



North River Collaborative

Independence Academy

Student Handbook

2026-2027



Ryan Morgan, Program Coordinator
460R Belmont Street, Brockton Massachusetts
P: 508.510.4091 F: 508.857.0815
www.iarecoveryhs.org

Welcome

I would like to welcome you to the Independence Academy community! As the director of our programs, I am eager and deeply committed to making a positive difference in the lives of our students. Our goal at Independence Academy is to provide students with an opportunity to develop and grow as individuals where they can make positive changes in their life and finish their high school education. Our mission is to engage students in a process of growth and development where they can improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

At our school we believe that for students to experience success in school and in life they need to develop healthy relationships and experience positive connections with others. At Independence Academy our first priority is to create a safe, supportive environment where students can be vulnerable and develop a true sense of who they are as an individual so that they can grow socially, emotionally and academically. We firmly believe that every student deserves the opportunity to receive a high-quality education. The staff at Independence Academy includes highly trained, licensed teachers who are prepared to meet the needs of all learners while providing an engaging and rigorous curriculum. We realize that each student that attends Independence Academy has a different academic profile and different academic goals, so it is our mission to work with each student individually to help them meet their goals.

We are committed to meeting the diverse social and emotional needs of each student. With a support staff of professional counselors, Independence Academy offers a safe and supportive environment for students to achieve their own personal goals. We also recognize the importance of working closely with each student's family and support network to maximize each student's potential for success both inside and outside of school.

This handbook serves as a guide for us as we implement a unique, individualized and evidenced-based academic program while providing an unparalleled level of social and emotional support through our dynamic team . The policies and procedures that are outlined here will assist us in ensuring the safety, security and success of all students who attend.

Much Success,

Ryan Morgan

Ryan Morgan
Principal/Program Coordinator

Non-Discrimination Statement

The North River Collaborative programs do not discriminate in employment on the basis of race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, color, age, homelessness, limited English proficiency, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, ancestry, age, disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical conditions, or military service or marital status. The North River Collaborative programs do not discriminate in admission to, access or treatment in its programs and activities on the basis of age, race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, limited English speaking ability, national origin, or sexual orientation, disability or homelessness.

If you need this booklet translated, please contact the Program Coordinator

Portuguese / Português

Se voce necessitar este livreto traduzido, ontate por favor o escritorio principal da escola da sua crianca.

Spanish / Espanol

Si usted necesita esta librete traducido, intre in contacto con por favor la officinal principal de la escuela de su nino.

French / Francais

Si vous avez bsdoin de ce livret traduit, entrez en contact avec svp le bureau principal de votre enfant.

German / Deutsch

Wenn Sie diese ubersetzie Broschure benotigen, treten Sie Bitte mit dem Haupiburo der Schule Ihres Kindes in Verbindung.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission/Vision/Guiding Beliefs	5
Equity Statement	5
Disclaimer	5
Independence Academy Mission/Vision/Guiding Beliefs	6
Recovery Capital Framework	6
Our Tiered Model of Programming	7
Student Responsibilities	10
Recovery Information	12
SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	14
Accidents	14
Age of Majority	14
Asbestos Notification	14
Attendance	15
Automobile Policy	17
Behavioral Supports	17
Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy	18
Cell Phones / Electronic Devices	21
Communicable Diseases	21
Concussion/Suspected Head Injury	21
Curriculum	24
Disciplinary Procedures	25
Dress and Appearance	34
English Learners	34
Field Trips	35
Fire Drills	35
Grading	35
Guidance Services	36
Hazing	36
Health Services	37
Immunization Requirements	39
Internet Use / Acceptability Use Policy	39
Lost and Found	41
Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect	42
MCAS	42
Medication Administration Policy and Procedures	42
Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure	45
Physical Restraint and Behavior Support Policy	50
Policy on Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use	55
Procedure on Alcohol and/or Controlled Substances	56
Property Maintenance	56

Protecting Students from Known Allergens	56
Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notification	57
Provision Against Buses Idling	59
School Lunch	59
Search and Seizure	59
Service Animals	60
Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures	61
Student Records and Confidentiality	68
Therapeutic Services	70
Transportation	70
Video Recording Policy	70
Visitor Policy	71
Wellness Policy	71

APPENDICES	75
-------------------	-----------

A. School-Wide Education Service Plan	76
B. Student Media Waiver	78
C. Handbook Acknowledgement Form	79
D. Upper Course Student Expectations	80
E. Standards of Community Excellence	81
F. Academic Calendar	82

NORTH RIVER COLLABORATIVE

Mission/Vision/Guiding Beliefs

<i>Mission</i>
North River Collaborative will act as a leader in cooperatively developing and delivering innovative and cost-effective educational and therapeutic services for students, families, school districts, partner organizations, and communities in order to offer excellent, equitable, and highly relevant education for all.
<i>Vision</i>
North River Collaborative will utilize a culture of accountability, transparency, equity, and continuous improvement to fulfill our mission and remain at the forefront of educational innovation to meet the individual needs of students in our region within the most inclusive settings possible.
<i>Guiding Beliefs</i>
<i>We Believe....</i> - All students and families deserve equitable access to high quality educational services that support student success in a variety of domains as well as a life-long success as an independent adult. - In an educational landscape where the needs of students are at the forefront of decision-making that includes personalized learning, individualized support systems, and commitment to nurturing the holistic development of each learner at their highest potential. - All students should be challenged to learn in a caring, inclusive, and flexible environment that appreciates diversity, values life-long learning, and prepares students to be successful. - High-quality professional development combined with a rigorous informal and formal staff evaluation system is essential for improving educational practices and maximizing student achievement. - Providing opportunities for collaboration and inviting feedback from a diverse community of voices will foster growth and innovation and allow us to build and sustain cutting edge programs and services for all students. - Through collegiality and shared commitment, we as a staff will continue to perform at our highest potential and be empowered to operate with agency and grow as individuals serving our organization in the fulfillment of its mission.

EQUITY STATEMENT

North River Collaborative believes that equity is rooted in a reflective practice that permeates all facets of our organization. We actively seek to promote inclusion and the celebration of what makes our community members unique as we continue to maintain their dignity, civil rights, and safety. We understand that equitable practices guide us to continue to seek to mutually understand one another and expand the representation of all stakeholders in order to create a more diverse organization.

DISCLAIMER

The laws, policies, and school rules in this handbook are intended to ensure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operation of the North River Collaborative programs. In addition to these written provisions, there may be times when, to further ensure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operation of the school, the North River Collaborative may enforce a standard of conduct upon students that furthers this end. Furthermore, the school

administration has the right to enforce any law, ordinance or Board policy not written in this handbook. The passage of any new laws supersedes current rules.

INDEPENDENCE ACADEMY

Mission/Vision/Guiding Beliefs

Independence Academy is an alternative, public, day-school serving a specialized population. Our students have determined that their use of substances is having a negative impact on one or more major areas of their life, and they have committed to their recovery; a process of change. Our primary purpose is to support students in their healthy growth and development as they work towards obtaining a high school education. To support a life in recovery, Independence Academy focuses on four dimensions of each student's life: Health, Home, Purpose and Community.

Recovery is central to our mission, and at Independent Academy, we use a research-based, government-supported definition of the term Recovery: *a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential* (SAMHSA).

