



# STUDENT HANDBOOK

August 2019

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Letter from the Head of School .....  | 1 |
| Mission, Goals, Schoolwide Objectives & Benchmark Skills, Guiding Questions ..... | 2 |

## COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

|   |   |
|---|---|
| School Contact Information .....                  | 3 |
| Communication from Home to School .....           | 3 |
| Communication from School to Home .....           | 4 |
| Cancellation of School or Emergency Closing ..... | 4 |

## ATTENDANCE

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Daily Attendance .....                  | 5 |
| Planned Absences .....                  | 6 |
| Tardy Arrival and Early Dismissal ..... | 6 |
| Permanent Withdrawal from School .....  | 7 |

## TRANSPORTATION

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Drop-Off and Pick-Up Authorization, Bus, Carpool.....   | 7 |
| After-School Pick-Up, Student Drivers, Walkers and Bikers, Changes in Transportation Plans..... | 8 |
| School Traffic Pattern .....  | 9 |

## STUDENT RECORDS

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Student Records.....           | 10 |
| Access to Student Records..... | 10 |
| Directory Information .....    | 11 |

## COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Community Standards of Behavior ..... | 12 |
| Expectations of Conduct.....          | 12 |

## SUPPORT OF STUDENTS

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Advisory Program .....                | 15 |
| Health and Nursing Services.....      | 15 |
| Adjustment Counseling Services.....   | 17 |
| College and Career Program .....      | 17 |
| Guidance and Support.....             | 17 |
| Special Education Services .....      | 17 |
| Section 504 Accommodation Plans ..... | 18 |
| Title I Program .....                 | 18 |

## **ACADEMICS**

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Expectations .....            | 19 |
| Curriculum .....              | 19 |
| Academic Support .....        | 20 |
| Assessment of Students .....  | 20 |
| Promotion Requirements.....   | 23 |
| Graduation Requirements ..... | 23 |

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Non-Discrimination Policy .....                              | 24 |
| Anti-Harassment Policy .....                                 | 24 |
| Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy.....                           | 24 |
| Grievance Procedures for Students .....                      | 25 |
| Rights of Eighteen-Year-Old Students.....                    | 27 |
| No Hazing .....  | 27 |
| Bullying Prevention and Intervention .....                   | 28 |
| Alleged Bullying Reporting Form .....                        | 35 |
| Non-Violent Intervention and Physical Restraint Policy ..... | 36 |
| Enrollment Policy .....                                      | 39 |
| Technology and Network Acceptable Use .....                  | 39 |
| School Supplies and Textbooks.....                           | 41 |
| Lockers and Cubbies.....                                     | 41 |
| Posted Materials.....  | 41 |
| Prohibited Items .....                                       | 41 |
| Personal Property .....                                      | 42 |
| Visitors.....  | 42 |
| Celebrations .....   | 42 |
| Dress Code .....   | 43 |
| Nicotine and Tobacco Policy.....                             | 44 |
| Wellness Policy .....  | 44 |

## **DISCIPLINE**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Student Discipline.....                        | 48 |
| Community Standards Meeting.....               | 49 |
| Principal’s Hearing.....                       | 50 |
| Superintendent’s Hearing.....                  | 54 |
| Discipline for Students with Disabilities..... | 55 |

# LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Welcome to Rising Tide Charter Public School (Rising Tide) and to this August 2019 edition of the Student Handbook. The Student Handbook has been developed and updated to help students and parents understand the expectations of our school community.

At Rising Tide, all of the staff members work to create a safe environment where students can try new things without fear of teasing or failure. We encourage students to treat one another with honesty, trust, and respect, and to take increasing responsibility for their actions. Additionally, we encourage students to accept each and every person as a unique individual and a significant part of the community. We ask for Rising Tide students and families to join our staff in continuing to build a strong school community through practicing the four principles of our Community Standards of Behavior: Honesty, Trust, Respect, and taking Responsibility.

We understand that students make mistakes. If students, school staff members, and parents join together in addressing mistakes that students have made, we can create “teachable moments,” where students can make mistakes, discuss the mistakes honestly, and learn from the mistakes. Everyone needs to work together, on the same team, to support the growth and development of the student.

Parents, we encourage you to communicate with us about any questions or concerns related to your child. Early adolescence and adolescence are times of rapid growth and change for students and can be challenging for both parents and children. During this time of growth, students often 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. It is important for parents to respect the child’s desire to grow up; however, it is also essential for parents and the adults at school to communicate effectively. At Rising Tide, the Advisory program is central to our structure of supportive relationships for students, and each child’s Advisor is the primary contact at the school for parents. Parents can also communicate with other Teachers or School Leaders, but the Advisor is the best point of contact for parents throughout the school year.

Students, we encourage you to communicate with your family, your Advisor, the other staff members at school about questions or concerns throughout the year. The staff members at Rising Tide want to help you explore the world and navigate your path in becoming a young adult. You are each an essential member of our school community.

