

Dismissal of the child due to illness or injury during the school day is at the discretion of the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse after speaking to the parent or guardian. If there is an extreme emergency requiring immediate medical attention, the child will be transported via ambulance to the appropriate hospital, most often Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Plymouth. It is essential for parents/

guardians to notify the school staff of any changes during the school year to the emergency contact information. IT IS IMPERATIVE TO EACH CHILD'S SAFETY THAT THIS INFORMATION REMAINS ACCURATE.

If a student is not feeling well, he or she needs to see the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse. It is essential to the health and safety of each individual in the school community for the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse to be aware of any illness or injury in either school building. If it is necessary to contact a parent about a student's illness, it is the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse who will call. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones or other devices to make calls or send text messages in either school building. If a student is found to be sending or receiving phone calls or text messages on mobile devices during school, the student will face disciplinary action.

Contagious Illness

If a student has symptoms of a contagious illness such as chickenpox, streptococcal infections, fifth disease, conjunctivitis or other contagious disease, it is important for the student to see a physician. **If a student has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, the parent/guardian must notify the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse and the student must bring a physician's certificate upon return to school.** Students diagnosed with strep throat must complete 24 hours of antibiotic treatment before returning to school. In addition, students out sick with a fever should be free of all fever for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medications, before returning to school.

Injuries and Restrictions

If any restrictions to a student's program are necessary, a physician's note must be given to the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse indicating the restrictions and the duration of the restrictions. Students arriving at school with crutches, canes, wheelchairs, braces, casts, etc. must report to the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse with a physician's note to discuss mobility within the school. A student may only be excused from physical activity in Physical Education classes, or other courses that involve physical activity, if a student brings a physician's note.

Head Injuries

Rising Tide has a concussion policy to ensure the safety of its students. The policy follows Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regulations and serves to prevent, train, manage, and guide the return to academic and athletic activity of students who receive head injuries. The policy is included in the athletic section of the school website. If a student suffers a head injury outside of school activities it is important that the parent/guardian notify the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse. When a student returns to school after suffering a concussion, the student, parent/guardian, and appropriate school staff members will convene a meeting to develop a re-entry plan. The student will be monitored by school staff members and the student's own physician, and the re-entry plan will be adjusted as appropriate until the plan is no longer necessary.

Immunizations

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has immunization regulations for school attendance (105 CMR 220.000).

Parents/guardians should review each child's immunization status with his or her physician prior to the school year in order to determine that immunizations are current. In addition to the immunizations required for all students from kindergarten through grade twelve, one Tdap and two varicella vaccines are also required for students entering grade seven.

The immunization requirements set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health shall not apply if the student's parents present written documentation that the student meets the standards for medical or religious exemption set forth in Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L., c. 76, s. 15). Students who are not immunized are not only at risk to themselves, but pose a danger of transmission to other students who cannot be effectively immunized. In the event of an outbreak, all non-immunized students will be required to stay at home until the outbreak resolves. Please contact the School Nurse Practitioner or School Nurse with any questions or concerns.

Home or Hospital Education

If a student, due to documented medical reasons, needs to remain at home or in a hospital for not less than fourteen (14) school days in a school year, the student may be provided with tutoring in accordance with 603 CMR 28.03 (3)(c). To obtain home or hospital tutoring, the student's physician must complete the Physicians Statement for Temporary Home or Hospital Education and submit it to the appropriate building Principal.

Adjustment Counseling Services

The school's Adjustment Counselors work together with Advisors and school leaders to support the social and emotional growth of all students. Through advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and direct work with groups of students and individual students, the school's Adjustment Counselors help provide a caring and productive atmosphere for students to achieve school success.

The Adjustment Counselors support the Advisory Curriculum, run small group sessions with some students, and meet individually with some students. The major emphasis of the adjustment counseling program is helping students succeed in school through building healthy habits and relationships, developing strategies for overcoming challenges, and making responsible decisions.

It is important for parents/guardians to keep the necessary school staff informed of any issues outside of school that may impact a student in school. If all the adults in a student's life communicate honestly about behaviors that have been observed, there is a much better chance of helping the student grow positively. If a student is working with a therapist outside of school, or is involved in an outside therapeutic program, parents/guardians are encouraged to sign a release form so that one of our school Adjustment Counselors can communicate with other supportive adults in the student's life.

College and Career Program

As a grades five through twelve college preparatory public school, Rising Tide has developed a program that is designed to provide students with academic, career, and workplace readiness. The school hosts a Career Day for Middle School Students every two years, and has a Senior Internship Course for students in grade twelve. The school's College and Future Planning Counselor works with Upper School Advisors, students, and parents/guardians in helping to navigate future planning and the college admissions process. The school also has a separate College Handbook, which is available on the school's website and shared with families at college planning events.

Guidance and Support

Additional academic guidance and personal support of students is provided by the Academic Dean, the Dean of Students of each building, and the Principal of each building.

Special Education Services

Rising Tide strives to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities. As a public school, Rising Tide is required to follow all laws pertaining to Special Education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other federal and state laws and regulations guarantee the right of each student to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Rising Tide has an inclusive philosophy, and Teachers, staff, and school leaders work hard to ensure that students with disabilities are included with their regular education peers to the maximum extent possible.

Students with disabilities who receive services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) are each assigned to a Learning Specialist, who works with the student's Teachers to ensure that the IEP is being followed. The student may receive direct services with Learning Specialists and classroom aides in the classroom or in a pullout setting. Related services are provided as described in the IEP, and may include counseling, occupational therapy, speech and language services, specialized reading instruction, or other services as determined by the IEP Team. IEP Teams meet for each student's annual review, to review evaluations of the student, and to discuss parent or Teacher concerns.

Referral for Evaluations

If Teachers or parents have a concern about a child's ability to make progress in school, the student may be referred for a Child Study. The Child Study is a process that typically takes 4-6 weeks, during which a student's Teachers identify areas of strength and weakness and work to identify and test out different strategies with the student to see if any prove beneficial. The Child Study Team is directed by the appropriate Dean of Students, and other support staff may be involved in the process to target specific areas of student need. The student's progress is assessed on a weekly basis, based on work samples, observations, and performance on various classroom assessments. At the end of the Child Study process, the team may conclude that the concerns with the student have resolved, or recommend that strategies continue under a Curriculum Accommodation Plan (CAP). If classroom strategies have had limited benefit and the student continues to have difficulty, the Child Study team may refer the child for an initial evaluation through the Special Education Department.

Parents/guardians may request an initial evaluation for their child at any time if they suspect the child may have a disability. If a referral is made, verbally or in writing, the Special Education Director will be notified immediately. The school will respond to the parents within five (5) school days. Under most circumstances, the school will test the student in all areas of suspected disability. If the student is making progress in school and the parent does not suspect a disability, the parent's request for testing may be declined. A child does not need to go through the Child Study process prior to being referred for testing by a parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to review their rights under Special Education Law on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/pnps.pdf>.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Rising Tide Charter Public School has a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SE-PAC). Membership to SE-PAC is open to parents/guardians of children with special education needs and anyone interested in Special Education. SE-PAC acts as a resource for families, providing support, networking and information about disabilities and the Special Education process.

Rising Tide's SE-PAC encourages open communication, understanding and mutual respect among all students, parents, and the greater community. SE-PAC provides a helpful network for parents/guardians, including access to current resources, training, and emotional support. Meeting dates are posted on the school's website and shared through the Monday Memo.

Section 504 Accommodation Plans

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) protects qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance, assuring that qualified students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students in the general educational setting. A student is eligible for a Section 504 Plan if the student has, or has a record of having, or is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and performing manual tasks. The development of a Section 504 Plan requires an evaluation process to ensure that students are not misclassified, unnecessarily labeled as having a disability, or incorrectly accommodated. Eligibility for a Section 504 Plan is determined by a committee that includes the appropriate Dean of Students, the student's Advisor, and the student's parents/guardians.

Title I Program

Rising Tide is a Targeted Assistance Title I School. As a targeted assistance school, Rising Tide receives some Federal programming to support Reading and Math programs for all students. Staff members identify students who are in need of additional Reading and Math support, and offer additional programming to these students. Title I services are designed to supplement the academic program at Rising Tide, not replace the academic program.

ACADEMICS

Expectations

The goal of the academic program at Rising Tide is to give students an opportunity to develop skills, content knowledge, and understandings through the exploration of academic disciplines, interdisciplinary projects, and enrichment activities. At Rising Tide, we believe that any student can succeed if he or she tries his or her best. Rising Tide has high academic standards and expectations for every student, and has developed a supportive structure to help each student meet such expectations. With appropriate effort, all students can succeed.

Curriculum

For a full explanation of the curriculum of the school, please refer to the Program of Studies.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

The curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in the following areas: Arts, English Language Arts, Foreign Languages, Comprehensive Health, Mathematics, History and Social Science, and Science and Technology/Engineering.

Schoolwide Objectives

In addition to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the curriculum at Rising Tide is also guided by Schoolwide Objectives for teaching and learning. By the time each student graduates from Rising Tide, he or she should feel confident in his or her ability to be an effective Communicator, Investigator, Self-Directed Learner and Community Steward. Teachers use these Schoolwide Objectives to set expectations, create teaching and learning activities, and assess student progress in all school-related activities.

Guiding Questions

Additionally, Rising Tide uses Guiding Questions that help connect academic, community building, and service learning activities to the growth and progress of students from grade five through grade twelve. The work of school is connected to the daily lives of students, and to the questions that individuals try to answer about themselves and the community in the process of growing and learning.

The following are the Guiding Questions:

All Grades: Who am I?

Grade Five: What is my place in the community?

Grade Six: How can I connect with others?

Grade Seven: How can we face challenges?

Grade Eight: How can we take responsibility for ourselves and one another?

Grade Nine: How can we recognize and demonstrate courage?

Grade Ten: How can we recognize and demonstrate integrity?

Grade Eleven: How can we be mindful of and prepare for the future?