<i>Mission</i>
Our mission is to engage students in a process of growth and development where they can improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.
<i>Vision</i>
Our vision is to create an educational model that transforms the lives of students.
<i>Guiding Beliefs</i>
<i>We Believe....</i> - Recovery emerges from hope - Recovery is person-driven - Recovery occurs via many pathways - Recovery is holistic - Recovery is supported by peers and allies - Recovery is supported through relationships and social networks - Recovery is culturally based and influenced - Recovery is supported by addressing trauma - Recovery involves individual, family and community strengths and responsibility - Recovery is based on respect

RECOVERY CAPITAL FRAMEWORK

Independence Academy provides a model that is built on the holistic growth and development of each student. Utilizing the concept of Recovery Capital, Independence Academy aims to identify the domains in each individual student's life that are strengths and those that need direct attention. Recovery Capital refers to the depth and breadth of internal and external resources present in a student's life, that can be drawn upon to facilitate healthy growth and development. Our goal is to engage each student in an individualized program that targets their specific areas of need and leverages their areas of strength according to the 13 domains of Recovery Capital that have been identified as critical for healthy growth and development. The 13 domains of Recovery Capital are:

- Basic Needs (food, clothing, shelter, safety)
- Mental Health
- Substance Use/Addictive Behaviors
- Self/Emotional Regulation
- Physical Health
- Self-Awareness/Identity
- Social Awareness (Social Relationships)
- Family/Kinship Relationships
- Commitment to Education/Purpose
- Relational Connection to School/Community
- Vision/Goals
- Hobbies/Interests
- Vocational Skills/Independence

OUR TIERED MODEL OF PROGRAMMING

Independence Academy is a recovery high school program designed to help adolescents engage in and maintain a lifestyle grounded in recovery. We believe that students who are engaged in maladaptive behaviors at a problematic level deserve the opportunity and support to develop the mindset, awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

Our approach focuses on healthy growth and development rather than punishment or shame. Through positive experiences, meaningful relationships, and intentional support, students develop greater self-awareness, learn to identify barriers to growth, and build the skills needed to create lasting change. We believe that by developing Recovery Capital across the 13 domains, adolescents are more likely to decelerate problematic behaviors, shift their mindset around substance use and other unhealthy coping strategies, and improve their overall health and wellness over time.

Our multi-tiered intervention model is designed around the understanding that adolescents are at different levels of readiness for and willingness to change. Because of this, students receive varying levels of support, structure, accountability, and intervention based on their individual needs and level of engagement.

Progression through the tiers is not automatic and is not based simply on how long a student has been enrolled. Movement through the model is based on each student's desire, willingness, and demonstrated ability to engage

authentically in the process of personal growth and change. As students move through the tiers, expectations increase around self-awareness, openness to feedback, accountability, honesty, and active engagement in addressing problematic behaviors and other barriers negatively impacting their lives.

Many adolescents do not need, are not ready for, or are not interested in sustained recovery work. Our responsibility is to help students better understand themselves, their strengths, challenges, and behaviors while introducing them to the process of healthy growth and development. Through each tier, students assess where they need to build Recovery Capital, develop greater self-awareness, and determine their readiness to engage in meaningful change.

The purpose of our tiered model is to identify the most appropriate next step for each student. For some, that may mean gaining insight, stabilizing, and returning successfully to their home school. For others, it may involve deeper engagement in a longer-term process of growth, recovery, and development. All students must enter our program in Tier 1: The Upper Course.

Tier 1: The Upper Course

Focus: Awareness, Engagement, and Assessment

The Upper Course is a 10-school-day intervention program that introduces students to Independence Academy's approach to personal growth and development. Students participate in group and individual activities designed to help them better understand themselves, identify patterns in their life, and begin building self-awareness.

Students are introduced to the concepts of recovery, recovery capital, and IA's 13 Domains of Healthy Growth and Development, which include areas such as emotional regulation, relationships, mental health, school engagement, physical health, identity development, and future goals.

Students in the Upper Course are expected to:

- Attend consistently and participate in all aspects of programming
- Engage respectfully with staff and peers
- Participate in self-assessment and reflection activities
- Begin developing awareness of patterns, strengths, and growth barriers

At the conclusion of the Upper Course, students can return to their district or move into Lower Foundations. Staff work collaboratively with the student, family, and district to determine the most appropriate next step.

Tier 2: Lower Foundations

Focus: Continued Engagement and Foundational Skill Development

Lower Foundations is designed for students who would benefit from continued structure and support, but who may still be ambivalent, resistant, or uncertain about deeper change work. Students in this tier continue developing foundational skills related to self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationships, accountability, and school engagement.

This tier is often appropriate for students who:

- Are still developing readiness for more intensive recovery work
- Intend to return to their district school after a short-term intervention
- Demonstrate a willingness and desire to engage in long-term recovery work

Students in Lower Foundations are expected to:

- Maintain consistent attendance and engagement
- Participate appropriately in programming
- Demonstrate increasing openness to feedback and support
- Show willingness to reflect on behaviors, choices, and challenges

Students who remain engaged and responsive may continue in this tier for an extended period of time when appropriate and then transition into Upper Foundations if and when that is appropriate. Other students may successfully transition back to their district school with recommendations and support strategies developed during their stay.

Tier 3: Upper Foundations

Focus: Readiness, Responsiveness, and Active Growth

Upper Foundations is intended for students who are demonstrating increased readiness to actively engage in the process of building recovery capital and creating meaningful change in their life.

Students in this tier are expected to move beyond participation alone and begin demonstrating:

- Openness to feedback
- Responsiveness to staff recommendations
- Effort toward growth in identified areas of need
- Increased ownership of goals, behaviors, and decision-making
- Greater commitment to health, wellness, and personal development

Students develop and implement individualized growth plans while receiving academic instruction, coaching, counseling support, and opportunities to strengthen social-emotional competencies and life skills.

Completion of Upper Foundations does not automatically result in full enrollment at the recovery high school. Continued enrollment decisions are based on overall readiness, engagement, and alignment with the expectations of sustained recovery work.

Tier 4: Independence Academy Recovery High School

Focus: Sustained Recovery Work and Long-Term Development

The Recovery High School tier is designed for students who are prepared to actively engage in sustained recovery-oriented growth and development. Students enrolled in this tier are expected to demonstrate consistent engagement in the process and a commitment to continued personal growth.

Expectations at this level include:

- Consistent participation in academics and programming

- Ongoing self-assessment and reflection
- Openness to accountability and feedback
- Active effort toward addressing identified barriers
- Demonstrated implementation of an Individualized Recovery Plan
- Demonstrated commitment to improving health, wellness, relationships, and future outcomes

Students in this tier receive a comprehensive academic program and individualized recovery programming and support related to recovery capital development, social-emotional growth, and long-term planning.

Enrollment in the Recovery High School may continue through graduation when appropriate.

Billing and Program Costs

The 10-day program, The Upper Course, is provided to districts at no cost.

Billing beyond the Upper Course is based upon each student's intended level of participation in the program:

- Students who intend to continue into sustained Foundations programming and/or the Recovery High School tier will begin generating tuition costs following completion of the Upper Course.
- Students who only intend to stay for a short-term enrollment (for up to 30 additional days, totaling 40 days cumulatively) due to disciplinary action, other recommendations, and/or individual needs will not incur a further charge.
- All billing decisions and recommendations regarding continued enrollment are communicated directly with the student's school district.

Independence Academy works closely with students, families, and districts to ensure that enrollment in the program remains appropriate, supportive, and aligned with the goals of the student and the program.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Enrollment at Independence Academy is contingent upon a student's willingness to engage in the program, make progress toward educational goals, and participate in the process of healthy growth and development. Because students enter the program at different levels of readiness for change, expectations around recovery engagement vary across the tiers. However, all students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not impede their own progress, growth, or learning, or that of others.