Sincerely,



Michael O'Keefe  
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*

*59 Armstrong Road*

*Plymouth, MA 02360*

**phone: 508-747-2620**

**fax: 508-747-1826**

**[www.risingtide.org](http://www.risingtide.org)**

## Communication from Home to School

During the school year, the school office is open weekdays from 7:25 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.

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 Main Office. 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 Main Office, 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](http://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 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 division. Access to the Student Record may take up to 21 days.

Report Cards, Progress Reports, and other secure student information will be posted on the Community Portal of the school's student information system.

## **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 Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1965, all children between the ages of seven (7) 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, the school will send written notification to the parent/guardian requesting a meeting to discuss the child's attendance. In the event of excessive tardiness or dismissal, 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 Duties of Parents Complaint with the district court, a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) petition with the juvenile court, or a 51A for educational 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, or an absence of two (2) consecutive days or fewer (Dismissals related to illness must go through the School Nurse.)
- A physician's note verifying an illness for an absence of three (3) consecutive days or five (5) in a term
- 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

### **Student Self-Dismissal**

Students who are 18 years old and have submitted a completed Age of Majority Form may dismiss themselves from school for documented medical, dental, or legal appointments; religious observances; family emergencies; and twice per semester, documented college visits. Students cannot dismiss themselves for other reasons. A staff member will contact a parent/guardian to communicate about any student self-dismissal.



## **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 x102**

If a parent/guardian does not call to inform the school of an absence, the school will call to notify the parent/guardian of the child's absence. 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 Principal of the appropriate division 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 the 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, misses any classes during the school day, 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. In some cases of excused absence, tardiness, or early dismissal, exceptions can be made at the discretion of the appropriate division's Principal.

## **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 five (5) days from the student's tenth (10) 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 (10) days after the sending of the notice. The time for the meeting may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and with the consent of the school, provided that no extension is longer than fourteen (14) days. The meeting may be convened without a parent or guardian if the school has made a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. The purpose of the meeting shall be to discuss 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 to a friend's home, 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. On Early Release days, students may not ride on a friend's bus due to limited space. 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.

### **Carpool**

All drivers must use extreme caution when driving on school grounds. The school has a traffic pattern that must be followed by all community members for the safety of all. The 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 property of neighboring businesses 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; the use of these signs supports

the safety and efficiency of the carpool traffic. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones or headphones in carpool area.

#### *Arrival*

The South Entrance will open at 7:25 am for carpool traffic.

#### *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. At regular dismissal time, students not picked up at the South Entrance by 3:15 pm will be brought to the Main Office area. Parents will need to come to the Main Entrance on the North side of the building after 3:15 pm.

#### **After-School Pick-Up**

After-school programs, such as clubs, theater productions, music programs, and interscholastic athletics, occur on a weekly basis throughout the school year. It is important for parents/guardians to respect the time of the after-school program staff members 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**

Students drivers are required to pay a parking fee to be assigned a parking permit. Student drivers must follow the traffic pattern for the school 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.