Grade Twelve: What is my place in the world?

Comprehensive Health Education

The educational program at Rising Tide is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Comprehensive Health, primarily through each grade level's Advisory Curriculum and Physical Education. The curriculum explores healthy living, healthy relationships, personal identity, coping strategies for overcoming challenges, responsible decision making, media literacy, and positive community membership.

Sexual Education

Some units in the curriculum involve topics of human sexuality and human reproduction. These units are designed to be age appropriate and within the guidelines of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. c. 71, s. 32A), Rising Tide will notify parents/guardians of any units in the curriculum that primarily involve sexual education or human sexuality issues. Parents/guardians may request to review material from such units and may exempt their children from any portion of the units. All requests for exemption must be presented in writing to the Principal of the appropriate building.

Physical Education

All students in grades five through twelve are required to participate in physical education each year. A number of courses, including Physical Education, Plymouth Fitness, Upper School Dance, Middle School Dance and Theater, and some Elective Courses, require students to wear appropriate attire for physical activity as directed by the Teacher.

For a student to be excused from, or limited in, participation in any course that involves physical activity, the school requires a physician's note. The physician's note should state the health reason for the exemption from, or limitation in, participation as well as the duration of such exemption or limitation. For some health concerns, the school may require a physician's note indicating that a student is able to return to participation in physical activity.

Academic Support

Academic support time is built into the weekly schedule in each school building. These are times when Teachers are available to provide extra support to individual students and small groups of students beyond class time. While Teachers will often reach out to students for these extra help opportunities, it is important for students to learn to take responsibility to ask for support from Teachers during these times.

Assessment of Students

On an ongoing basis, students are assessed, both formally and informally, on their ability to demonstrate skills, content knowledge, and understandings of the subject matter in each discipline.

Classwork

Teachers at Rising Tide develop classroom practices that enable students to explore topics and receive ongoing feedback on their own progress within each course. Students are expected to participate fully in their individual, small group, and full group work in each course, and are assessed on their classwork by Teachers.

Homework

The faculty and staff at Rising Tide view homework as essential to the learning process and to high academic achievement. Individual work helps students to build on the skills and knowledge they gain in the classroom, and provides opportunities for students to gain deeper understanding through practice, reflection, and synthesis; in addition, homework assists students in developing organizational skills and the ability to follow directions. Homework is an important part of student assessment and is required for high learning standards in secondary school. Homework is another opportunity for Teachers to assess student progress and provide ongoing feedback to students.

Completion of homework assignments is an individual student's responsibility, supported by the student's family members; as partners in the educational process, family members are expected to encourage students to take responsibility for completing homework assignments. A student will have consequences if he or she does not fulfill this responsibility to complete homework.

Students should expect to have homework assignments every night. Depending upon the grade level, completing all homework should, approximately, take between forty-five minutes and two hours each night. If homework is consistently taking a student more than the expected amount of time per night to complete, the student should speak to his or her Advisor.

Teachers understand that, sometimes, an emergency may arise when a student may be unable to complete an assignment; if such a circumstance should arise, the student should bring a note from home to his or her Advisor or Teacher, explaining the circumstance. Teachers also understand that some assignments may seem difficult to a student. If a student is having difficulty with an assignment, he or she can ask a parent or family member to help clarify the assignment, and should spend the appropriate time trying to complete the assignment. At school the next day, it is important for the student to approach the Teacher at the beginning of the day to explain the difficulty. Teachers want to help students, and it is important for students to let Teachers know when they are having difficulty.

The school provides a Student Agenda for each student in order to assist with organization. Some students in secondary school need help in organizing their time and place for study at home. Each student should have a place at home where he or she studies, away from TV, video games, phones, or other social media distractions. Students should let their Advisors know if they are having trouble keeping organized.

Making up Homework When Absent

If absent from school, a student is responsible for making up missed homework assignments in a timely fashion. In such cases, Teachers will give students a reasonable amount of time to complete assignments missed due to absence from school, usually equal to the number of days absent. If a child is absent for one or two days, he or she should contact another student in the course for assignments, as it is important for students to learn to take responsibility for their education. If a student is absent for more than three days due to illness or emergency, the student's parents/guardians may request help from the student's Advisor to gather assignments within twenty-four hours of the request. Students who have been absent may need to make up more than the homework assignments missed upon return, depending upon the course and the classwork missed. In the case of a planned absence, the student and the parents/guardians will assume full responsibility for a student's educational program and for making up any school work that was missed during the absence.

Quizzes, Tests, Papers, Reports, and Projects

Quizzes, tests, papers, reports, and projects provide opportunities for Teachers to more formally assess the ability of students to demonstrate skills, content knowledge, and understandings of the subject matter in each course. It is important for students to prepare actively for quizzes and tests, and to fully complete all required components of papers, reports, and projects in a timely manner.

Mid-Term Progress Reports

Progress Reports are sent home four times a year, in the middle of each term, for some students. Not all students receive a Progress Report each term. The report may indicate areas in which the student needs to improve, and may also indicate areas in which the student has shown progress.

Report Cards

Four times a year, students receive Report Cards. After the first and third terms, the Report Cards contain an assessment of student progress for each subject area through a narrative comment and a letter grade. The narrative comments provide individualized feedback to students and families that identify individual strengths and areas for improvement. These Report Cards are given to the family at the end of a Student/Advisor/Parent conference.

After the second and fourth terms, the end of the first and second semesters respectively, the Report Cards are mailed home. In addition to the narrative comment and the letter grade, these Report Cards also include each Teacher's assessment of a student's progress in demonstrating the Benchmark Skills from each of the four Schoolwide Objectives: Communicator, Investigator, Self-Directed Learner, and Community Steward.

Student/Advisor/Parent Conferences

The Student/Advisor/Parent conferences are noted previously in the Advising section of this Student Handbook. Each student is given an opportunity to preview the Quarterly Student Report and prepare for the conference, as the goal is for the student to lead the conference. Students are encouraged to discuss achievements and challenges and to develop revised goals and action steps. Parents/guardians are encouraged to join Advisors in listening to and asking questions of the student.

Grades and Marks on Report Cards and Transcripts

The faculty and staff at Rising Tide believe that a letter grade should indicate the degree to which a student has demonstrated skills, content knowledge, and understandings according to the standards of the course. All formal and informal assessments from a course are considered by Teachers in the grades and marks earned by students. Courses are not leveled. The grade point average (GPA) is not weighted, and students are not ranked. If a student has exceeded the standard expectations, the range should be B+ to A. If a student has met the standard expectations, the range should be C to B. If a student has not met the standard expectations, the range should be F to C-. The highest grade a student may earn in a course is an A. The lowest grade a student may earn in order to pass a course is a D-.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	4.0 Scale
A	93-100	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	0.7
F	Below 60	0

Benchmark Skills Scale

Emerging	Learning	Accomplished	Distinguished
1	2	3	4

Scale For Courses Not Included in GPA

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Outstanding
U	N	S	O

Standardized Testing

Student progress is also measured through standardized testing. All students educated with public funds in Massachusetts are required to participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). MCAS tests are given to students at all grade levels at Rising Tide during testing periods, primarily in the spring. The tests are designed to measure student performance based on the learning standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Some students in the Upper School also participate in the College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA+), the PSAT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP Exams. Many students also choose to take SAT and ACT tests.

Promotion Requirements

In keeping with the mission of the school, Rising Tide will graduate capable and prepared young adults who have acquired skills and knowledge as well as developed a sense of being a strong community member. Some students may need more time to develop the necessary skills, content knowledge, and understandings necessary to be promoted.

Middle School Students

Promotion

A student's promotion to the next grade level depends on the following criteria:

- Satisfactory progress in demonstrating the Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills
- Satisfactory narrative comments from Teachers and passing letter grades for each course

Non-Promotion

A student may not be promoted to the next grade level for any of the following reasons:

- Unsatisfactory progress in demonstrating the Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills
- Failing, or receiving No Credit (NC) for two or more courses

Upper School Students

For Upper School students, there is a greater emphasis on earning credits and meeting graduation requirements than on promotion from one grade-level Advisory to the next grade-level Advisory.

Promotion

A student's promotion to the next grade-level Advisory depends on the following criteria:

- Satisfactory progress in demonstrating the Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills
- Satisfactory narrative comments from Teachers and passing letter grades for each course

Non-Promotion

A student may not be promoted to the next grade level Advisory for any of the following reasons:

- Unsatisfactory progress in demonstrating the Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills
- Failing, or receiving No Credit (NC) for the number of courses which, through the promotion, would prevent the student from the opportunity to earn enough credits and meet all the graduation requirements in the amount of years remaining

Credit Recovery

At Rising Tide, students must work within the school schedule to recover any necessary credits to meet graduation requirements.

Graduation Requirements

A minimum of twenty-eight (28) credits is required for graduation from the Upper School at Rising Tide. Full-year courses are given one (1) credit. Semester courses are given a half (.5) credit. The following are the minimum credits required for each discipline:

- *English* 4 credits
- *Mathematics* 4 credits
- *Science* 4 credits
- *Social Studies* 3 credits
- *World Languages* 3 credits in one language
- *Arts* 3 credits
- *Physical Education* 2 credits

Students are not permitted to graduate early. Each student must also meet the Competency Determination (CD) standard of the state through successful participation in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests in high school English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Non-Discrimination Policy

Each student has a right to an equal education. No student will be excluded from admission to Rising Tide Charter Public School, or excluded from or discouraged from participation in any element of the school's program, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, homelessness, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation (in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, M.G.L. c. 76, s. 5).

No student should be subjected to unfair treatment, discrimination, or harassment due to differences or perceived differences in abilities, body type, school achievement, race, color, sex, gender identity, homelessness, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 s. 84, no student who is pregnant, or who has become a parent, will be excluded from regular classes or extra-curricular activities. Rising Tide does not require a pregnant student to submit a physician's statement in order to attend school or participate in extracurricular activities.