The students and staff at Independence Academy are guided by principles that support healthy growth and development, including honesty, hope, courage, openness, willingness, humility, gratitude, accountability, focus on self, and connection to others. As students progress through the program, increasing levels of engagement, self-awareness, accountability, and commitment to positive change are expected. All students are expected to actively participate in the program and work toward the following five core values:

Five Core Values

- 1) **Commitment to Health and Wellness-** In order for an individual to be fully engaged in the recovery process it is strongly believed that the development of healthy routines, activities and lifestyle choices have to be a priority. Personal Development and Wellness are the cornerstones of our program. Students are actively engaged in our wellness activities and in daily personal development practices. Students believe that recovery is a way of life that is built upon a foundation of self-care and healthy habits.
- 2) **Commitment to Social Responsibility-** Every member of Independence Academy is expected to treat themselves, others and property with respect. They are also expected to continually take responsibility for their own behavior and participate in activities that enhance the overall culture and quality of the school environment. Students are actively working towards developing a world view which includes tolerance, acceptance, respect and appreciation for others. Students do not engage in behavior in any form which threatens the safety and/or recovery efforts of other students.
- 3) **Commitment to Academics-** The students at Independence Academy commit themselves to developing the necessary skills that allow them to exceed their academic potential, to take academic risks and to challenge themselves to understand how they can live a self-directed life and reach their full potential. Students are engaged in their education and actively work to develop and maintain a positive school routine.
- 4) **Commitment to Open and Honest Communication-** It is the expectation of every member of Independence Academy to communicate openly and honestly with each other, regardless of the intensity of their emotional dysregulation. For any student to have a beneficial experience at Independence Academy, they must commit to honesty and are expected to be forthcoming at all times.
- 5) **Commitment to Social/Emotional Learning-** Social and emotional learning (SEL) enhances students' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges. Our social/emotional curriculum is integrated throughout our school day and promotes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence. Students develop competency in five core areas:
 - Self-Awareness- The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."
 - ◆ Identifying emotions
 - ◆ Accurate self-perception

- ◆ Recognizing strengths
 - ◆ Self-confidence
 - ◆ Self-efficacy
- Self-Management- The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.
- ◆ Impulse control
 - ◆ Stress management
 - ◆ Self-discipline
 - ◆ Self-motivation
 - ◆ Goal-setting
 - ◆ Organizational skills
- Social Awareness - The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- ◆ Perspective-taking
 - ◆ Empathy
 - ◆ Appreciating diversity
 - ◆ Respect for others
- Relationship Skills- The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
- ◆ Communication
 - ◆ Social engagement
 - ◆ Relationship-building
 - ◆ Teamwork
- Responsible Decision Making- The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.
- ◆ Identifying problems
 - ◆ Analyzing situations
 - ◆ Solving problems
 - ◆ Evaluating
 - ◆ Reflecting
 - ◆ Ethical responsibility

When a student continuously demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to adhere to Independence Academy's Five Core Values, a meeting will be held between the student, school personnel, and the student's support network to address strengths and needs and develop a realistic plan for the student. If a student is consistently unable to adhere to the Five Core Values despite documented intervention efforts by Independence Academy staff, that student may be unenrolled and transitioned back to their sending district. Data is collected on a regular basis throughout the day to assess all students in several areas and specifically, in Engagement and Productivity in their classes/groups. Students are expected to be engaged and productive on a consistent basis.

RECOVERY INFORMATION

EXPECTATIONS AROUND SUBSTANCE USE AND RECOVERY

Independence Academy recognizes that adolescents enter the program at different levels of readiness for change and with varying relationships to substances. Our program is designed to meet students where they are while helping them develop greater self-awareness, healthier coping strategies, and the skills needed to improve their overall health and wellness and how their substance use impacts their life.

We believe that recovery is a process of healthy growth and development through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. We also believe that adolescents who engage in substance use at a problematic level are at increased risk for negative outcomes and that, in order for adolescents to become healthy and well, substance use must become less severe, less frequent, and less central to their lives over time. Ideally, students will be working towards periods of abstinence.

Because students are at different stages of readiness for change, Independence Academy does not require students to initially commit to any changes around their use of substances in order to engage in programming. All students are expected to at least be open to exploring their use of substances honestly. However, as students progress through the tiers, increasing levels of honesty, self-awareness, accountability, and active effort toward addressing problematic substance use and related behaviors are expected. Students who demonstrate no willingness to reflect on or address behaviors that are negatively impacting their health, relationships, education, or future may not be appropriate for continued enrollment.

In order to maintain a safe, supportive, and recovery-oriented environment for all students, the following expectations apply to every tier of programming:

- Students may not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at school or participating in school-sponsored activities.
- Students may not possess, use, distribute, share, solicit, or sell drugs, alcohol, nicotine products, paraphernalia, or other unauthorized substances at school or during school-sponsored activities.
- Students may not glorify, promote, encourage, or openly discuss substance use in ways that are disruptive, triggering, unsafe, or counterproductive to the school environment. Conversations related to substance use may occur when they are part of an appropriate therapeutic, educational, or staff-facilitated discussion.
- Sharing, soliciting, distributing, or selling substances to other students is considered one of the most serious violations of community expectations and may result in immediate administrative action.
- Any student whose substance use presents significant safety concerns based on the frequency, intensity, duration, or overall pattern of use may be recommended for a more appropriate setting until they are stable enough to safely engage in a recovery-focused environment.

Students are expected to demonstrate increasing levels of engagement in healthy growth and development and actively making progress towards their substance use goals as they move through the program.

SUBSTANCE USE SCREENING

Students attending Independence Academy programming must agree to random drug screening and upon reasonable suspicion of relapse once they commit to remaining beyond Tier 1: The Upper Course. All students will be initially screened as part of the intake process into Tier 2: Lower Foundations and re-entering after a period of consecutive absences. All urine screens are conducted in the nurse's office and all students will be searched prior to providing a urine sample. At times it is necessary to engage an outside agency for a more in-depth analysis of a screen (i.e. test for substances that are not included in our panel, obtain a quantitative level of a particular substance). In all cases a student's insurance provider information will be given to the outside agency for billing. While most insurance companies will cover the cost of drug testing to an extent, some insurance

companies will only cover a specified amount of tests in a period of time. Independence Academy will work with each family to determine insurance coverage for the cost of testing at the outside agency, however, any costs incurred by the outside agency for urine screening is the responsibility of the student's family/guardian.

RECOVERY STABILITY

The most important aspects of a student's commitment to their recovery at IA is their ability to communicate openly, be actively involved in developing recovery capital and developing and implementing an individualized plan that targets their specific needs. It is a challenge for adolescents who struggle with substance use to achieve and maintain sobriety and a positive quality of life in the early stages of recovery. Therefore, it is the goal of the Independence Academy staff to provide students with resources, skills, knowledge and a supportive environment as they move through the stages of change and take steps to engage in positive mental, emotional and physical change. The combination of these three factors - student sincerity, active engagement, and professional compassion, have proven to maintain the integrity of our community and significantly increase student success at our school.

When a student struggles to make changes around their use of substances they are expected to communicate openly with the recovery counselor or designee at all times. In the event that a student self-reports a significant incident pertaining to use:

- The student will meet with the recovery counselor to revisit the student's individual recovery plan. They will discuss the nature and severity of the incident and discuss appropriate next steps which may include a recommendation to inpatient/outpatient treatment or other community-based supports.
- The recovery counselor will notify the student's parent/guardian, and other relevant personnel (i.e. Therapeutic Mentor) within twenty four (24) hours after the incident is reported. In extenuating circumstances, the parent notification period may be extended to 48 hours with principal approval.
- When appropriate, the principal will be notified and a meeting may be held with the student's support team (i.e. parent/guardian, therapist, mentor, etc.) to discuss additional steps.