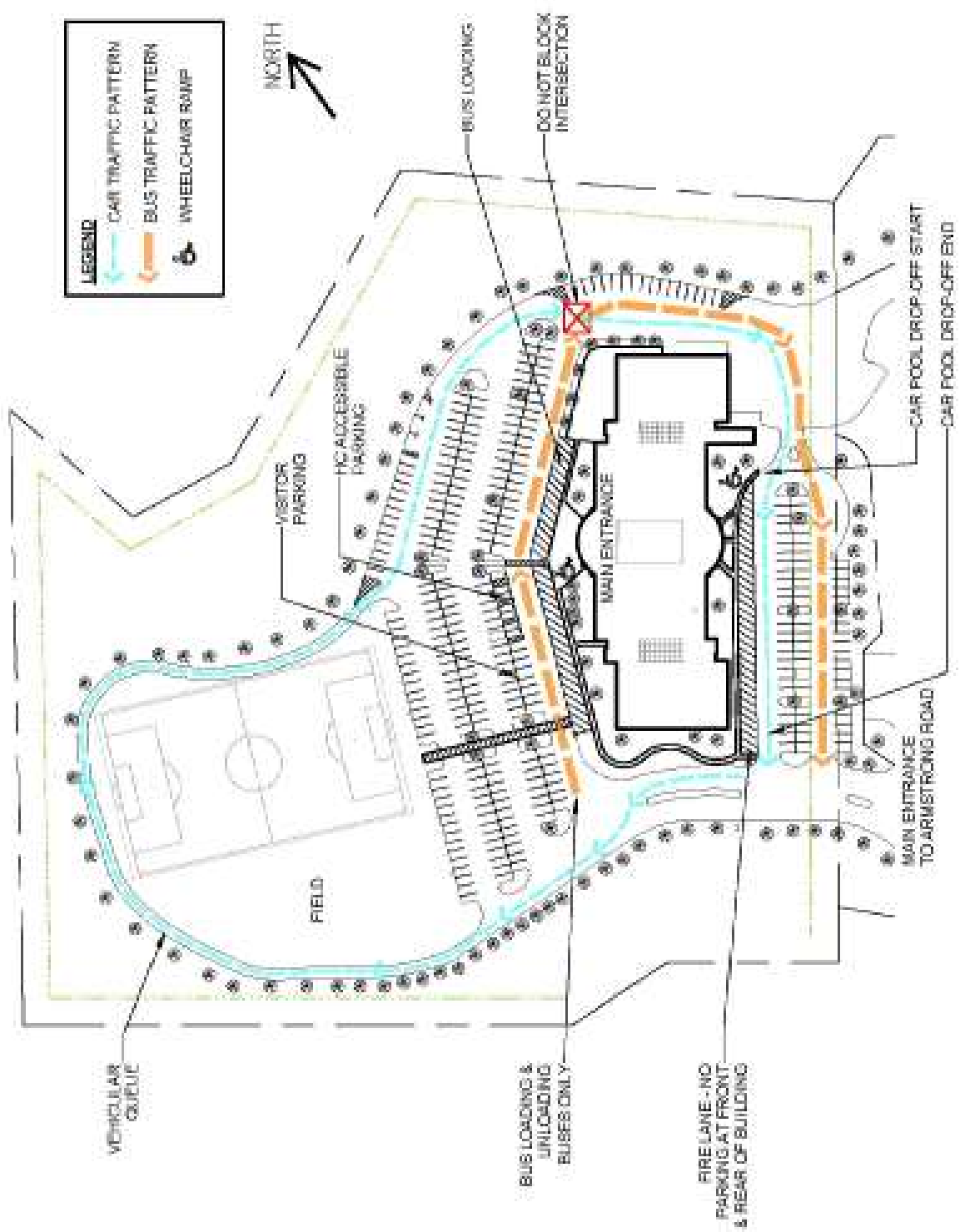
#### **Riding Bicycles to School and Bicycle Helmet Policy**

Any student who chooses to travel to and from school by bicycle, inline skates, scooter, or skateboard 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.



# 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 division, 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 a disproportionate share of 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 expects students, staff members, and parents/guardians to tolerate, accept, 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, sex-based, 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 complete homework, come to class prepared, and do his or her best in class. 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. When on field work and special trips with the school beyond the school grounds, students follow the same expectations. 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.

### *Physical Contact and Public Displays of Affection*

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. 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.

### *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 an Advisory Curriculum connected to the grade level Guiding Question that addresses orientation to the school, community building, future planning, 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, the Wellness Director, and Principals and Assistant 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 Leader works with the School Nurse and the Wellness Director 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 Leader 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 Leader, 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 Leader 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 Leader or School Nurse. It is essential to the health and safety of each individual in the school community for the School Nurse Leader 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 or injury, it is the School Nurse Leader or School Nurse who will call. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones or other devices to make calls or send text messages within the 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 Leader 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 Leader 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 Leader 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 Leader 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 Leader 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 the Wellness Director and the Advisors 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 Director, and the Principal and Assistant Principal of each division.

## **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 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 from 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 to the Student Support Team. 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 Student Support Director, 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 been 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 Student Support 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/parents.html>

## **Special Education Parent Advisory Council**

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

Rising Tide's SEPAC encourages open communication, understanding, and mutual respect among all students, parents, and the greater community. SEPAC 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 Principal or Assistant Principal, 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, Comprehensive Health, Digital Literacy and Computer Science, English Language Arts and Literacy, Foreign Languages, History and Social Science, Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and Vocational Technical Education.

### 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 Physical Education and grade level's Advisory Curriculum. The curriculum explores physical health, emotional health, and social health.

#### *Sex Education*

Some units in the curriculum involve topics of human sexual education, human reproduction, and human sexuality issues. 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 human sexual education, human reproduction, 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 division.

### *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 for students. 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, upon return, may need to make up work from class time in addition to the homework assignments missed, 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 shared through the Community Portal 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. The Report Cards are also shared through the Community Portal after the conference period.

After the second and fourth terms, the end of the first and second semesters respectively, the Report Cards are shared through the Community Portal. 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 Advisory Program section of this Student Handbook. Each student is given an opportunity to preview the Report Card 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.

Students in Grades 7, 9, 11, and 12 also participate in the College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA+). Some Upper School students choose to participate in the PSAT, SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP Exams.

## 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. A student's grade level cohort placement is based upon the academic record of the student with consideration to the Rising Tide academic program.

### 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, Principal, Assistant Principal, Adjustment Counselor, Nurse, Wellness Director, Student Support Director, 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 Middle School Principal or the Upper School Principal 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, Middle School Principal, or Upper School Principal 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.