Anti-Harassment Policy

No student should be subjected to unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse such as teasing, threatening, name calling, or bullying.

No student should be subjected to unwelcome written forms of harassment such as teasing, threatening, name calling, or bullying.

No student should be subjected to unwelcome non-verbal harassment such as hitting, shoving, or making gestures that ridicule, antagonize, or threaten the student.

Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy

No student should be subjected to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by another student or a staff member.

No student should be subjected to unwelcome touching or pressure for sexual activity, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades or inclusion in the community.

No student should be subjected to the unwelcome display of sexually suggestive objects, drawings, pictures, or cartoons from email, internet publications, or any other media source.

Response to Acts of Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Harassment

Notification

Each person within the Rising Tide school community should feel safe to operate freely within the school and feel unencumbered by unwelcome comments, gestures, or actions.

If a student believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or sexually harassed, it is important for that student to let a trusted adult member in the Rising Tide community (Advisor, Teacher, Dean of Students, Adjustment Counselor, Nurse, Assistant Head of School, Head of School, or any other trusted adult) know what has happened. If a trusted adult in the Rising Tide community learns about any acts of discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment, such acts can be addressed in an appropriate manner.

The trusted adult will work with the Head of School, the Assistant Head of School, the Middle School Dean of Students, or the Upper School Dean of Students to investigate the matter. Together with the Advisor(s) of any involved student(s), they will determine if disciplinary action is necessary.

Disciplinary Action

Any student or staff member who engages in acts of discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. The procedures for student discipline are outlined in this Student Handbook. The procedures for the discipline of staff members is outlined in the Employee Handbook.

Follow-up

The parents of all involved students will be contacted and kept informed. The school response to acts of discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment will often include counseling and, if appropriate, mediation, with the involved parties. The Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Dean of Students, or Upper School Dean of Students will follow-up with the involved parties to make sure that the situation has been corrected, to prevent reoccurrence, and to ensure that no individual is subjected to acts of retaliation.

Grievance Procedures for Students

The Rising Tide Charter Public School staff would like to know immediately if any student believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or sexually harassed. School staff would prefer for the student to tell a trusted adult at the school, or for the student's parents to call the appropriate Principal, so that the concern can be addressed quickly and appropriately; however, in some instances a student or the student's family may feel it is necessary to file a formal complaint. In an effort to ensure equitable treatment of all Rising Tide students, Rising Tide has created the following grievance procedures.

I. Where to File a Complaint

Any student who feels that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or sexually harassed may file a complaint, in writing, with any of the individuals listed below as the Grievance Administrators.

- Jill Crafts, Head of School: 508 747-2620, ext. 224
- Michael O'Keefe, Assistant Head of School: 508 747-1889, ext. 306
- Tyler Post, Middle School Dean of Students: 508 747-2620, ext. 227
- James Simons, Upper School Dean of Students: 508 747-1889, ext. 307

Complaints of Discrimination Based Upon Disability

A person who alleges discrimination on the basis of disability relative to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student who, because of a disability, needs or is believed to need special instruction or related services, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 766, and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Act, must use the procedure outlined in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Parents' Rights Brochure rather than this grievance procedure. A copy of this brochure is available in the school office and on the department's website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/parents.html>.

A person with a complaint involving discrimination on the basis of a disability other than those described above may either use this grievance procedure or file the complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or the U.S. Department of Education.

II. Contents of Complaint and Time Lines for Filing

Complaints covered under this grievance procedure must be filed within 30 school days of the alleged discrimination. The complaint must be in writing. The Grievance Administrator, or any person of the grievant's choosing, may assist the grievant with filing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

1. The name and school of the grievant
2. The name of the grievant's representative, if any
3. The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment
4. A description of the alleged discrimination or harassment

5. The names of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment, as can be reasonably determined
6. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the grievant wants the complaint to be resolved

III. Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint

Respondents will be informed of the charges as soon as the Grievance Administrator considers it appropriate. The Grievance Administrator will interview witnesses to determine the facts relevant to the complaint and will gather relevant information. These interviews and fact gathering will be completed within 15 days of the complaint. Within 20 school days of receiving the complaint, the Grievance Administrator will meet with the grievant and his/her representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment. Within 10 school days of the meeting with the grievant, the Grievance Administrator will provide written disposition of the complaint to the grievant. It is understood that, in the event that a complaint should result in disciplinary action against an employee or student, the complainant will not be informed of the action unless it directly involves the complainant. Any disciplinary action imposed upon a student or employee is subject to applicable procedural requirements. Confidentiality of grievants/respondents and witnesses will be maintained, consistent with Rising Tide Charter Public School procedures.

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this Grievance Procedure is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

IV. Appeals

If the grievant is not satisfied with a disposition of a Grievance Administrator, the grievant or his/her representative shall appeal the disposition by written response, certified mail, receipt requested to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees:

Harry Salerno
Chairman, Board of Trustees
Rising Tide Charter Public School
6 Resnik Road
Plymouth, MA 02360

The Board of Trustees Chairman will issue a written response on the appeal to the grievant within 10 school days of receiving the appeal.

A grievant may file a complaint relative to complaints under applicable federal statutes with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, at the Boston Office, 8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109-3921, telephone 617-289-0111, email OCR.Boston@ed.gov. You may also file an online complaint form with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at www.ed.gov. Such complaints may be filed as follows:

1. Within 180 calendar days of alleged discrimination or harassment, or
2. Within 60 calendar days of receiving notice of Rising Tide's final disposition on a complaint filed through Rising Tide Charter Public School
3. Within 60 calendar days of receiving a final decision by the MA DESE, Bureau of Special Education Appeals, or
4. Instead of filing a complaint within Rising Tide

Other agencies that accept complaints of discrimination include the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at John F. Kennedy Federal Building, Government Center, Room 475, Boston, MA 02203; the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02146, telephone 781 338-3300; the MA Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108.

Rights of Eighteen-Year-Old Students

Any student who is eighteen years of age or older has the legal rights of an adult and may take responsibility for the following:

- Signing permission slips as well as absence, tardy, and dismissal notes
- Making decisions to authorize or limit access to his or her own school records
- Making decisions related to special education services
- Making decisions about withdrawing from school.

If a student chooses to take over from his or her parents/guardians responsibility for school life, the student must complete an Age of Majority form and present it to the Upper School Principal. Even if a student chooses to exercise his or her rights and responsibilities for school life, Rising Tide will continue to share letters, report cards, and disciplinary notices with the parents/guardians of the student.

No Hazing

The hazing of students as a part of an initiation to any student organization, activity, or class conducted by any individual or group will not be tolerated at Rising Tide. Any student who organizes or participates in hazing will be referred for disciplinary action. Hazing is prohibited in Massachusetts, as defined in Massachusetts General Law 269, sections 17-19:

Section 17

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 such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, 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 other 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.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 18

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen 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.

Section 19

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.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Overview

Rising Tide has developed a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the Plan) as required under M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 in consultation with school personnel, state agencies, and Rising Tide families. The Plan is intended to continue the philosophy and practice of Rising Tide in the context of the state law. The Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and Deans of Students are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan. This Plan applies to all students regardless of legal status. This section of the Student Handbook includes excerpts of the student-related sections of the plan.

The Rising Tide Charter Public School community is a close and caring group of students, Advisors, Teachers, staff, and parents. We value our relationships with one another and strive to develop an atmosphere of trust, respect for differences, support and understanding. Rising Tide is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation.

At Rising Tide, we expect that all members of the school community, adults and students, will treat one another in a civil manner with respect for differences. All students deserve to feel respected and safe in our school community.

We understand that members of certain student groups, or people associated with certain student groups, may be more vulnerable to becoming victims of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including but not limited to: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socio-economic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability.

Rising Tide takes specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for all populations in the school community, and provide students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

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

investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the victim's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, staff development, extracurricular activities, and family involvement

Definitions

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or by 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 of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
2. places the victim 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 victim;
4. infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
5. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

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.

Perpetrator is 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.

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

Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Retaliation Prohibited

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, 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.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are also prohibited 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 victim 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, § 370, nothing in this Plan requires the school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Prevention of Bullying

Expectations of the School Community

All members of the school community are expected to honor and uphold the Community Standards of Behavior, which are shared annually in the Student Handbook, the Staff Philosophy and Practice Handbook, and the school website. These standards are centered around four strong principles: Honesty, Trust, Respect, and Responsibility.

The structure at Rising Tide is designed to support students in upholding these Community Standards of Behavior, with relatively small class sizes, teams of Teachers who communicate about students, Advisors who support students at school and communicate directly with families, and a team of staff members who meet weekly about the overall wellness of individual students at the school. Team-building activities and Service Learning projects enable students to learn more about themselves and others in positive ways.

This Bullying and Intervention Plan, as well as summaries of the Plan, is shared with students, staff members and families annually on the school website.

Work with Students - Specific Approaches

Specific bullying prevention approaches with students are explored through the Comprehensive Health curriculum in addition to other curricular areas at Rising Tide. Teachers develop the curriculum from such resources as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Teaching Tolerance, and the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC). The bullying prevention curricula are informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using literature to address bullying through identification, catharsis and insight;
- 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 cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Students will also review the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as a part of the Comprehensive Health curriculum.

Work with Student - General Approaches

General bullying prevention approaches with students are practiced at Rising Tide through an inquiry- and skills-based approach that is designed to support academic and personal growth in students. The following approaches are integral to establishing and maintaining a safe and supportive school environment:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including students listed in the *Overview* section of this plan;
- noticing and addressing gateway behaviors;
- 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; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Reporting Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A Rising Tide staff member is required to report immediately to the appropriate Dean of Students any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not Rising Tide staff members, may be made anonymously. Rising Tide will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community, including a Bullying Reporting Form. Reports may be submitted to the appropriate Dean of Students, or any other Teacher or staff member. Reports may be made in writing or by calling or emailing. Students can report bullying, either anonymously or with their signature, in one of several drop boxes around the school.