In the event that a student continues to struggle with substance use and that student has not been honest and forthcoming with the staff at Independence Academy, or they are resistant to addressing their substance use, the student's commitment to recovery will be questioned and their enrollment at IA may be jeopardized. This will be interpreted as a clear indication that the student is struggling in their recovery or not interested in our school's mission. The following situations will be identified as not meeting Independence Academy's standard for open and honest communication:

- a random drug screen indicates a positive result for one or more substances that have not been previously reported;
- a student discloses use after a urine sample is requested;
- a student refuses to consent to or "cannot provide" a drug screen within 30 minutes of the request
- a third-party (i.e. peer, parent/guardian) informs the staff of a student's suspected ongoing struggle or of a significant incident involving substances
- a student tampers with or manipulates a drug test or is known to consume a masking or cleansing agent in an attempt to provide a negative screen.
- A student refuses to develop and/or implement an individualized recovery plan with the recovery counselor

When it is determined by the recovery counselor that a student is struggling with their recovery and/or is not effectively working through the stages of change:

- The principal will be notified and a team meeting will be held as soon as possible to discuss the nature and severity of the student's use. In some cases, the principal may excuse a student from school until a team meeting can be scheduled (see *Emergency Removal*).

- The recovery counselor will assess the student's motivation to work towards addressing their use and willingness and commitment to remain at Independence Academy. The student's individual recovery plan will be updated and/or revised to meet the student's needs which may include a period of time away from Independence Academy to focus more intently on the issues surrounding their use.
- The student may be suspended from school with the stipulation of successfully completing inpatient/outpatient treatment before returning to school.
- Privileges during the school day (i.e. use of cell-phone, going outside) may be revoked due to the concerns of the students' high-risk behavior.

It should be noted that it is possible for a student to be suspended for a significant incident involving substance use due to circumstances and severity of the incident, even if the student self-reports the incident. Additionally, individual circumstances surrounding a student's use may require that the student be sent for a crisis evaluation, recommended for substance use treatment, and/or emergency medical treatment. The program coordinator reserves the right to terminate a student's enrollment at Independence Academy at any time due to ongoing or continued substance use as it jeopardizes the integrity of the recovery community. Any student who jeopardizes the recovery efforts of another student through the distribution, sale, or sharing of substances will be immediately removed from the program.

All instances of substance use during school hours will be addressed by the principal and recovery counselor, and any other relevant clinical or counseling personnel. Independence Academy reserves the right to access and utilize outside clinical evaluation support personnel to assist with treatment recommendations.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

ACCIDENTS

Accident reports are to be completed by any school personnel at the scene of the accident by the individual whom the accident is reported to, or by the one who administers first aid. Accident reports must be made out immediately. Copies will be sent to the sending school system and the parent or guardian. An additional copy will be placed in the student's file.

AGE OF MAJORITY

Students who are 18 years of age or older, may legally assume full responsibility for their actions. Unless the student provides a written statement to the Program Coordinator that he/she does not want his/her/their parents receiving student records, the parents are entitled to access such records. Further, parents/guardians must still countersign all documents requiring a signature.

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

The North River Collaborative operates educational programs in locations throughout the region through classroom or office rentals housed in both public school and private locations. The Asbestos Management Plan for these locations is available through the public school or private institution in which the program is housed. For school building locations, this information would be housed both at the school and at the central administrative office for that respective school district. Inquiries regarding the management of asbestos-containing materials in our educational program locations should be directed to the school district in which the program is located. For assistance identifying the private entity or school district contact person or location of this information, please contact Paul Tzovolos, Executive Director, who can be reached at 198 Spring Street in Rockland, MA, and at ptzovolos@nrcollab.org or 781-878-6056 and we would be happy to assist you.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and consistent attendance is essential to learning, to developing a positive school routine, to maintaining a respectful school climate, and to a student's successful school performance. The goal of the student attendance

policy is to promote consistent, daily school and class attendance and subsequent emotional, mental, social, and academic growth. The expectation is that all students will have, at a minimum, at least ninety percent (90%) attendance in school and in each class during each school day. A student who is truant, frequently absent, or frequently tardy to school without adequate reason is in violation of this policy.

Absences

1. A parent/guardian must notify the school the day a student is absent at (508)510-4091 between 8:00 and 9:30 AM to state the reason why an absence is necessary.
2. If a call is not made, a note from the parent/guardian/caregiver or the student's medical provider is due on the day that the student returns to school explaining the absence.
3. In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school principal or designee may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be excused.
4. If an extended absence of a student is foreseen, the parent/guardian/caregiver should contact the principal to make arrangements for the completion of academic requirements.
5. A student who is chronically absent or tardy will be referred to the program coordinator or designee for corrective action. The sending district will be notified regularly of each student's attendance at Independence Academy, when necessary.
6. In the event that a student has five (5) or more unexcused absences in an academic quarter, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and the student's sending district informing them of the student's attendance.

Students should be familiar with their own sending district's attendance requirement for earning credit in courses for which they are enrolled. Some districts will not award academic credit, despite a passing grade, for a course if a student exceeds a maximum number of unexcused absences in a given marking period.

At the end of each month, any student who misses more than 20% of the scheduled school days will be required to meet with the Program Coordinator, or designee to discuss appropriate steps to address the issue and notification will be sent home. Students who continue to miss school for reasons other than those stated below may be withdrawn from the school. The Program Coordinator reserves the right to use discretion as to whether or not to excuse absences.

Excused Absences

Students are expected to be in school every day. However, it is understood that there are specific instances where missing school is unavoidable, and an absence may be excused. Instances which constitute an excusable absence are listed below:

1. Illness will only be considered excused with a signed note from a doctor stating that the student was not able to attend school due to a serious or contagious medical condition.
2. Serious illness or death of a family member.
3. Hospitalization/Treatment
4. Emergency medical or dental attention
4. Authorized religious holidays
5. Court dates
6. Weather so inclement that it would jeopardize the student's safety to attend school (School cancellation in student's home district but not at IA)
7. Attendance at an appointment/event that is in-line with the student's academic, recovery or post-secondary plan (e.g. Educational Testing, College Tour, Recovery Event). Prior approval from the principal is required.

If a student is hospitalized or enters a treatment facility, a Re-Entry meeting must be set up before the student can return to school. The purpose of the re-entry meeting will be for school personnel, including the school nurse

and counseling staff, to collect as much information as possible regarding the student's needs and to ensure a successful transition back into the school community.

Students enrolled in the Upper Course are permitted two (2) unexcused absences over their 10-day enrollment. Upon the third unexcused absence the student will be enrolled from the Upper Course.

Dismissals

Parents should not request that students be dismissed from school except in an emergency. Dismissal is granted when a note stating a reason for the request is signed by the parent or guardian and is presented to the main office and accepted by the Program Coordinator or school nurse. A student who is ill will not be released unless there is someone to pick him/her up with parental permission. The school will make every attempt to contact parents to verify early dismissal notes. A student will be considered absent if they are dismissed before 10:30am.

Extended Vacations

The regularly scheduled school breaks in December, February, April, as well as July and August should provide adequate time for family vacations and trips. Parents must realize that vacations during scheduled school days detract from the continuity of a student's education. Parents should be aware that vacations taken during MCAS testing are counted by the state as a failing grade both for the student and for the school.

Leaving School Without Permission

Students are not permitted to leave the school without permission due to concern for the safety of the student and for the school community. If a student does leave school without permission during the school day, the Program Coordinator may or may not permit re-entry to the school building. In all cases, parents will be notified and if the student is excluded, the procedures for a suspension will be followed. The Program Coordinator will make an effort to retrieve and return the student.

1. If a student is not permitted to return, a parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to arrange for transportation home. The student will not be permitted to take their regularly scheduled transportation at the end of the day due to safety concerns.
2. A student may be considered to be trespassing if he/she/they remains on school grounds.
3. If a student leaves the building and does not return, the Brockton Police may be notified.
4. If the student is over the age of 18 and leaves school without permission, the student's guardian (if applicable) will be notified.
5. Any student who leaves school without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.
6. A student who continues to leave school without permission may be terminated due to safety concerns.