- Michael O'Keefe, Head of School: 508-747-2620, ext. 512
- Tyler Post, Middle School Principal: 508 747-2620, ext. 533
- James Simons, Upper School Principal: 508 747-2620, ext. 521
- Shawna Weekly, Wellness Director: 508-747-2620, ext. 513

### *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/prb/>

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:

Christopher Schelleng  
Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Rising Tide Charter Public School  
59 Armstrong 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](mailto: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](http://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, Middle School Principal, and Upper School Principal 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.

**Hostile Environment** is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

### **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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal, 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 Principal or Assistant Principal. 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 Principal or Assistant Principal.

### **Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation**

#### *Safety*

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the appropriate Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The appropriate Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The appropriate Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal with the investigation as appropriate. As with all disciplinary matters at Rising Tide, student confidentiality will be maintained during the investigative process. The appropriate Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal 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 Principal or Assistant Principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the appropriate Principal or Assistant Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer

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

### **Access to Resources and Services**

#### *Support Services*

School personnel, including the Adjustment Counselors, the School Nurses, and the Wellness Director 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 Problem Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the school.

# Rising Tide Charter Public School Report of Alleged Bullying

Name of Initial Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged perpetrator solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

Check whether you are the:         Victim  
     Reporter (*not the Victim*)

Check whether you are a:         Student (*grade: \_\_\_\_\_*)  
    Staff Member (*role: \_\_\_\_\_*)  
    Parent  
    Other (*specify: \_\_\_\_\_*)

Name of Victim: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Perpetrator: \_\_\_\_\_  
(*of behavior*)    (*person who engaged in behavior*)

Date(s) and Time(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Witnesses (*Students, Staff, Other*): \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Description of the Incident(s) including names of students involved, and the actions of and words by such students (*please use additional space on back if necessary*):

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**Signature of Reporter/Person Filing the Report (optional)**    **date**

## 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 the needs/limitations of students
- Identification of staff in each building who have received certification in physical restraint

A minimum of three staff members per division, 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.

### **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, Assistant Principal, or Principal.

### **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 should return equipment to its proper location.
- Students may not use personal technology equipment or tools, including laptops, tablets, or other smart devices, 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.
- Each user should only send authentic messages through his or her account within the Rising Tide domain. Users should never send email messages with forged header information, or modify the header or content of forwarded emails that have been authored by someone else without clearly stating that the email has been modified and how it has been modified. If a user receives an inauthentic message, she/he is responsible for reporting the incident to a staff member.
- Users should never transmit messages that may be disrespectful, offensive, or are any form of harassment.
- Users should never send unsolicited email messages, junk mail, chain letters.
- Each user may only use his or her personal log-on information and may not share passwords with other users.
- 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.
- The security of a student’s account within the Rising Tide domain is the responsibility of the student. Each user should log out of Google Chrome and of their Google account 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 to a staff member.
- All material used from the internet should be properly cited.

**Password Policy**

To ensure digital safety, it is essential for students to create strong passwords, protect those passwords, and change them on a regular basis. All passwords for student accounts existing within the Rising Tide domain must conform to the guidelines described below:

| Policy                              | Security Setting                            |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Enforce Password History            | A password different than the most recent 8 |
| Special Characters/Capitals/Numbers | 1 Each                                      |
| Minimum Password Length             | 8 Characters                                |
| Password Expiration                 | 180 Days                                    |

Students should not use the same password for Rising Tide accounts as for any non-Rising Tide account or share Rising Tide passwords with anyone. All passwords are to be treated as sensitive and confidential information. If an account or password is suspected to have been compromised, the student is responsible for reporting the incident to a staff member.

**Monitoring and Filtering**

The school maintains control over the Rising Tide domain, including, but not limited to, Google Drive and Gmail. Items stored on Google Drive and staff and student 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 Principal of the building. 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 without prior approval from the Principal of the building. 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, bullets, 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 expected to be present with the rest of the school community during all program times at Rising Tide. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones or other smart devices, including wearable smart 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, during after-school programming in the building, and during carpool dismissal time. This rule also applies to school field work and special trips, unless specific permission has been granted for a trip.

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 smart 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 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 phones, mobile smart 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**

Rising Tide's Dress Code reflects its values and practices. Trustees, Parents, Teachers, and School Leaders have worked to design a Dress Code that does not discriminate based on gender, race, religion, political affiliation, or any other identity category. While the Dress Code enables students to express individuality through their attire, it also aims to teach the importance of professionalism by requiring students to dress for the work of school.