Use of a Bullying Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report; however, Rising Tide will make the Bullying Reporting Form available in the school office, the counseling office, and the school nurse's office and post the Bullying Reporting Form on the school's website. The Bullying Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

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

Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation

Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the appropriate Dean of Students will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged victim and/or to protect the alleged victim 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 victim and/or the perpetrator in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the victim; and altering the perpetrator's schedule and access to the victim. The appropriate Dean of Students will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The appropriate Dean of Students 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.

Investigation

The appropriate Dean of Students will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation will be consistent with Rising Tide's procedures for investigating reports of student concerns.

During the investigation the appropriate Dean of Students will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The appropriate Dean of Students will remind the alleged perpetrator, victim, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

The School Counselor, Advisors, and other Teachers may support the appropriate Dean of Students with the investigation as appropriate. As with all disciplinary matters at Rising Tide, student confidentiality will be maintained during the investigative process. The appropriate Dean of Students will maintain a written record of the investigation. If necessary, the appropriate Principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

Determinations

The appropriate Dean of Students will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation is substantiated, a Discipline Committee will be held for the perpetrator. The procedures for a Discipline Committee meeting are included in the Student Handbook; the disciplinary process is designed for a student to admit a mistake, understand the reasons for the mistake, and to find ways to learn from and not repeat a mistake.

If, after investigation, it is determined that a student has knowingly made a false accusation of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, a Discipline Committee will be held for the student who knowingly made a false accusation.

The Discipline Committee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the victim is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities.

The appropriate Dean of Students will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the victim and the perpetrator about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying, cyberbullying, 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 appropriate Principal or designee cannot report specific information to the victim's parent/guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the victim must be aware of in order to report violations.

The appropriate Dean of Students shall inform the parent/guardian of the victim about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

Responses with Involved Students

Rising Tide will use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 370(d)(v).

Taking Disciplinary Action

A Discipline Committee will determine disciplinary consequences and remedial responses for a student on the basis of facts reviewed during the meeting, 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. Disciplinary actions will remain consistent with the disciplinary practices at Rising Tide, practices that are outlined in detail in the Student Handbook.

The Discipline Committee will work 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.

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.

No disciplinary action will be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Any students involved with bullying, including the perpetrator, victim or others, may benefit from the following skill-building approaches:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's bullying prevention curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with the School Counselors and Teachers;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the bullying prevention curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills.

Promoting Safety for the Victim and Others

The appropriate Dean of Students will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the victim's sense of safety and that of others as well. Specific responses to promote safety are described in the previous section of the Plan, titled *Safety*.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the responses with involved students, the appropriate Dean of Students will contact the victim to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the appropriate Dean of Students will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

Notification to Parents, Other Schools, Law Enforcement

Notice to parents or guardians

Upon determining that bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has occurred, the appropriate Dean of Students will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the victim and the perpetrator of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Dean of Students first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice to Law Enforcement

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

Principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator.

Access to Resources and Services

Support Services

School personnel, including the Adjustment Counselors, the Nurse Practitioner, and the School Nurse, are available to provide assistance to the victim, the perpetrator, and others. The Adjustment Counselors support students individually and run social skills groups. When deemed appropriate, students and their families may be referred to community-based agencies for outside counseling or other services. Rising Tide Charter Public School maintains a list of outside agencies and services available for students and families. Parents/guardians should contact an Adjustment Counselor at Rising Tide to obtain assistance and/or referral to an outside agency.

Students with Disabilities

At each IEP meeting, the Team will discuss whether the student has a disability that affects social skills development or if the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability. If the Team determines that this is the case, it will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Identifying Resources

The committee that reviews the Plan annually will work to identify any gaps in the resources or services available to the school community in providing a safe and supportive school environment; from this review, recommendations may be made to improve such resources or services.

Problem Resolution System

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 370 of chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g) (v): The Plan shall inform parents or guardians of the victim about the Department's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic formats:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the school.

Non-Violent Intervention and Physical Restraint Policy

Rising Tide Charter Public School recognizes its responsibility, under 603 CMR 46, to ensure that every student is free from the unreasonable use of physical restraint in school. For this reason, the appropriately trained Rising Tide staff will only restrain a student as a last resort in an emergency situation to protect a student or a member of the community from imminent serious physical harm to themselves or others, and after the student has proven to be unresponsive to other less intrusive interventions. All physical restraint will be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.05.

Situations where a student might have to be restrained include a fight between two students, a situation where a student becomes frustrated and angry with him/herself, or a situation where a student becomes defiant and/or upset with a Teacher. If a potentially dangerous situation should arise at school, the attending staff member will attempt to diffuse the situation with verbal intervention techniques, and if necessary, aim to escort the involved student(s) from the area and attempt to calm the situation. When time-out is used as a de-escalation strategy to calm a student, staff will be present to monitor the student, and permission from the building Principal must be received for any time out to last more than 30 minutes.

If all attempts to de-escalate the situation should fail and the student is about to inflict harm to him/herself or others, a staff member trained in physical restraint will restrain the student in the safest possible manner, administering the restraint using the least restrictive and shortest method possible to save any students or staff members from harm, and applying only the amount of force necessary to safely conduct the restraint.

Physical restraint at Rising Tide will not be used in the following ways:

- As a form of punishment
- As a response to the destruction of property
- As a standard response for any individual student
- If a student's medical condition prevents him or her from being restrained safely

Interventions and Alternatives to Physical Restraint

The following de-escalation strategies apply to potentially dangerous behavior with a group of students, or a student in an individual setting, and will be covered in the annual staff training.

A) Provide Personal Space

B) Body Language

- Be aware of non-verbal communication, provide a supportive, non-threatening stance

C) Verbal Intervention

- *Tips*

- a. Remain calm
- b. Isolate the situation
- c. Enforce limits
- d. Listen
- e. Be consistent
- f. Be aware of tone, voice, cadence

- *Scenarios*

- g. If a student asks a questions to seek information then provide them with a rational response
- h. If the student questions or challenges authority then ignore the challenge and attempt to re-direct the topic
- i. If the student refuses to comply with your direction then set clear, reasonable, and enforceable limits
- j. If the student acts out verbally and screams and swears then remove the audience from the room and allow the student to calm down in a safe place

D) Time Out

- Staff will temporarily separate a student from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student will 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 will be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the use of calming. The time-out will end as soon as the student has calmed.

E) Physical Escort

- Staff trained in physical restraint may also attempt to physically redirect an agitated student by temporarily touching or holding, without the use of force, their hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing the student to walk to a safe location

F) Physical Redirection

- Staff trained in physical restraint may also attempt to physically redirect an agitated student by temporarily placing one hand on each of the student's shoulders, without force, and redirecting the student to the learning activity, the classroom, or safe location.

Training

The Head of School is responsible for making sure all staff members are trained in accordance with the MA DESE guidelines for physical restraint training within the first month of school. This training will include the following components:

- Rising Tide's restraint policy
- Methods of prevention of the need for physical restraint, including de-escalation strategies
- Types of restraint and related safety considerations
- Administering restraint in accordance with student's needs/ limitations
- Identification of staff in each building who have received certification in physical restraint

A minimum of three staff members per building, six total, will receive initial certification in a 12 hour long competency-based physical restraint training, with an annual 6 hour re-certification required. These trainings will include prevention techniques, identification of dangerous behaviors, simulation in administering and receiving proper techniques for physical restraint, and the demonstration of proficiency with the techniques of physical restraint. Physical restraint will only be administered by these staff members who have received in-depth training in the proper and safe use of physical restraint. The initial and recertification trainings will take place during the first month of school.

When implementing physical restraint, trained staff will take the following actions:

- Avoid administering the restraint in a manner that will prevent the student from breathing or speaking
- Avoid administering prone restraint, mechanical restraint, medication restraint, and seclusion
- Release the student from the restraint if the signs of physical distress occur so that medical assistance can be given
- Seek approval from the building Principal for the continuation of any physical restraint lasting over 20 minutes.

Reporting

The staff member who administered the restraint will verbally notify the building Principal as soon as possible, and a written report should be submitted to the Principal by the next school day. The Principal will make every attempt to notify the parents of the student within 24 hours of the incident, and a written report will be mailed to the parents within three school days. The letter will provide parents with the opportunity to meet with school leaders to discuss the incident as well as include information regarding the staff involved with administering the restraint, student activity prior to the event, efforts made to de-escalate the situation, and the restraint holds used. The letter will also include whether the student who was restrained might face consequences for the behavior that led to the restraint. Consequences would be determined by a Discipline Committee, following procedures

outlined in the Student Handbook. In the event of an injury to a student or staff member the school will send a copy of the written report to the DESE postmarked within three days of the event. The school will report all restraint data to the DESE annually.

Review

A review process will be followed as soon as possible after each incident of restraint, including a review of the incident with the student to address precipitating behaviors, a debrief of the incident with any staff who were present, and a plan for discussing the necessary follow up with any students present for the incident.

The building Principal will conduct regular reviews of restraint data to assess the effectiveness of the current restraint policy and make modifications as necessary. Weekly reviews will take place to determine if a particular student is being physically restrained multiple times per week, in which case the Principal will oversee a team to create a plan of action for that student. The Principal will conduct monthly reviews of restraint data to determine if improvements can be made to the existing policy.

Waivers

Rising Tide may seek a parent/guardian's consent to waive the reporting requirements of 603 CMR 46.06 for restraints administered to an individual student that do not result in serious injury to the student or a staff member and do not involve extended restraint. Extended restraint and restraint that result in serious injury to a student or staff member must be reported to the DESE, regardless of any waivers. Individual waivers will only be sought for students who are at high risk for behavior that may require frequent restraint procedures.