Make-up Work

When students miss school due to absences whether excused or not, the staff is dedicated to ensuring that learning opportunities that were missed are made available. Students will always be provided with missed work and opportunities to receive missed instruction. A grade of "Incomplete" will be given to any student whose work is not complete at the time an academic report (e.g., progress report, report card) is issued. It is the student's responsibility to work with teachers to ensure that all work is made up in a timely fashion. Students will have ten (10) school days from the close of a grading period to turn in all make-up work. An extension may be granted by the Program Coordinator in the case of extenuating circumstances.

No School Announcements

Independence Academy will follow the Brockton Public Schools announcements for **School Cancellations Only** unless the Program Coordinator determines that opening or closing the school is in the best interest of the students and staff at Independence Academy.

In the event that inclement weather forces schools to close, a no school announcement will be sent out via text message to all parents/guardians and notification will be sent out via social media (i.e. Facebook, twitter). In addition, Brockton Public Schools will also notify students on-line, over radio stations and television.

Students coming from other districts should use extreme caution when traveling in inclement weather and are required to notify Independence Academy if they will be late or unable to attend. If school is canceled in the town that a student resides in, they are not expected to be present.

Religious Holiday Observances

Parents shall have the right to determine when their child will be absent from school because of religious observances and students will not be penalized or deprived of make-up opportunities for such absences or pressured to choose between school attendance and religious observances.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be on time every day. Lateness is seen as a potentially high-risk behavior and may result in the loss of privileges during the school day. Therefore, students who demonstrate a pattern of arriving to school late must meet with the counseling staff to develop a strategy to address this challenge.

1. Students who arrive late to school must sign in at the front desk.
2. Any student who arrives unexcused after 10:30 AM will be considered absent for the day.
3. Chronic tardiness may result in failing grades
4. Students enrolled in the Upper Course who are chronically late may be unenrolled from that program.

Withdrawing from School

Any request to transfer to another school or for withdrawal from Independence Academy requires a meeting among the principal, the parent or guardian, and any other relevant personnel working with the student. A reasonable effort will be made by the counseling staff to conduct an exit interview as part of the withdrawal process for all students. Students and parents have the right to withdraw from Independence Academy at any point and return to their sending district. If a student is looking to withdraw from school completely, they must return to the sending district and follow their withdrawal procedures.

AUTOMOBILE POLICY

Students who have a driver's license and who own or have access to a registered and insured vehicle may, with school permission, drive to school if the following provisions are met:

1. Parental permission is given,
2. The student demonstrates responsible driving habits at all times, (as determined by staff),
3. Student must not transport other students to or from school without permission from a parent/guardian
4. The student provides the office with a copy of a valid driver's license and current registration,

Any violation of the Automobile Policy may result in suspension of the privilege.

Students are not permitted in their vehicle during the school day without permission from the program coordinator or his/her designee.

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

In an effort to promote students' commitment to social responsibility at Independence Academy the following behavioral supports and interventions will be implemented if a student engages in behavior that is deemed unacceptable:

Level 1 intervention- Verbal prompting by peers/staff- If a student or staff member witnesses another student engaging in a behavior that is unacceptable but does not pose a danger to the community (i.e. disrupting the learning environment), the witness will attempt to prompt the student to stop the unacceptable behavior.

Level 2 intervention- Verbal warning - If a student continues to engage in behavior that is unacceptable but does not pose a danger to the community, staff will issue a verbal warning.

Level 3 intervention - Group Separation - If a student has failed to respond to level 1 or 2 intervention, the student may be asked to separate from the group to a designated, calm, and comfortable space within the school (“The Big Room”) for the purpose of calming, refocusing, and emotional regulation) that allows the student to engage in their individualized behavioral intervention plan. The expectation when students elect or choose to go to The Big Room is that they are actively engaged with the individualized strategies that are developed for them during a period of dysregulation or increased stress/anxiety. Students in The Big Room are not allowed to use their cell phones. Refusal by the student to follow the individualized intervention plan and implement strategies during their time in The Big Room will be documented by the staff. The staff assigned to The Big Room may recommend that the student briefly check in with a counselor.

Level 4 intervention- Behavioral/Counseling Intervention – A student who continues to not meet the expectations in The Big Room and is unable or unwilling to implement their strategies will be sent to a separate counseling space for an individual meeting. . The student will be expected to return to the academic environment when they are ready. The removal from class will be documented and communicated to the principal.

Level 5 intervention- Disciplinary meeting – If a student is engaging in behavior that is deemed disruptive or dangerous to the community, has required multiple Level 3 or 4 interventions in the same day and/or has failed to respond to earlier stages of behavioral interventions, the student will be required to participate in a disciplinary meeting with the school principal. (*Note: A level 5 intervention- disciplinary meeting with the Program Coordinator may be called at any time at the Coordinator’s discretion if a student is consistently violating the code of conduct or behaving in a manner that is dangerous to self or others*). Depending on the nature and significance of the incident and also taking into account the student’s individual behavior history, the Program Coordinator may choose to suspend the student out of school for a period of time (*see, “Suspension and Termination Policies” below*).

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING POLICY

It is the policy of the North River Collaborative to provide a learning environment for students free from bullying and cyber-bullying. It is a violation of this policy for any student or member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, custodian, vehicle driver, or paraprofessional to engage in bullying or cyberbullying or for any employee of NRC to condone or fail to report acts of bullying or cyberbullying that they witness or become aware of (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; (ii) at school sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds; (iii) at school bus stops;(iv) on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district/NRC; (v) through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district/NRC; and (vi) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district/NRC, (vii) if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require the NRC to staff and/or monitor any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

The North River Collaborative will not tolerate retaliation against a person who reports bullying or cyber-bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or cyber-bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or cyber-bullying.

Definition of Terms:

Bullying. Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or 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: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of

damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

We at NRC understand that members of certain student groups such as gay/lesbian, bisexual, transgender, homeless and students with disabilities may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment or teasing in our own programs or in our host school environments based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics. Differentiating characteristics include race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more characteristics. NRC will take steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations and provide its students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying refers to 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.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated. Members of certain student groups such as gay/lesbian, bisexual, transgender, homeless and students with disabilities may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment or teasing in our own programs or in our host school environments based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics. Differentiating characteristics include race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more characteristics

Perpetrator is defined as a student or 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.

It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent/guardian to recognize acts of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of NRC are implemented. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to bullying and/or cyber-bullying has the right to: (i) file a complaint to his/her teacher or Principal and to (ii) receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any and all information received.

Students, parents and NRC employees (including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, job coaches, as well as transportation drivers and monitors), who witness or become aware of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation should immediately report it to the Program coordinator.

Reports of bullying and/or cyberbullying will result in an investigation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on

the basis of an anonymous report. Parents of students alleged to have engaged in bullying and/or cyberbullying will be invited to attend a meeting at which the activity, words, or images subject to the complaint will be reviewed.

The NRC will provide students with age-appropriate instruction on bullying/cyberbullying prevention. The NRC will provide professional development to build the skills of staff members, as required by law. The NRC will develop a Bullying/Cyberbullying Prevention and Intervention Plan which shall set forth the administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. Such Prevention and Intervention Plan shall include, but not be limited to: procedures for reporting, responding to and investigating reports of bullying/cyberbullying or retaliation of a person who reports bullying/cyberbullying or provides information during an investigation; any notification requirements consistent with state and federal law; a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators to include a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, job coach, custodian, transportation driver, victims, and family members; and provisions for educating and informing parents about bullying/cyberbullying and the Collaborative's bullying/cyberbullying prevention curriculum.