Students are expected to adhere to the Dress Code at all times when in school or when participating in any academic or extracurricular programming. Staff members may make exceptions to the Dress Code for certain special programming or for documented medical reasons. We ask that Parents/Guardians support their children in following the Dress Code. The Dress Code is as follows:

### **Bottoms**

Students may not wear ripped bottoms or bottoms designed for sleep or athletics. Shorts and skirts must pass the fingertip rule (with outstretched arms and hands at sides, the fabric edge must be below the student's fingertips, all the way around). Students may not wear leggings as pants. If a student wears leggings, he or she must cover them with a garment that passes the fingertip rule. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.

### **Tops**

Students may not wear tops that are ripped or inside out. Tops should cover the torso. Tops must be opaque around the torso. Tops may be sleeveless as long as the fabric between the neck and the shoulder is wider than four fingers on each side. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.

### **Head Coverings**

Hats, hoods, and other head coverings are not to be worn in the school building at any time, unless for genuinely held religious beliefs. Headbands are allowed.

### **Text and Images**

All attire, including accessories, should include no text or image that is larger than a 3"x3" Post-it note. Attire containing messages or styles related to drugs, including alcohol; weapons; gangs; or other inappropriate content is unacceptable.

### **Physical Activity**

During the school day, when students are participating in course work that involves physical activity, teachers may make certain dress code exceptions in order to facilitate the work of the discipline. In such courses, students may wear athletic pants and shorts, including sweatpants and yoga pants. They may also wear tops designed for athletic training and dance, including tank tops and leotards. In these cases, students are expected to meet all other expectations of the Dress Code. Students should wear appropriate footwear when participating in recess or course work that involves athletic activity.

### **Staff Interpretation**

School staff members interpret the Dress Code. Any clothing accessories that are determined to be unsafe in a school setting, such as shoes with wheels, are unacceptable. If a staff member determines that a student's clothing or accessories are unacceptable, the staff member will send the student to the appropriate school division's office. Parents/guardians of students who are in violation of Rising Tide's Dress Code will be contacted and asked to bring appropriate clothing to school. Repeated violation of the Dress Code may result in a Community Standards Meeting.

## 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 to the following:

- Children need access to nutritious 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, high-sugar, and 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, or 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. Students in some Middle School grade levels 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 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 as Reward or Punishment*

- The school prohibits the use of food as a reward or punishment in the school.

#### *Student Nutrition Education*

Through the Comprehensive Health curriculum, staff members explore nutrition with students, 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.

## Student Discipline

Secondary school is a time of personal and academic growth. As students grow and learn, they sometimes make mistakes. Student mistakes are treated as teachable moments from which the student may learn and grow. It is important for students to understand the impact of their actions upon the other members of the school community, and to find ways to repair the relationships that have been negatively impacted by the student's actions. Staff members at Rising Tide approach discipline with compassion and firmness, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own conduct and behavior, and develop an awareness of themselves and others. There is not a system of automatic penalties at Rising Tide. As far as the welfare of the community allows, staff members consider the needs and age of the individual student as well as the circumstances of the student's actions.

The approach to discipline at Rising Tide 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 middle school or high 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 approach and practices of the school.

Every student at Rising Tide has a right to learn and thrive in a school atmosphere that is conducive to personal and academic growth. All community members at Rising Tide - Students, Teachers, School Leaders, other Staff Members, and Parents/Guardians - 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. The Rising Tide code of conduct and discipline policies and procedures are aligned with M.G.L. c.71, s.37H, M.G.L. c.71 s.37H ½, M.G.L. c.71 s.37H ¾, and 603 CMR 53.

### Investigation

If a concern about a student's behavior arises, the Principal or Assistant Principal will conduct an investigation of the discipline incident. This investigation may include student interviews, teacher or staff member interviews, written accounts of the discipline incident, written reflection from the student, and any other evidence relative to the discipline incident. The Principal or Assistant Principal will also consult with the student's Advisor. Once an investigation of the discipline incident has been conducted, the Principal or Assistant Principal will follow one of the following steps in the process of addressing the discipline incident with a student:

1. A determination that there is no evidence for a consequence further than the process of the investigation.
2. A determination that there is evidence that the student violated the Community Standards of Behavior and will participate in a Community Standards Meeting with the student's Advisor and the Assistant Principal or Principal.
3. A determination that there is evidence that the anticipated consequence for the student's actions may be an out-of-school suspension, and the student will participate in a Principal's Hearing. Prior to conducting a Principal's Hearing, the Principal will provide the student and the parent/guardian with oral and written notice of the hearing, and provide the parent/guardian an opportunity to participate in the hearing.

### No Evidence for Further Consequence

If a Principal or Assistant Principal has conducted an investigation and determined that there is no evidence for a consequence further than the process of the investigation, the Principal or Assistant Principal will notify the student, Advisor, and parent/guardian of the decision and discuss the circumstances of the concern.

### **Community Standards Meeting**

If a Principal or Assistant Principal has conducted an investigation and determined that there is evidence that the student violated the Community Standards of Behavior, and the anticipated consequence for the student's actions will not be an out-of-school suspension, the student will participate in a Community Standards Meeting with the student's Advisor and the Assistant Principal or Principal. The goals of the meeting are to process the student's actions with the student, to understand the choices made by the student, to support the student in learning from the situation, and to find ways for the student to repair the relationships with other community members negatively impacted by the student's actions.