Individual Waivers

1. Rising Tide may not require a parent's consent to a waiver as a condition for admission to the school.
2. A parent may withdraw consent to a physical restraint waiver at any time, without penalty
3. Rising Tide will maintain the following documentation concerning a physical restraint waiver in the student's file and make it available to the DESE for inspection at any time: a. The informed written consent of the parent or guardian to the waiver, which shall specify those reporting requirement in 603 CMR 46.06 that the parent or guardian agrees to waive. b. Specific information regarding when and how the parent or guardian will be informed regarding the administration of all restraints to the individual student.
4. No Rising Tide program or classroom is exempt from any of the physical restraint requirements.

Methods of Engaging Parents and Youth

Board of Trustees

The Rising Tide board of trustees will select a school administrator to serve as the "building Principal" to oversee the physical restraint regulations. This individual is not required to be the school Principal.

Enrollment Policy

Rising Tide's enrollment policies and procedures are consistent with the Massachusetts Charter School Statute (MGL, ch.71, sec. 89), and the Charter School Regulations (603 CMR 1.00). As a public school, Rising Tide is open to all students who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In admitting students, Rising Tide does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. The full enrollment policy is published on the Enrollment page of the school website.

Technology and Network Acceptable Use Policy

Guiding Statement

In an inquiry and skills-based classroom, technology is used as a tool to support investigation, communication, and collaboration. Technology provides many opportunities for students to explore the world beyond school and to practice important skills, from word processing to computer programming. When used in the context of supportive relationships among Teachers and students, the purposeful use of technology enhances the teaching and learning experience and provides opportunities to learn new skills.

All users of technology at Rising Tide Charter Public School (Rising Tide) are expected to follow the school's Community Standards of Behavior. Rising Tide's Guiding Principles of Honesty, Trust, Respect, and Responsibility apply to the use of technology equipment and the internet. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in disciplinary action which could lead to revocation of technology privileges.

Staff members should report concerns to their Advisory Team Leader, Curriculum Coordinator, or the Educational Technology Director. Students should report concerns to their appropriate classroom Teacher, Advisor, or Dean of Students.

Equipment and Tools

Rising Tide provides technology equipment and tools to staff and students. Each user may use these tools only for school-related work.

- Each user is expected to respect the school's equipment through careful use and to report any damages, including breakages, missing parts, or theft, immediately.
- Any error messages, including virus alerts, should be reported immediately.
- No user may download software without approval.
- No user may change or modify any settings without permission from the Educational Technology Director.
- Each user may only use his or her personal log-on information and may not share passwords with other users.
- Each user should return equipment to its proper location.
- Students may not use personal technology equipment or tools without specific permission from the Educational Technology Director.

Internet, Email Communication, and Online Collaboration

Any online activity, including communication and collaboration, should reflect essential components of Rising Tide's philosophy, including taking responsibility, building meaningful relationships, and respecting others. Online communication should not replace verbal, face-to-face communication.

- Upon enrollment at Rising Tide, each student is assigned an account within the Rising Tide domain. Upon withdrawal, or after graduation from Rising Tide, each student's account is deleted.
- Each user's assigned account within the Rising Tide domain is for school-related, educational purposes only. Technology use will vary for each course; Teachers will communicate with students the expectations for technology use within a course or for particular projects or assignments.

- Each user's assigned account within the Rising Tide domain includes Google Drive. Each user should use Google Drive to create and save documents. Each user can access these documents through his or her account at school or outside of school using an internet connection. Documents may also be shared through Google Drive when appropriate for educational purposes.
- Each user's assigned account within the Rising Tide domain includes a Gmail address. This email address is for school-related business only. It is not a personal email account, and users should never transmit messages that may be disrespectful or offensive.
- Rising Tide email accounts are primarily for internal communication; however, at a Teacher's discretion, some assignments may require students to communicate with individuals from organizations outside of Rising Tide.
- Each user should log out of Google Chrome after each use.
- Each user is expected to use the internet for educational purposes only.
- If a user accesses inappropriate material online, he/she is responsible for reporting the incident.
- All material used from the internet should be properly cited.

Monitoring and Filtering

The school maintains control over the Rising Tide domain, including, but not limited to, Google Drive and Google Email. Items stored on Google Drive and staff and student Google Email communications are not private. The school does not anticipate needing to view staff or student accounts within the Rising Tide domain, but if the need arises, the school reserves the right to do so.

Rising Tide will take precautions required by the Children's Internet Protection Act to restrict access to undesirable materials including, but not limited to, installing content filtering software or using an internet provider that uses content filtering software. This software should not give users a false sense of security; the ultimate responsibility for appropriate internet use lies with the user.

School Supplies and Textbooks

Some school supplies that students keep, such as a student agenda or paperback books in which students practice the skills of marking a text, are purchased by the school and families are asked to pay the school for them; other items, including notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, and colored pencils need to be purchased by students and their parents outside of school. Parents should speak with their child's Advisor if they have difficulty purchasing any school supplies.

Textbooks, if used in a course, are provided for students by the school to borrow for the year. At the end of the school year, students are expected to return the school's textbooks in excellent condition. If a student does not return the books, or if a book is damaged, the family of the student is responsible for the cost of replacing the book(s).

Rising Tide is not able to supply an extra set of textbooks for a student unless an accommodation for extra textbooks is listed on the student's IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan.

Lockers and Cubbies

Lockers, at the Upper School, and cubbies, at the Middle School, are provided to students for the storage of books and personal items. The lockers and cubbies are property of the school and are subject to search at any time for reasonable cause. Students may not decorate or post anything on the exterior of lockers or cubbies. Students may not change lockers or cubbies without prior approval from the Dean of Students. Students may not share lockers or cubbies with other students.

Posted Materials

No posters, flyers, or other announcements, whether for Rising Tide events or events outside of school, may be posted in either building without prior approval from the Dean of Students. Students who post approved materials are responsible for removing the materials after the event has occurred.

Prohibited Items

Any student possessions brought to school must be lawful, not dangerous or threatening. School leaders and Teachers may conduct searches of students' possessions if the staff feels it is necessary to ensure the safety and security of all students. Any searches will take place on school grounds and at least two adults will be present. The following are items that are prohibited at the school; possession or use of these items will likely result in disciplinary action.

Fire

Any unauthorized use of fire (e.g. cigarettes, lighters, candles, incense, firecrackers, etc.) on school property is a potential threat to the safety of others and is not permitted. Students may not bring any items that could create fires, such as matches or lighters, to school.

Weapons or Simulated Weapons

No student at Rising Tide is allowed to carry any type of weapon or simulated weapon to school; examples include guns, knives, peashooters, toy guns, squirt guns, and laser pointers. The Gun-Free Schools Act and state statute require a one-year minimum expulsion of any student who brings a firearm to school.

Illegal Substances

Possession of drugs, alcohol, any illegal substance, or drug paraphernalia, including vaporizers, at school will not be tolerated. Rising Tide Charter Public School is a DRUG FREE ZONE.

Food and Beverages

Students may not chew gum at school. Students are expected and encouraged to follow the nutrition standards of the Wellness Policy. Students may not arrive at school with open containers of coffee, or other caffeinated or artificially sweetened drinks. Students may drink water in classrooms.

Phones

Students are not permitted to use mobile phones or other devices to make calls or send text messages within either school building. Phones need to be turned off and stored in a locker or bag upon entering either school building. This rule applies during school hours as well as during after-school programming in either building. If school staff members see a student with a phone, the phone will be taken and left at the front office of the school building until a parent/guardian can pick up the phone. If a student is found in possession of a mobile phone, or found to be sending or receiving phone calls or text messages on mobile devices during school, the student will face disciplinary action. Students may use the school telephones to call home for emergencies only, and need permission from a Teacher to go to the school office in either building to call. Students should make after-school plans before arriving at school.

Electronics

Students are not allowed to use the following items during the school day: mobile devices, music players, cameras, game systems, or other electronic devices. If a student is found to be using any of these items at school, the student may face disciplinary action. Students are allowed to play games and listen to music quietly on the bus, but the electronic items must be turned off and put away before entering the building.

Personal Property

Rising Tide is not responsible for personal items that may be lost or stolen at school. Parents should insure any valuable possessions that students bring to school. Names should be clearly printed on the outside of book bags, lunch bags, books, calculators, and clothing.

Visitors

Each school building is full of activity during the school day. Outside of special events for the school community, it is important for any visitors to the school to make arrangements with school staff for such a visit. If current family members, prospective families, or local community members wish to learn more about our school, they are encouraged to arrange for a tour or attend an informational Open House session.

Celebrations

Rising Tide community members need to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of all students at the school. Special birthday and other personal celebrations, involving only one student or a few students, should take place at home, rather than at school. Parents should not deliver, or have delivered, presents, flowers, balloons, etc. to the school for a student. Surprise deliveries during the school day can be very distracting to the learning environment. In addition, singling out one or a few students and excluding other students can cause unnecessary hurt for those not included.

Dress Code

The Rising Tide Dress Code was created by trustees, parents, and Teachers, and is designed to support a school environment that promotes meaningful teaching and learning. Students should come dressed for the work of school, and are expected to be in Dress Code from the beginning of the school day until the end of the school day, including Advisory, lunch, and recess. We ask that Parents/Guardians support their children in complying with the Dress Code. The Dress Code is as follows:

Bottoms

Students may wear long pants, shorts, or skirts. Skirts and shorts must pass the fingertip rule (with outstretched arms and hands at sides, fabric edge must be below fingertips). Acceptable clothing materials for bottoms include twill, cargo, khaki, chinos, corduroy, denim, jeans, and trousers.

Bottoms may not be ripped or torn. Students may not wear pajama bottoms or leggings as pants. Students may not wear mini-skirts, short shorts, or sagging pants. Athletic pants, athletic shorts, or sweatpants may be worn only during a Physical Education class, Dance class, or an Elective or Discover course that includes physical activity. Unacceptable materials for pants and shorts in these categories include knit, fleece, flannel, velour, and nylon.

Tops

Students may wear shirts with solid colors, stripes, checks, plaids, or pattern prints. Shirts with a small logo (must be smaller than a 3"x3" post-it note) are acceptable. Rising Tide shirts or sweatshirts are also acceptable. Jackets, sweaters, or sweatshirts must comply with the same rules as shirts.