Students and parents/guardians will receive annual written notice of the relevant student-related sections of the Prevention and Intervention Plan annually and NRC employees shall be trained annually on the plan. This Handbook serves as such annual written notice. The Plan shall also be posted on the NRC website. Each Program Coordinator shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at his/her program. Program Coordinators will work cooperatively with the Coordinator of Special Education from the sending district to assist NRC students, parents, and employees who seek guidance or support in addressing matters related to any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation Guidelines

Reporting

- Students, parents/guardians, or others make an oral or written report of a bullying incident
- Staff must immediately report an incident of bullying to the principal or designee (staff must fill out an Incident Reporting Form)

Safety

- Before investigating the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from possible further incidents
- At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal, after consultation with the Executive Director, will notify the local law enforcement agency

Investigation

- Interview the target
- Interview students, staff, witness, parents or guardians, and others as necessary
- Interview the alleged aggressor

Determination

- The principal or designee makes the determination of bullying based upon all of the facts and circumstances
- Take steps to prevent recurrence if bullying or retaliation occurred
- Notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation
- Principal should not disclose specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken- except when the target needs to know the information, such as a stay away order

Discipline / Follow-up

- Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct and can include suspension, expulsion and termination for employees

- Document outcome of investigation on the Incident Reporting Form
- Notify appropriate staff
- Promote the continued safety of the target
- Provide counseling or refer aggressors, targets, and family members of those students to appropriate services as needed
- Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 370(g)(v), inform parents or guardians of the target about the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System, and the process for seeking assistance and filing a claim through the Problem Resolution System.

CELL PHONE POLICY

Recent studies show a coexisting relationship between problematic cell phone use and substance use. The use of cell phones can be disruptive to the learning environment and has been shown to trigger anxiety and stress among young people. Independence Academy aims to educate students on the effective use of technology and the many benefits of cell phones and to help students self-regulate their use of their device. Students attending the Upper Course Program and the Lower Foundations program are not permitted to have their cell phones with them during the school day. Students in the Upper Foundations program that are getting ready to transition to Independence Academy may earn the privilege of carrying their cell phone with them. Students attending the recovery high school (top tier) are permitted to carry their cell phone with them during the school day as long as it is not disrupting their learning. Any staff member at the school has the right to limit a student's use of their cell phone. Any student who continues to use their phone despite verbal redirection from staff, will be asked to put their phone in a designated area for the remainder of the class. The student will get their phone back at the end of the class period. If a student is asked to turn over their cell phone to a staff member and refuses to do so, the student will be removed from class and disciplinary action will result. A student's privilege to carry their cell phone with them is contingent upon their ability to adhere to the expectations of the school. The principal reserves the right to revoke a student's privilege to carry their phone for any reason. Any lost, stolen or damaged cell phone is not the responsibility of the school or school staff. Students are strictly prohibited from recording any other student and/or staff without explicit consent of the subject as it is against the law to do so in the state of Massachusetts. Students may be subjected to discipline if this occurs.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

NRC adheres to 105 CMR 300.00 on the reporting and surveillance requirements for communicable diseases. In accordance with the regulations, the NRC may require isolation and quarantine requirements for contacts of persons infected with certain communicable diseases in school / community, and health care settings. These requirements include attendance guidelines for non-immune students when cases or suspect cases of vaccine-preventable diseases are reported. A list of the reportable diseases that are subject to control under general reporting and isolation and quarantine regulations are provided on the following web page: 105 CMR 300.00: Reportable diseases, surveillance, and ...

CONCUSSION/SUSPECTED HEAD INJURY

NRC, in order to protect the health and safety of students and to comply with Mass. Gen. L. c. 111, Section 222 ("Section 222") and accompanying regulations (105 CMR 201 et seq.), has developed a policy to address the identification and proper handling of suspected head injury in students participating in extracurricular activities. The full contents of this policy can be found in Appendix D. At this time the SAILS programs do not have extra-curricular activities; however, this policy will be applied to all students who experience concussion, whether at school, in the community, on school-sponsored trips or at home. For any student diagnosed with a concussion, school personnel, including but not limited to teacher, nurse, along with parents shall develop a written graduated entry plan for return to full program activity access. The school nurse will coordinate the writing and approval process of the written graduated entry plan in consultation with the student's Health Care Provider.—Please refer to Appendix D in the Appendices.

Concussion Policy / Suspected Head Injury

North River Collaborative (NRC), in order to protect the health and safety of students and to comply with Mass. Gen. L. c. 111, Section 222 (“Section 222”) and accompanying regulations (105 CMR 201 et seq.), has developed the following policy to address the identification and proper handling of suspected head injury in students participating in extra- curricular activities.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this policy, consistent with 105 CMR 201.007, the following words shall have the following meaning:

TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) is defined as: A complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces. TBI may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an impulsive force transmitted to the head. TBI includes, but is not limited to, a concussion.

Head injury is defined as: a direct blow to the head or indirect trauma to the head including a concussion or traumatic brain injury. Scalp or facial laceration alone is not itself a head injury.

Concussion is defined as: a complex disturbance in brain function, due to direct or indirect trauma to the head, related to neurometabolic dysfunction, rather than structured injury.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Program Director shall be responsible for the general implementation of this policy and any accompanying procedures as it relates to students in grades 6-12 who participate in school-based athletic, extracurricular activities.

Coaches/teachers are required to instruct students in form, technique and skills that minimize sports-related head injury and are directed to discourage and prohibit students from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health and safety of a student, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.

The Collaborative will adopt policies and procedures governing the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries following development of a proposal by a team consisting, at a minimum, of a school administrator, school nurse, school or team physician if on staff, athletic director, licensed athletic trainer if on staff, neuropsychologist if available, guidance counselor, and teacher in consultation with any existing school health/wellness advisory committee. Review and revision of such policies and procedures shall occur as needed but at least every two years.

The Collaborative will require documentation of physical examination prior to a student’s participation in extracurricular athletic activities on an annual basis.

Training

Annual training is required for those specified below in the prevention and recognition of sports/activity related head injury, and associated health risks including secondary impact syndrome: coaches, teachers, NRC staff, school nurses, volunteers, parents of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity, students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity. Pursuant to 105 CMR 201.015, the school nurse(s) shall also be responsible for participating in the development and biannual review of policies and procedures required by 105 CMR 201.006 for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school, and providing ongoing educational materials on head injury and concussion to teachers, staff, and students.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) approved training materials will be available to staff and at no charge to the individual. This training shall include recognizing sports-related head injury including second impact syndrome. Individuals who are required to participate in the training shall submit documentation verifying

the completion of the training to the Program Director. Records of completion of annual training shall be maintained by the Executive Director or a designee for three years.

Removal from Activities due to Head Injury

Any student removed from an extracurricular/athletic activity with a suspected head injury or concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, shall be removed from the activity immediately and may not return to said activity that day. Parents will be notified so the parent may take the student to a medical provider for appropriate medical evaluation and treatment. Parents and students are responsible for completion of the Pre-participation forms including the Report of Head Injury Form. The student must provide a completed *Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form* to the Program Director/Nurse prior to resuming the activity.

Procedures for Returning to the Activity

If a student is diagnosed with a concussion, school personnel, including but not limited to the teacher, school nurse, along with parents shall develop a written graduated entry plan for return to full academics and extracurricular activities. The school nurse will coordinate the writing and approval process of the written graduated entry plan.

Accommodations may include, as appropriate: provision for physical or cognitive rest; graduated return to classroom studies; estimated time intervals for resuming activities; assessments by the school nurse; periodic medical assessment by a physician until the student is authorized to full classroom and extracurricular activities. The school physician and/or student's physician may be consulted as appropriate in devising the graduated entry plan.

Reporting Requirements

Coaches/teachers are required to report any student's head injury or suspected concussion sustained in extracurricular activities to the student's parent so follow-up by a medical provider for evaluation and treatment can be provided. The parent shall be informed of the injury immediately after the activity in which it occurred and notification must be provided in writing no later than the end of the next business day.