#### *Alternatives to Program Removal*

As far as the welfare of the school community allows, the Assistant Principal or Principal will work with the Advisor and the student in the Community Standards Meeting to determine an appropriate consequence for the student's actions through alternatives to program removal and in-school suspension. Alternative consequences may include mediation, conflict resolution, positive interventions, or service to the community.

#### *Removal from Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored Events*

At times, an appropriate consequence for a student's actions may be the removal of a student from privileges such as participating in extracurricular activities or attending school-sponsored events. Recognizing that participation in such activities or events supports the development of a sense of belonging, the Assistant Principal or Principal will work with the Advisor and the student in the Community Standards Meeting to determine if short-term or long-term removal from an extracurricular activity or school-sponsored event is an appropriate consequence for the student's actions.

#### *In-School Suspension*

The Assistant Principal or Principal will work with the Advisor and the student in the Community Standards Meeting to determine if an in-school suspension is an appropriate consequence for the student's actions.

If, after investigating a concern that a student violated the Community Standards of Behavior, informing the student of the evidence of the concern, and discussing the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident with the student in the Community Standards Meeting, the Assistant Principal or Principal may impose an in-school suspension and shall inform the student of the length of the in-school suspension.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the Assistant Principal or Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian by phone of the concern, the evidence of the concern, and the length of the in-school suspension. The Assistant Principal or Principal shall also invite the parent/guardian to a meeting to discuss the incident of concern, strategies for the student's engagement in the school community, and the student's academic progress and personal growth.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the Assistant Principal or Principal shall also send written notice to the student and the parent/guardian about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent/guardian to a meeting with the Assistant Principal or Principal if such meeting has not already occurred. The written notification shall be delivered by hand delivery, certified mail, first class mail or an email address provided by the parent/guardian.

#### *Communication with Parents*

After any Community Standards Meeting, regardless of the student's consequence following the meeting, the Assistant Principal or Principal will notify the student's parent/guardian about the meeting, the circumstances of the concern, a summary of the meeting, and the outcomes from the meeting.

## **Principal's Hearing**

If a Principal or Assistant Principal has conducted an investigation and determined that there is evidence that the anticipated consequence for the student's actions may be an out-of-school suspension, and the student will participate in a Principal's Hearing. Prior to conducting a Principal's Hearing, the Principal will provide the student and the parent/guardian with oral and written notice of the Principal's Hearing, and provide the parent/guardian an opportunity to participate in the Principal's Hearing.

### *Notice and Principal's Hearing*

Prior to holding a Principal's Hearing, the Principal must provide the student and parent/guardian with oral and written notice of the Principal's Hearing, and provide the parent/guardian with an opportunity to participate in the Principal's Hearing. In the oral and written notice, the Principal will provide the student and the parent the following information in plain language:

1. The disciplinary offense.
2. The basis for the charge.
3. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension.
4. The opportunity for the student and parent/guardian to participate in a Principal's Hearing concerning the potential suspension, including the opportunity for the student to dispute the charges and present the student's explanation of the alleged incident.
5. The date, time, and location of the Principal's Hearing.
6. The right of the student and the student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the Principal's Hearing if needed to participate.
7. If the student may be placed on a long-term suspension or expelled, the notice shall also include the following:
  - a. The right for the student and parent/guardian to review, in advance of the Principal's Hearing, the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not.
  - b. The right for the student to be represented by counsel or advocate of the student's choice, at the student's and parent/guardian's expense.
  - c. The right to produce witnesses on the student's behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so.
  - d. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school.
  - e. The right to request that the Principal's Hearing be recorded by the Principal and to receive a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request. If the Principal's Hearing is recorded, the Principal shall inform all participants before the Principal's Hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.
  - f. The right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Head of School for a Superintendent's Hearing.

The Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the Principal's Hearing, with at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency notification. A Principal's Hearing may be conducted without a parent/guardian present if the Principal has sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian orally.

### *Principal's Hearing Procedures - Short-Term Suspension*

At the Principal's Hearing where the consequence for a student's actions may be a short-term out-of-school suspension for less than ten (10) days, the Principal will be joined by the student's Advisor and, if relevant, additional school staff members. The student and the parent/guardian will also be provided an opportunity to participate in the Principal's Hearing.