Tops may not be ripped or torn. No tops with writing, advertising, or large graphic images (larger than a 3"x3" post-it note) are to be worn. Tops are not to be worn reversed. Low cut tops and bare midriffs are unacceptable. Halter tops, strapless tops, tube tops, backless tops, spaghetti strap tops, and tank tops are unacceptable.

Shoes

For safety's sake, we recommend that the students do not wear open-toed shoes or high heels.

Accessories

Hats and other headgear, such as bandanas, are not to be worn in the school building at any time, unless for religious reasons. Any accessories that contain inappropriate or gang-related messages are unacceptable.

Staff Interpretation

School staff members interpret the dress code. If a Teacher or other staff member determines that a student's clothing or accessories are unacceptable, the Teacher may ask the student to remove the item. The student is expected to comply with this request. Parents/Guardians of students who are in violation of Rising Tide's Dress Code may be contacted and asked to bring appropriate clothing to the school. Repeated violation of the Dress Code may result in a Discipline Committee.

Nicotine and Tobacco Policy

Students, staff members and visitors are prohibited from carrying and/or using nicotine or tobacco products, as well as any products that can be smoked or vaporized, in school, on school grounds, on school buses or in other school vehicles, and at all school-sponsored events.

Purpose of Policy

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. c. 71 s. 37H), the Rising Tide Charter Public School Board of Trustees and staff are dedicated to providing a healthy, safe, and productive learning and recreation environment for its students, staff, and visitors to its facilities. It is the intention of the Board and staff to prohibit the use or distribution of nicotine or tobacco products, as well as any products that can be smoked or vaporized, within the school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses or in other vehicles, and at all school-sponsored functions in order to improve the health of students and all school personnel.

For Students

- A violation of the Nicotine and Tobacco policy will result in disciplinary action.
- The violating student will be required to participate in research and/or community service activities about the dangers of nicotine or tobacco use, as determined through the disciplinary process. A student may be referred to a nicotine or tobacco program, if appropriate.
- The parent/guardian will be notified by telephone and letter, with the Nicotine and Tobacco Policy attached.
- Any nicotine or tobacco products and paraphernalia will be confiscated from the student and returned to the student's parent/guardian upon request.
- Any athletic coaches and club leaders will be notified of the policy violation, and the student may be suspended from an activity for a period of time, as decided by the Discipline Committee.

For Staff Members

- The staff member may be referred to a nicotine or tobacco program, if appropriate.
- The Head of School will submit a verbal warning for the first offense, and a written warning for subsequent offenses.

Progressive disciplinary action will take place at the discretion of the Head of School.

Wellness Policy

The Rising Tide Charter Public School promotes a healthy school environment by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. Rising Tide provides a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, the school contributes to the basic health status of children. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that no child is left behind. The intent of this policy is to outline the school's commitment to implementing these measures in order to promote health and wellness. The Rising Tide Community agrees that:

- Children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
- Good health fosters student attendance and education.

Goals

Rising Tide recognizes the need to take specific measures in order to make an impact on students' future nutrition and physical activity habits. Rising Tide is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects our students' health, well-being, and ability to learn, by setting the following goals to promote healthy eating and regular physical activity.

Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs, and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. A healthy school environment should not be dependent on revenue from high-fat, low-nutrient foods to support school programs.

Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.

All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the school's Nutrition Standards. Emphasis should be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. Foods should be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging, to ensure high quality meals.

Increase the amount of time students are engaged in physical activity.

Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through a variety of courses in physical education, dance, theater, and various elective courses. Middle School students participate in daily recess periods.

Rising Tide is committed to improving academic performance in high-risk groups so that no child is left behind.

Educators, administrators, parents, health practitioners, and communities must all acknowledge the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure that students' basic nourishment and activity needs are met. Research pointing out the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn should be highlighted to ensure widespread understanding within the school community of the benefits to healthy school environments. The diversity of the student population should be considered at all times to ensure that all student needs are being met so that no child is left behind.

Nutrition Standards

Rising Tide strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient-dense foods for all school functions and activities. Nutrient dense foods are those foods that provide students with calories rich in the nutrient content needed to be healthy. Rising Tide has adopted the following Nutrition Standards governing the sale of food, beverage, and candy on school grounds.

Food

- Any given food item for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day will have no more than 30% of its total calories derived from fat.
- Any given food item for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day will have no more than 10% of its total calories derived from saturated fat.
- Nuts and seeds are exempt from these standards because they are nutrient dense and contain high levels of monounsaturated fat. Foods high in monounsaturated fat help lower "bad" LDL cholesterol and maintain "good" HDL cholesterol.
- It is recognized that there may be rare special occasions when the appropriate Principal may allow a school group to deviate from these guidelines.
- Encourage the consumption of nutrient-dense foods; i.e., whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

Beverages

- Vending sales of soda or artificially sweetened drinks will not be permitted on school grounds. The non-vending sale of soda or artificially sweetened drinks will not be permitted on school grounds both prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day, but will be permitted at those special school events that begin after the conclusion of the instructional day.

- Low fat milk, water, and 100% fruit juices may be sold on school grounds both prior to and throughout the instructional day.
- Students may not arrive at school with open containers of coffee, or other caffeinated or artificially sweetened drinks. Students may drink water in classrooms.

Candy

- Vending sales of candy will not be permitted on school grounds. *Candy is defined as any item that has sugar (including brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, fructose, glucose (dextrose), high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, table sugar (sucrose, syrup) listed as one of the first two ingredients.*

Lunch Time

- The lunch time environment provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate, in which students have the following:
 1. Adequate space to eat and pleasant surroundings
 2. Adequate time for meals (a voluntary range of 15 to 30 minutes for lunch from the time they are seated)
 3. Convenient access to hand-cleaning facilities before meals
 4. Available drinking fountains so that students have access to water throughout the day
 5. Protection of the identity of any student who participates in the free and reduced lunch program

Physical Activity Goals

Rising Tide recognizes the importance of promoting and maintaining the student's physical fitness and the impact being physically fit will have on the prevention of conditions and diseases that are known to be associated with poor physical health. The healthy, physically active student is more likely to be academically successful.

- Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through a variety of courses including physical education, dance and theater, dance, and various elective courses. Middle School students participate in daily recess periods.
- Students will be given opportunities for physical activity through after-school sports and clubs
- Rising Tide will encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

Safety Goals

Rising Tide will strive to provide a safe environment that supports academic success by:

- Providing school buildings and grounds that meet required health and safety standards, including environmental air quality, keeping them inviting, safe, and in good repair.
- Creating an environment where students, parents/guardians, and staff are respected, valued, and accepted with high expectations for personal behavior and accomplishments.
- Providing staff training in appropriate safety procedures (e.g., Life Threatening Allergies, First Aid, Staff Emergency Manual, CPR, use of AED, Nuclear Emergency, Blood Borne Pathogens).
- Working with staff, students, and when appropriate, community resources and law enforcement to maintain a school environment that is free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

Goals for other School-based Activities

Fundraising

- All fundraising projects for sale and consumption within and prior to the instructional day will be expected to make every effort to follow the school's Nutrition Standards when determining the items being sold.
- Items being sold that do not meet the school's Nutrition Standards may be acceptable for student consumption within moderation (i.e., limit quantity sold to an individual student).

- Items being sold that do not meet the school's Nutrition Standards may be acceptable when offered on an intermittent basis in balance with items that do meet the Nutrition Standards.

Food or Physical Activity as Reward or Punishment

- The school prohibits the use of food as a reward or punishment in the school.
- The school will not deny student participation in physical activities as a form of discipline or for classroom make-up time.

Student Nutrition Education

Through the Comprehensive Health curriculum, staff members explore nutrition with students in all grades, emphasizing the health benefits of good nutrition.

Parent Nutrition Education

Nutrition education will provide to parents:

- Knowledge of healthy diet information, healthy heart choices, and resources where nutritional information is available.
- Nutrition education may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the website, or presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles.
- Parents are encouraged to follow the school's Nutrition Standards when sending food to school with students. Nutrient dense foods such as whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables are excellent choices for snacks and lunch.

Rising Tide Charter Public School Wellness Policy Review

On an annual basis, the school will form a committee to review the school's Wellness Policy, assess the implementation of the policy, and, as necessary, revise the policy.

Discipline

Secondary school is a time of growth, both academic and social, and as students grow and learn, they sometimes make mistakes. Staff members at Rising Tide want students to learn from their mistakes. Staff members administer discipline, when necessary, with compassion and firmness, trying to encourage students to take responsibility for their own conduct and behavior. There is not a system of automatic penalties at Rising Tide; instead, as far as the welfare of the community allows, staff members try to consider the needs and age of the individual student as well as the circumstances of the offense and the student's previous record.

The discipline system is based on the philosophy that, if a student is honest in admitting mistakes, his or her straightforwardness is the first step in accepting responsibility for the mistake, learning from the experience, and not repeating it. Staff members recognize that an admission of error can be difficult for a secondary school student, so it is important for parents and Teachers to help each student to be honest about making mistakes. In the best interest of the student, it is important for all the adults in a student's life to cooperate and uphold the discipline codes and proceedings of the school.

Every student at Rising Tide Charter Public School has a right to learn and thrive in a school atmosphere that is conducive to academic achievement and social growth. Any behavior on the part of a student that threatens to disrupt the learning process or pose a danger to others is reprehensible and may result in consequences. These consequences will depend upon the seriousness and frequency of the offense, and may range from a conversation with a staff member, to a loss of privileges, to suspension or expulsion. All adults at Rising Tide Charter Public School - Teachers, administrators, staff members, school volunteers, etc. - are expected to uphold the Rising Tide Charter Public School Community Standards of Behavior so that students and adults may thrive in a safe atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Any violations of the Community Standards of Behavior may result in a consequence. Students and parents/guardians are expected to honor and uphold consequences related to violations of Community Standards of Behavior.