Coaches/teachers must also notify the Program Director of the injury and removal from the activity by the end of the next business day. The coach/teacher must complete a *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* and provide it to the Program Director, parent, and school nurse.

If a student sustains a head injury outside of the extracurricular activity, the parent must complete the *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* to the Program Director.

The school, consistent with any applicable state and federal law, shall maintain the following records for three years or at a minimum until the student graduates: (1) verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of materials; (2) Department Report of Head Injury forms; (3) medical clearance and authorization forms, and (4) graduated reentry plans for full return to academic and extracurricular activities.

CURRICULUM

The collaborative ensures that individual teachers in the collaborative review all educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials are used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials.

Whenever new curricular materials are needed, NRC works with vendors to obtain samples of proposed texts and other materials in order to review their appropriateness and value to the curriculum. Materials are screened for simplistic and demeaning generalizations lacking intellectual merit. Administrators and Teachers utilize a

checklist of questions to guide their review as needed. This same process is used for supplementary materials such as news articles, supplementary books, advertisements, videos, etc.

Teachers participate in ongoing professional development related to equity and bias in order to enhance their understanding of these issues and improve the lens with which they evaluate all educational materials. If materials are selected that possess intellectual merit yet depict stereotypes that are demeaning, teachers are expected to provide balance and context in their instruction. Student feedback on feelings of equity within the school environment are frequently sought during primary counselors' ongoing meetings with students. Parent input on equity and bias at the school will be obtained during implementation of the Safe and Supportive Schools Grant in 2020-2021.

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), North River Collaborative, through its curricula and materials, encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building principal/program coordinator on available accommodations related to curriculum content.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Education Curriculum

In accordance with state and federal law, North River Collaborative shall provide an age-appropriate and evidence-based drug, alcohol, and tobacco education and prevention curriculum in grades K-12.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug education curriculum shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The curriculum shall also include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

The objectives of the curriculum, as stated below, are rooted in the Collaborative's belief that prevention requires education and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the Collaborative should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making and personal wellness:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Executive Director and approved by the NRC Board of Directors.

This policy shall be posted on the North River Collaborative and Independence Academy websites and notice shall be provided to all students and parents of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the Collaborative shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

Sex Education - Policy Regarding Notice to Parents, Exceptions

Independence Academy does not provide regular curriculum which primarily pertains to human sexuality or human sexuality issues, however in the event that human sexuality or human sexuality issues will be presented as part of the curriculum parents/guardians will be notified and parents or guardians will be provided the flexibility to exempt their children from any portion of said curriculum through written notification to Independence Academy Principal. No student at Independence Academy so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Code of Conduct

North River Collaborative students are expected to abide by the code of conduct for the host school in which their program is located. A copy of the student handbook for the host school will be distributed to each Collaborative student. However, the student handbook for the host school may not include an exhaustive list of actions that are in violation of the code of conduct for the host school or the Collaborative. Therefore, Collaborative students should be aware that they may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, for any violation of school rules defined in the handbook of the host school or for any behavior not specifically mentioned within that handbook that places any member of the school community (student, staff member or visitor) in danger or disrupts the educational process. Additionally, collaborative students may be subject to suspension or expulsion by the Program Coordinator/Executive Director or the Principal/Superintendent from the host school for any violation of MGL c. 71 §37H or 37H ½, as described further below.

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, the Program Coordinator or his/her designee (which may include staff from the host school) shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense. The Program Coordinator or his/her designee shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning and shall attempt to avoid long term suspension as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. These alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Due Process for Students with Special Needs

Any student may be suspended or removed from school for disciplinary reasons for a short time, which is no more than 10 days based on procedures outlined herein. However, when the Collaborative seeks to exclude a special education student from his/her program for more than cumulative ten school days in the school year, the student's special education Team must first determine whether the student's behavior was caused by or was directly and substantially related to his/her disability or whether the conduct in question was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the student's IEP (a "manifestation determination"). If the Team determines that the behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability or was caused by a failure to implement the IEP, it must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavior plan (or review and modify an existing plan, if necessary), and return the student to his/her current program, unless the student's parents and the district agree to a change in placement.

If the Team determines the behavior was not caused by, or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or failure to implement the IEP, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that during the period of suspension or expulsion, the district must continue to provide the student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and, if appropriate, conduct a functional behavior assessment and provide intervention services and modifications to prevent the conduct from recurring. If the conduct involves weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, a special education student may be removed to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting for up to 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability. The IEP Team will determine the IAES and the appropriate educational services that will be provided to the student while he or she is in the IAES.

Additional information regarding the procedural protections for students with disabilities can be obtained from the Program Director. The Collaborative does not advocate long-term suspensions of students. However, in cases of dangerous disruptions or safety-related behavior by a student, a team meeting will be held, if pertinent to discuss these factors.

Suspension/Termination Policies and Procedures

NRC adheres to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, sections 37H, 37H 1/2 and 37H 3/4 as well as 603 CMR 53.00 et seq.

Definition of Terms:

In-School Suspension is the removal of a student from regular classroom activities for no more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative school days or less in one school year. Please note that removal from participation in extracurricular activities does not count as a removal from school in calculating the duration of a suspension.

Out of School Suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for no more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative school days or less in one school year. Please note that removal from participation in extracurricular activities does not count as a removal from school in calculating the duration of a suspension.

Short-Term Suspension is the exclusion of a student from school premises and regular classroom activities for a specified period of not more than ten school days.

Long-Term Suspension is defined as the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in one school year, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. A long-term suspension may be served in school. Except for M.G.L. c. 71, sects. 37H and 37H1/2 offenses, a long-term suspension may not be imposed for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year and does not extend from school year to school year.

Emergency Removal is a brief removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for no more than two (2) school days following the date of the emergency removal when the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

School Wide Education Service Plan is a document created by the Program Coordinator that “includes a list of educational services available for students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days.”

Procedures for In-School Suspension

An in-school suspension may be used as an alternative to out-of-school suspension. An in-school suspension means the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in one school year.

If the Program Coordinator chooses this alternative, the Program Coordinator shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for that charge; the Program Coordinator shall provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charge and explain the circumstances surrounding the charge. If an in-school suspension is issued, the Program Coordinator shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the offense, and the length of the in-school suspension.

The Program Coordinator shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student’s academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. This meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension, if possible, or as soon as possible thereafter. The Program Coordinator shall also send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to the above-described meeting, if such meeting has not already occurred.

Procedures for Short-Term Suspension

The Program Coordinator, or his/her designee, may suspend students on a short-term basis. Unless a student poses a danger to persons or property, or the suspension/expulsion is pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, sect. 37H or 37H 1/2 , the student will receive the following prior to a short-term suspension:

1. Oral and written notice of the charges in English and the primary language of the home if other than English. This notice shall include:
 - The disciplinary offense;
 - The basis for the charge;
 - The potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension;
 - The opportunity to have a hearing with the Program Coordinator and the parent concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
 - The date, time, and location of the hearing;
 - The right of the parent and student to interpreter services at the hearing; and
 - If the student may be placed on a long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal:
 - The rights set forth under the "Procedures for Long-Term Suspension"; and
 - The right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.
2. At the hearing, if the student and/or parent elects to attend, the student shall have the opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts and any mitigating circumstances. The Program Coordinator shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct the hearing without the parent, the Program Coordinator must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The Program Coordinator is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the Program Coordinator sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.
3. Based on the available information, the Program Coordinator shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offenses and what remedy shall be imposed. The Program Coordinator shall notify the student and parent in writing of his/her decision, the reasons for it, and, if applicable, the type and duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and other academic work.
4. If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Program Coordinator shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect.