1. The Principal will summarize the procedures for the Principal's Hearing and will ask each participant, including the student and the parent/guardian, to identify themselves.
2. The Principal will present the disciplinary offense and the evidence gathered through the investigation of the discipline incident including, if relevant, statements from any school staff members.
3. The student will be provided an opportunity to discuss the alleged incident, the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, and present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining the appropriate consequences or remedies.
4. The parent/guardian, if present, will also be provided an opportunity to discuss the alleged incident, the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, and present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining the appropriate consequences or remedies.
5. Based upon the available information and evidence presented at the Principal's Hearing, the Principal will determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
6. The Principal will notify in writing the student and the parent/guardian of the determination, the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from school. This notification may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

*Principal's Hearing Procedures - Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion*

At a Principal's Hearing where the consequence for a student's actions may be a long-term out-of-school suspension for more than ten (10) days, or expulsion for more than 90 days, the student shall have the following additional rights:

1. The right for the student and parent/guardian to review, in advance of the Principal's Hearing, the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not.
2. The right for the student to be represented by counsel or advocate of the student's choice, at the student's and parent/guardian's expense.
3. The right to produce witnesses on the student's behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so.
4. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school.
5. The right to request that the Principal's Hearing be recorded by the Principal and to receive a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request. If the Principal's Hearing is recorded, the Principal shall inform all participants before the Principal's Hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.

At the Principal's Hearing, the Principal will be joined by the student's Advisor and, if relevant, additional school staff members or witnesses. The student and the parent/guardian will also be provided an opportunity to participate in the Principal's Hearing, have the student represented by counsel or advocate, and present witnesses on the student's behalf.

1. The Principal will summarize the procedures for the Principal's Hearing and will ask each participant, including the student and the parent/guardian, any representation, and any witnesses, to identify themselves.
2. If the Principal's Hearing is recorded, the Principal shall inform all participants before the Principal's Hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.
3. The Principal will present the disciplinary offense and the evidence gathered through the investigation of the discipline incident including, if relevant, statements from any school staff members or witnesses.

4. The student will be provided an opportunity to discuss the alleged incident, the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, and present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining the appropriate consequences or remedies.
5. The parent/guardian, if present, will also be provided an opportunity to discuss the alleged incident, the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, and present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining the appropriate consequences or remedies.
6. The student, or the student's representation, will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses on the student's behalf.
7. The student, or the student's representation, will be provided the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school.
8. Based upon the available information and evidence presented at the Principal's Hearing, the Principal will determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed in place of or in addition to long-term suspension or expulsion.
9. The Principal will notify in writing the student and the parent/guardian of the determination, sent by hand delivery, certified mail, first class mail or an email address provided by the parent/guardian. The written determination shall:
  - a. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date the Principal's Hearing took place, and the participants at the Principal's Hearing.
  - b. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal.
  - c. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as the date of return to school.
  - d. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive educational services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school.
  - e. With a Principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion, inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Head of School. Notice of the right to appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
    - i. The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Head of School within the applicable calendar days.
    - ii. The long-term suspension or expulsion will remain in effect unless and until the Head of School decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

#### **Disciplinary Offense Under M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H**

A student may be subject to expulsion, the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than 90 days, for committing one or more of the following alleged or determined disciplinary offenses:

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 a Principal, Assistant Principal, Teacher, Teacher's Aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-related events, including athletic games.

If a student may be subject to expulsion for committing one or more of the above alleged or determined disciplinary offenses, the Principal will follow the procedures and notice for a Principal's Hearing - Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion. After the Principal's Hearing, a Principal may, at the Principal's discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined to have committed one or more of the above disciplinary offenses. Any student who has been expelled from the

school under M.G.L. c.71, s37H shall have the right to appeal to the Head of School; the student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion to notify the Head of School of the student's appeal. The student shall have the right to counsel, at the student's and the parent/guardian's expense, at a Superintendent's Hearing with the Head of School. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has committed one or more of the above disciplinary offenses. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the determination made by the Principal following the Principal's Hearing shall remain in effect.

#### **Disciplinary Offense Under M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H ½**

1. A student may be subject to long-term suspension, removal from school for ten (10) or more days, if a student is issued a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.
2. A student may be subject to expulsion, the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than 90 days, if a student is convicted of a felony or felony delinquency, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

If a student may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion under M.G.L. c.71, s.37H ½, the Principal will follow the procedures and notice for a Principal's Hearing - Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion.

Any student who has been suspended long-term or expelled from the school under M.G.L. c.71, s.37H ½ shall have the right to appeal to the Head of School; the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the long-term suspension or expulsion to notify the Head of School of the student's appeal. The Head of School shall hold a Superintendent's Hearing with the student and the student's parent/guardian within three (3) calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. The student shall have the right to counsel, at the student's and the parent/guardian's expense, at a Superintendent's Hearing with the Head of School. The Head of School shall issue a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the Superintendent's Hearing. The decision made by the Head of School following the Superintendent's Hearing shall be the final decision of the school with regard to the student's suspension or expulsion. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the determination made by the Principal following the Principal's Hearing shall remain in effect.