For common school discipline issues, Teachers, Advisors and staff members will address the actions of a student directly, or refer the student to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Dean of Students, or Upper School Dean of Students. For more serious or repeated student offenses, a Discipline Committee will meet with the student to discuss the actions and determine the consequences. If the Discipline Committee recommends an in-school or short term out-of-school suspension of less than ten days, the Chairperson of the Discipline Committee will invite the parent/guardian to a meeting to discuss the issue. For very serious issues, which may result in long-term suspension or expulsion, students will be assured due process through a Discipline Hearing.

Any student who is excluded from attending classes at Rising Tide for disciplinary reasons will be offered opportunities to keep making academic progress while not attending classes. For students serving in-school or short-term out of school suspensions, the Advisor will work with Teachers and parents to provide work for the student. For students serving long-term suspensions of more than ten consecutive days, Rising Tide will provide the student with a School-Wide Education Service Plan so that the student can keep making academic progress while out of school (M.G.L. c.71 s. 21). This plan includes a listing of educational services available to suspended students.

Referrals to School Leaders

Any student who does not respond to a Teacher's warnings and limits, or who seriously violates a Teacher's guidelines for acceptable classroom behavior, may be referred to the Head of School, the Assistant Head of School, the Middle School Dean of Students, or the Upper School Dean of Students; a student may also be referred for poor behavior on the bus. Each time a student needs to be sent to the front office, the student will be required to complete a reflection form wherein he or she will state the reasons for the office visit. A school leader will meet with the student to discuss the reflection. Depending on the severity or frequency of the offense, a referral to a school leader may result in a student's appearance before a Discipline Committee.

Fact Finding

The Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Dean of Student, or Upper School Dean of Student takes the responsibility for carrying out or directing a thorough review of the facts of any disciplinary case. This investigation of the facts includes the following process:

1. Gathering verbal accounts from students, Teachers, or other school personnel
2. Gathering written accounts, as appropriate
3. Gathering any other evidence related to the case

Once a thorough review of the facts of a disciplinary case has been carried out, the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Dean of Student, or Upper School Dean of Students will consult with the student's Advisor to determine if a Discipline Committee meeting is required, or if the case is very serious and requires a Discipline Hearing.

Discipline Committee

For any violation of the Community Standards of Behavior, a student may appear before a Discipline Committee. The task of the Discipline Committee is to examine a mistake, or a series of mistakes, made by a student, called an offense. The disciplinary process is designed to help a student learn that he or she is responsible for his or her actions, and that consequences can result if he or she does not act in an honest, trustworthy, respectful, or responsible manner. The goal is for a student to learn from, and not repeat, the mistake. School staff members thoroughly investigate all situations prior to a Discipline Committee meeting in an effort to be fair to all involved parties. It is important for parents support the Committee's decision; a consistent message to a student from the adults in his or her life helps the student to learn to take responsibility.

The Discipline Committee has the authority to make recommendations to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Dean of Student, or Upper School Dean of Students (whichever school leader did not participate in the Discipline Committee) who will normally follow the recommendations, but who reserves the right to alter them.

Some examples of conduct that could result in a Discipline Committee and, potentially, in-school or short-term suspension, are the following: failure to comply with the Community Standards of Behavior; excessive tardiness or absenteeism; habitual refusal to complete assignments; cheating; plagiarism; profanity; inappropriate dress; defiance of school staff; endangering the health and safety of others; intimidation, assault, harassment or sexual harassment; theft; violation of transportation rules; conduct involving property damage, vandalism, and arson; conduct involving prohibited substances; conduct involving access of Internet sites that contain pornography, promote hatred, and/or promote illegal activities; violations of the terms of the Technology and Network Acceptable Use Policy.

Discipline Committee Meeting Procedure

1. Meetings of the Discipline Committee will be held at the discretion of the Rising Tide Charter Public School Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Dean of Students, or Upper School Dean of Students in consultation with faculty and staff
2. The Discipline Committee will be made up of two to five members: a school leader; the student's Advisor; and, as appropriate, one to three additional faculty members. The student's Advisor serves as an advocate for the student during the meeting. One member of the Committee will be the designated secretary/recorder of the meeting procedures.
3. At the Discipline Committee meeting, the student will be notified of the charge(s), and asked to discuss the case as well as answer any questions from Committee members about the situation. All accumulated facts, written or verbal, will be presented to the student for discussion.
4. A Discipline Committee meeting is based upon the assumption that a student will be honest and will admit to making mistakes. In the event that there is a significant disagreement in the facts of the case, the school leader and faculty members from the Committee will hear the case, review the evidence, and will make a binding determination as to fact.

5. The Committee members will encourage the student to think about the reason for the mistake(s) and encourage the student to think through potential solutions so that the mistake(s) will not be repeated.
6. After this discussion, the student will be asked to leave the room.
7. The Discipline Committee will determine a consequence after review of the charges, the student's previous record, of precedent, and of the circumstances of the case. The Committee should reach a consensus in recommending a particular response. This recommendation for consequence will be presented to the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Middle School Dean of Students, or Upper School Dean of Students (a school leader who did not participate in the Discipline Committee), for approval.
8. At the conclusion of the Discipline Committee meeting, depending on the Discipline Committee recommendation, the parent/guardian will be phoned and informed of the proceedings and the findings, either by the Middle School Dean of Students, the Upper School Dean of Students, The Assistant Head of School or the Head of School.
 - a. If the Discipline Committee recommends a penalty that is not a suspension, the parent/guardian will be called and informed of the charges and the consequence.
 - b. If the Discipline Committee recommends a consequence of an in-school suspension, of under ten days, the Committee Chairperson will contact the parent/guardian by telephone with information about the charges and consequences; the Chairperson will invite the parent to attend a follow-up meeting to discuss the student's academic progress, behavior and possible strategies to use with the student (603 CMR, 53.10).
 - c. If the Discipline Committee recommends a consequence of a short-term out-of-school suspension of less than ten days, the parent/guardian will be contacted, both by telephone and in writing, and asked to attend a meeting with the Chairperson of the Discipline Committee and the student before a final decision is made about the consequence. (603 CMR, 53.08). At the meeting, the student and parent/guardian will have the opportunity to dispute the charges and/or present any relevant mitigating circumstances. Once the meeting concludes or if the parent declines to attend a meeting, the Discipline Committee Chairperson will make the final determination as to the charge and consequences and notify the parent by telephone or in person.
 - d. For very serious student violations, when the Discipline Committee recommends suspension, in-school or out-of-school, of over ten days during a single school year or an expulsion, the parent/guardian will be contacted both by telephone and in writing, and informed that the school will assure due process to the student through a Discipline Hearing (M.G.L.c.71 s.37H; M.G.L.c.71 s. 37h1/2; M.G.L.c.71 s 37H ¾).
9. Once a final determination of the consequences for the behavior is made, either by the Discipline Committee or the Chairperson, written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian, including the charge(s), the reasons for the charges, the consequence and other information (CMR 603, 53.06).
10. The designated secretary of the Discipline Committee meeting and any subsequent meetings or hearings, will record the proceedings, which will be placed in the Discipline Committee record book, along with any other written statements or facts from the case including a statement of the charge and the consequence. If the penalty involves in-school suspension or short-term suspension and no other similar violation involving the student occurs, this information will be removed from student's temporary record upon graduation from the Rising Tide Charter Public School.
11. At the end of the meeting, the Committee will discuss the information that needs to remain confidential and what information can be shared in the Rising Tide community. A Discipline Committee Announcement, in the form of a general statement to either the Middle School or Upper School community about the charge(s) and the consequence(s) of the event, may be given. As a general rule, however, the details of Discipline Committee proceedings should remain confidential in order to protect the student.

Emergency Removal

If at the time of a student violation, prior to the Discipline Committee meeting, the Middle School Dean of Students, Upper School Dean of Students, Assistant Head of School or Head of School determines that the student's continued presence at the school might pose a danger to that student or others at the school, or that the student's continued presence would have a detrimental effect on the general welfare of others in the school community, the student may be removed from the school grounds temporarily, up to two days, as stated in CMR 603, 53.07. The school leader who makes this determination will notify the Head of School, in writing, of this removal. If an emergency removal is necessary, the school leader will:

1. Make reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and his/her parent/guardian of the removal and make provisions for the student's safe removal from school.
2. Provide written notice of the emergency removal to the student and parent, consistent with CMR 53.06(2).
3. Provide the student an opportunity to return to school, accompanied by a parent/guardian, for a Discipline Committee within the two-day time frame.
4. After the Discipline Committee meeting, the Chairperson will provide the student and parent an opportunity to attend a meeting with the Discipline Committee Chairperson.
5. The Discipline Committee Chairperson will make a decision about consequences for the disciplinary action on the same day as the hearing and notify the student and parent/guardian, both orally and in writing.

Discipline Hearing

A. A Discipline Hearing will be scheduled for a student for the following reasons (consistent with 603 CMR 53.00 and M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H (a), (b); Chapter 71, Section 37 ½ (2)):

1. If a student is found on school premises or at school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun, or a knife.
2. If a student is found on school premises or at school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L.c.94c, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin.
3. If a student assaults any Teacher, administrator, or school staff member on school premises or at school-related events, including athletic games.
4. If a student is issued a criminal complaint charging the student with a felony, or issued a felony delinquency complaint and the student's continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.
5. If a student is convicted of a felony, or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt of such a felony or felony delinquency and the student's continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

If, at the time the School becomes aware of the M.G.L. c. 71, secs. 37H or 37H ½ allegation, prior to a formal disciplinary hearing, the Head of School or Assistant Head of School, may, after oral notice of the violation and providing the student the opportunity to respond to those charges, suspend the student for up to ten (10) school days.

B. A Discipline Hearing may also be scheduled under MGL c. 71, Ch. 37H ¾ for a student who seriously violates Rising Tide's Community Standards and is recommended by a Discipline Committee for long-term suspension of more than ten (10) days and no more than ninety (90) days in the course of one school year. Under Ch. 37H ¾, a student is eligible for a Discipline Hearing and is offered the opportunity to appeal the decision of the Hearing Committee. The following procedures will be followed for any student recommended for long-term suspension under Chapter 37 H ¾.

Procedural Rights

For very serious student violations, which may result in long-term suspension or expulsion, the school will assure due process to the student consistent with state law (M.G.L. c. 71 s. 37H; M.G.L. c. 71 s. 37H ½; M.G.L. c. 71s.37H 3/4). A student has the following procedural rights in regards to long-term suspension and expulsion:

1. Written notification of the charges and of the reasons and evidence for long-term suspension or expulsion before the long-term suspension or expulsion takes effect.
2. Written notice to the student of the student's right to be heard by the Middle School or Upper School Principal and Discipline Hearing Committee, including date, time, and location of the hearing. The student's parent or guardian will be provided with the opportunity to be present at the hearing.
3. At the hearing, students and parents have the right to: bring counsel (at the student's expense), present evidence (through the student's own testimony or witnesses and through written evidence) and cross-examine witnesses presented by the school.
4. A reasonably prompt written decision, including specific grounds for the decision.

Discipline Hearing Procedure

1. A Discipline Hearing will be scheduled for any recommended long-term suspension or expulsion. Students and parents may decide to forego the hearing if they so desire. Failure to attend the hearing, without properly notifying the school, will likely result in a hearing and implementation of the recommended long-term suspension or expulsion.
2. The Hearing Committee will include either the Head of School or the Assistant Head of School (hereinafter referred to as the "Hearing Committee Administrator"), the student's Advisor, and at least one additional faculty member. One member of the Hearing Committee will be the designated secretary/recorder of the meeting procedures.
3. At the Discipline Hearing, the Hearing Committee Administrator will present the recommendation for the long-term suspension or expulsion as well as the accumulated evidence to support such recommendation.
4. The student and the student's representative(s) will then have an opportunity to present evidence and question any witnesses.
5. After the student has had an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and question witnesses, the student, any representative of the student, and any witnesses, will be asked to leave the Discipline Hearing.
6. The student, as well as any witnesses, is expected to be honest in presenting evidence. In the event that there is a significant disagreement in the facts of the case, the Hearing Committee Administrator and faculty members from the Hearing Committee will review all evidence presented at the Hearing, and will make a determination as to the facts of the case.
7. After reviewing all evidence presented at the Discipline Hearing, the Hearing Committee will render a decision to uphold or change the recommendation for the long-term suspension or expulsion of the student.
8. After the hearing, the Hearing Committee Administrator may decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Hearing Committee to have violated either Chapter 71, Section 37H, paragraphs a and/or b, involving possession or use of illegal substances or dangerous weapons, or assault on staff, or Section 37H ½, related to conviction of a felony.

Procedure Following the Discipline Hearing

1. If the recommended long-term suspension or expulsion is approved by the Discipline Hearing Committee, the Hearing Committee Administrator will present a written decision to the student and parents at the hearing. This written decision will include:
 - a. Specific grounds for the decision,

- b. Information about the student's right to appeal the decision to either the Head of School or Assistant Head of School, whichever did not participate in the Discipline Hearing Committee process.
 - c. An explanation of the process for appealing the decision
 - d. An explanation of the student's opportunity to receive educational services that will be made available so that he or she will have the opportunity to make academic progress during the period of long-term suspension or expulsion (Ch. 76, s. 21). This letter will be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. This letter will include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a specific Rising Tide staff member to arrange services.
 - e. A copy of the decision will be placed in the student's record.
2. The long-term suspension or expulsion will remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. For any charges related to delinquency complaint, conviction, adjudication or admission of guilt (Ch. 71, s. 37H ½), the Head of School or Assistant Head of School may remove the student without the participation of the Hearing Committee, for a period of time up to ten(10) days if, after an informal hearing, the Head of School or Assistant Head of School determines the student's continued presence would have a substantial detriment on the general welfare of the school. An informal hearing consists of verbal notice and the opportunity to respond.
 3. If a student is expelled from Rising Tide and is accepted to another school, a copy of the decision will be forwarded to the new school.
 4. If a student is expelled from Rising Tide and moves to a new district during the period of expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan.

Appeal Hearing

1. For expulsion related to weapons, illegal substances, or assault, under M.G.L. c. 71 s.37H, the expelled student has ten (10) days from the date of expulsion to notify either the Assistant Head of School or Head of School, whichever did not participate in the Hearing Committee or formal hearing process ("Appeal Administrator") of the appeal.
2. For expulsion related to conviction of a felony, under M.G.L. c. 71 s. 37H1/2, the expelled student has five (5) days from the date of expulsion to notify either the Assistant Head of School or Head of School, whomever did not participate in the Hearing Committee or formal hearing process ("Appeal Administrator") of the appeal.

In the case of offenses under M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H 1/2, the appeal hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the appeal, including the opportunity for the student's parents or guardians and the student's counsel to participate.

3. For long-term suspension under M.G.L.c.71 s 37H ¾, a serious violation of Community Standards, the suspended student has ten (10) days from the date of suspension to notify either the Assistant Head of School or Head of School, whichever did not participate in the Hearing Committee or formal hearing process ("Appeal Administrator") of the appeal.

Appeal Hearing Procedures

1. The Appeal Administrator, either the Assistant Head of School or Head of School, whomever did not participate in the Hearing Committee or formal hearing process, will hear the appeal and will become the Appeal Administrator.
2. Prior to the commencement of the Appeal Hearing, the Appeal Administrator will review the student's disciplinary record, including the notes from the Discipline Hearing, the written decision of the Hearing Committee Administrator as well as other relevant documents. The Appeal Administrator will also review documents provided by the student's parents/guardians, advocate, or counsel.

3. At the Appeal Hearing, one or more members of the Discipline Hearing Committee will first meet with members of the Appeal Hearing Committee to present a review of the Discipline Hearing proceedings including the reasons for the decision to expel the student.
4. The student and his or her parents/guardians, advocate, counsel, if present, will then meet with the Appeal Administrator to present their position in the matter, including reasons why the suspended or expelled student should be allowed to return to Rising Tide. The student and his or her representatives may present evidence and documentation to support their position. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to the factual determination of whether the student has violated any Community Standards related to assault of staff, controlled substances, or dangerous weapons.
5. The Appeal Administrator may, in his or her discretion, receive one or more presentations from other persons, including other students and their families, who demonstrate that they have some legitimate involvement in the outcome of the matter. The suspended or expelled student and his or her representatives may question and cross-examine any witnesses presented by Rising Tide, including members of the Discipline Hearing Committee.
6. The Appeal Administrator will have the opportunity to ask the involved parties for further information and/or documentation to help in the investigation of the matter.
7. After consideration of all presentations, evidence, documents, and comments, the Appeal Administrator will render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the Appeal. The Appeal Administrator may overturn or alter the decision of the Discipline Hearing Committee. In the event that the Assistant Head of School serves as the Appeal Administrator, he or she shall have the authority to modify or overturn the decision of the Hearing Committee and/or the Hearing Committee Administrator (i.e., Head of School). The decision of the Appeal Administrator will be the school's final decision with regard to the student expulsion.

Procedure Following the Appeal Hearing

1. The Appeal Administrator will notify the student's family of the decision in writing.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities and Special Education Needs

When facing disciplinary action at school, students with disabilities have rights and protections under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H. In disciplinary cases involving a student with a disability, the Special Education Coordinator, Special Education Teacher, or 504 Coordinator will be included as a member of the Discipline Committee or Discipline Hearing so as to assure the student of his or her rights.

Guidelines for Discipline of Students with Disabilities and Special Education Needs:

- School personnel must administer discipline according to the student's Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P), or Section 504 Accommodation Plan, components if there are behavioral stipulations.
- School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a student with disability who violates the Community Standards of Behavior; additionally, school personnel will determine if a pattern of removals constitutes a change in placement.
- If a student with a disability is involved with dangerous weapons or controlled substances, or if the student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person, the school may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for up to forty-five (45) school days, without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability.
- If a student with disability is removed from the school program for ten (10) school days or less, Rising Tide is not required to provide services to the student unless the school provides services to a student without a disability who is similarly removed. The student's Advisor, however, may gather work for the student, during his or her exclusion, from Teachers so that parents may pick up the work at school and the student can continue to make academic progress.

- If a student with disability is removed from the school program for more than ten (10) days, Rising Tide will provide services that will enable the student to progress in the general curriculum and towards the student's IEP goals.
- If a student with a disability is recommended to be removed from the school program for more than ten (10) school days, the school must convene a meeting with either the IEP Team or 504 Team to determine if the student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability.

Manifestation Determination

The Manifestation Determination is made by convening either the student's IEP Team or 504 Team to determine if the student's conduct was related to the student's disability. The Manifestation Determination must be completed within ten (10) school days of the Discipline Committee or Discipline Hearing, and the process must include a Functional Behavioral Assessment as well as a Behavior Support Plan.

If the Team determines that the student's behavior was related to the student's disability, the Team will need to consider alternative service and placement options. If the Team determines that the student's behavior was not related to the student's disability, Rising Tide may proceed with the long-term suspension or expulsion of the student.

When a parent disagrees with the Team decision for the Manifestation Determination or with a decision regarding placement, the parent has a right to request an expedited due process hearing from the MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals

Parents can find more information about procedural safeguards for students with disabilities through the MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/parents.html>

Discipline of Students prior to Eligibility Determination for IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan

If a student has been identified as potentially having a disability prior to the event that precipitated the school's disciplinary action, but has not been determined to be eligible for an IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan, the student has the same rights and protections as a student with an IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan. A student is identified as potentially having a disability if the parent of the student requests an evaluation or expresses in writing to the school that the student is in need of special education services, or if a school staff member directly expresses concern about the student's pattern of behavior to the Special Education Director.