#### **Emergency Removal**

The Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the Principal determines that the student's continued presence poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgement, there is no alternative to available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The Principal will notify the Head of School, in writing, of the emergency removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal may not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal.

In the event of an emergency removal, the Principal shall:

1. Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the need for emergency removal
2. Provide written notice of the emergency removal and the Principal's Hearing to the student and the student's parent/guardian, following the guidelines for Notice and Principal's Hearing.
3. Provide the student and the student's parent/guardian an opportunity to participate in the Principal's Hearing, following the notification and procedures for a Principal's Hearing - Short-Term Suspension or Principal's Hearing - Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion, as applicable, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent/guardian.



4. Render a decision verbally on the same day as the Principal's Hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, following the procedures for a Principal's Hearing - Short-Term Suspension or Principal's Hearing - Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion, as applicable.

In the event of an emergency removal from school, the Principal will not release the student until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

#### **Superintendent's Hearing - Appeals of Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion**

If a Principal has decided to impose a long-term suspension or expulsion after a Principal's Hearing, the student has a right to file a written notice of appeal to the Head of School within the applicable calendar days:

- If the student has been expelled from the school under M.G.L. c.71, s37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Head of School of the student's appeal.
- If a student has been suspended long-term or expelled from the school under M.G.L. c.71, s.37H ½, the student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the long-term suspension or expulsion to notify the Head of School of the student's appeal. The Head of School shall hold a Superintendent's Hearing with the student and the student's parent/guardian within three (3) calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. The Head of School shall issue a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the Superintendent's Hearing.
- If a student has been suspended long-term from the school under M.G.L. c.71, s. 37H ¾, the student shall have five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension in which to notify the Head of School of the student's appeal, but may be granted an extension of time of up to seven (7) additional calendar days. The Head of School will hold a hearing with the student and the parent/guardian within three (3) school days of the student's request for an appeal. The time may be extended up to seven (7) additional calendar days if requested by the parent/guardian. The Head of School shall issue a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the Superintendent's Hearing.

If the appeal is not timely filed, the Head of School may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in the Head of School's discretion, for good cause. The Head of School shall send written notice of the Superintendent's Hearing to the parent/guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The Superintendent's Hearing may proceed without the parent/guardian if a good faith effort was made to include the parent/guardian. The Head of School shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if the Head of School has made efforts to find a day and time for the Superintendent's Hearing that would allow the parent/guardian and Head of School to participate.

At the Superintendent's Hearing, the Head of School shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The student shall have all the rights afforded to the student at the Principal's Hearing - Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion. The Head of School shall arrange for an audio recording of the Superintendent's Hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request. The Head of School shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.

The Head of School shall issue a decision on the appeal in writing within five (5) calendar days of the Superintendent's Hearing. If the Head of School determines that student committed the disciplinary offense, the Head of School may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the Principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the determination made by the Principal following the Principal's Hearing shall remain in effect. The Head of School's decision shall be the final decision of the charter public school.

## **Education Services and Academic Progress**

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

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in-school or out-of-school, shall have an opportunity to receive educational services that will enable the student to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through the School-Wide Education Service plan. The plan includes the process for notifying the student and the parent/guardian of the available services and arranging the services. The notice, provided in English, and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, shall include a list of specific education services that are available to the student and the contact information for a school staff member who is to coordinate the services. For data reporting purposes, school will document the student's enrollment in education services, including the tracking of attendance, academic progress, and other such data as directed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. If a student moves to another school district during the period of a long-term suspension or expulsion, the new school district shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services through an education service plan.

## **Discipline of Students With Disabilities**

All students are expected to follow the school's Community Standards of Behavior. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short-term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. If a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan participates in a Community Standards Meeting, Principal's Hearing, the Director of Student Support will be notified of the student's actions in advance of the meeting or the hearing. For a student with an IEP, a staff member from the special education department will be included in a Community Standards Meeting or a Principal's Hearing. School staff must administer discipline according to the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan components if there are behavioral stipulations in the plan. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

1. Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from the student's program, for more than ten (10) consecutive days in a given school year or ten (10) cumulative days in a given school year, building administrators, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the student's IEP or Section 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (manifestation determination). During disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single year, the student shall have the right to receive services identified as necessary to provide the student with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
2. If building administrators, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students, but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.

3. If building administrators, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or Section 504 Team develops, and the parent/guardian consents to, a new placement, or unless the school obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, an existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.
4. If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the school may place the student in an interim alternative educational placement (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA hearing officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty five (45) school days.
5. If, prior to the disciplinary action, the student has been identified as potentially having a disability but has not been determined to be eligible for an IEP or a Section 504 Plan, the student will be afforded the same protections available to a student with an IEP or a Section 504 Plan. A student is identified as potentially having a disability if the parent of the student requests an evaluation or expresses in writing that the student is in need of special education services, or if a school staff member directly expresses concern that the student may have a disability.