Education Service Plan for students suspended from school for 10 or fewer

In accordance with Chapter 76, Section 21, North River Collaborative Principals and Program Coordinators shall ensure that students who are suspended from school for 10 cumulative school days, whether in or out of school, shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension, to make up assignments and earn credits missed including, but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, papers, and projects missed.

NRC program coordinators shall provide educational services for all students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than 10 consecutive school days, whether in or out of school, with agreement from the student's sending district. The responsibility for education services ultimately rests with the student's school district, not the educational collaborative since the student continues to be enrolled in the district while attending the collaborative program. However, an educational collaborative and the student's sending district may agree for North River Collaborative to provide educational services, in which case the principals and program coordinators shall notify the student and their parent of the opportunity to receive education services and arranging such services at the time that the student is expelled or placed in long-term suspension. The services will be based on and provided in a manner consistent with the academic standards for all students.

In the event that North River Collaborative provides the educational services, it offers either tutoring or Online Learning. North River Collaborative's obligations assume that the student is still a student at North River Collaborative.

Procedures for a Long-Term Suspension

The Program Coordinator, or his/her designee, may issue long-term suspensions at the building level. Expulsions may also be issued for the offenses set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H1/2, as described in the next section, below.

- In the event of a long-term suspension or expulsion, the student will be provided oral and written notice of the charges in English and the primary language of the home if other than English. This notice shall include:
 - 1) The disciplinary offense;
 - 2) The basis for the charge;
 - 3) The potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension;
 - 4) The opportunity to have a hearing with the Program Coordinator and the parent concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
 - 5) The date, time, and location of the hearing; and
 - 6) The right of the parent and student to interpreter services at the hearing.
- The Program Coordinator shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct the hearing without the parent, the Program Coordinator must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The Program Coordinator is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the Program Coordinator sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.
- In advance of the hearing, the student shall have the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Program Coordinator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student. The student shall also have the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person at the choice and expense of the student/parent.
- At the hearing, if the student and/or parent elects to attend, the student shall have the opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts and any mitigating circumstances. The student shall also have the right to produce witnesses and the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school. The student may request that the hearing be audio recorded by the Program Coordinator and may request a copy of the recording. All parties must be made aware that the hearing is recorded in advance of the hearing.
- The parent, if present, shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and other information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Program Coordinator should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- The Program Coordinator shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offenses and what consequences shall be imposed. The Program Coordinator shall notice the student and parent in writing of his/her decision, including the following information:
 - The disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants in the hearing;
 - The key facts and conclusions reached by the Program Coordinator;
 - The length and effective date of the suspension and the date of return to school;
 - The notice the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the suspension;
 - The student's right to appeal the Program Coordinator's decision to the Executive Director or his/her designee if a long-term suspension has been imposed. This notice of appeal shall include the process for appealing the decision, which requires the parent or student to file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension.
 - The Executive Director shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless an extension is mutually agreed to.
 - The Executive Director shall make a good-faith effort to include the parent in the hearing.
 - The hearing shall be conducted to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and, if so, what the consequence shall be. The hearing shall be audio recorded and a copy of the recording shall be provided to the student or parent upon request.
 - All the same rights as are afforded in the above long-term suspension principal's hearing shall apply to the student in an Executive Director's hearing.

- The Executive Director shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. If the Executive Director determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Executive Director may impose the same or lesser consequence than the Program Coordinator.
- The decision of the Executive Director shall be the final decision of the Collaborative.

Procedures for Emergency Removal / Expulsion / Termination Removal

If a student's continued presence poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principals' judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption, the Program Coordinator shall temporarily remove the student from the school. This temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) days following the day of the emergency removal and the Executive Director shall be immediately notified of the removal. Additionally, the Program Coordinator shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the emergency removal, and the other information required in a short-term suspension notification. The short-term suspension notice shall be provided in writing to the student and parent. The opportunity for a hearing with the Program Coordinator shall occur within two (2) school days, unless otherwise extended by the school and parent. A decision regarding the student's continued suspension or other removal shall be rendered the same day as the hearing and written notice shall be provided the following school day. This written notice shall include all the information required based on the type of discipline imposed (short-term suspension, in-school suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion).

The Program Coordinator may also remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on a student's misconduct. This type of removal is not subject to the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in this policy.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) days, indefinitely, or permanently. Conduct that may lead to expulsion includes but is not limited to possession of a dangerous weapon, assault on school personnel or upon other students, possession of a controlled substance, and certain criminal convictions and charges.

M.G.L. c. 71 §37H

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

(f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.

(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 consecutive days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

M.G.L. c. 71 §37H ½

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter 76:

- Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Executive Director. The student shall notify the Executive Director in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The Executive Director shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

- Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the Program Coordinator of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such Program Coordinator determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

Termination

In the event of a student termination the principal or program coordinator will try every available means to maintain the student's placement until the sending school district has had sufficient time to search for an alternative placement.

In the case of a planned termination, the school will notify the sending school district of the need for an IEP review meeting. The school district will arrange a Team meeting and will provide all parties, including the parent, and student if appropriate, notice of this meeting ten days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. The meeting will be held for the purpose of planning and developing a written termination plan for the student.

The plan shall describe the student's specific program needs, the short and long-term educational goals of the program, and recommendations for the follow-up and/or transitional services.

The Team chair shall thoroughly explain termination procedures to the student, the parents, and other stakeholders, including the sending district's administrator of special education and officials of the appropriate human service agency, if applicable.

The written termination plan shall be implemented in no less than thirty days unless the team agrees to an earlier termination date. If unable to maintain the student's placement, tutoring or online learning will be offered to the student until such time an alternate placement is identified.

In the case of an emergency termination, which shall be defined as circumstances in which the student presents a clear and present threat to health and safety of him/herself or others, the North River Collaborative program and the sending school district shall follow the procedures under 603 CMR 28.09 (12).

The North River Collaborative program involved in the incident will immediately notify by telephone and by letter the student's parents, any state agency involved in the student's care or program placement and the sending school district of the circumstances in which the student needs to be terminated.

Upon telephone notification of the emergency termination, the sending school district is expected to take responsibility for the student and to immediately convene an emergency Team meeting or planning to address an appropriate course of action and new placement for the student prior to termination.

If the sending school district requests, termination may be delayed up to a maximum of two calendar weeks from the date of notification in order to allow the emergency team meeting or planning to occur. Emergency termination will not be delayed beyond two calendar weeks without the express consent of both the sending district and the North River Collaborative program.

Involvement of Law Enforcement

The North River Collaborative agree to coordinate their response to violence or other illegal activity by students and non-students, which occur on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events to the extent allowed under the law with local law enforcement. Through collaboration, the two parties can ensure safe and secure school and community environments designed to maximize effective teaching and learning.

To ensure a safe educational environment, this collaborative effort between school administration and law enforcement supports immediate action for drugs, alcohol, weapons, hate crimes and violence within and on the

grounds of North River School. Non-students involved in such acts on school premises or at school events are to be reported in the same manner as students are reported. Non-students include administrators, teachers, professional staff, support staff, clerical and custodial staff, security personnel, bus drivers, visitors, and trespassers.

It will continue to be the sole prerogative of school officials to impose disciplinary sanctions for infractions of school rules and policies. North River School does not share with the Rockland PD or any other database or system designed to track gang affiliation or involvement, any information about the immigration or citizenship status of a student or their families. It does not share student information relating to residential neighborhood, religion, national origin, ethnicity, and suspected, alleged, or confirmed gang affiliation unless germane to a specific unlawful incident, or the “prospect” of unlawful activity “the school is otherwise required to report.”

General Principles of Involvement of Law Enforcement

This policy shall be applicable to all students in the North River School. A reasonable effort will be maintained between the school administration and the law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement officials should be summoned in order to conduct an investigation of alleged criminal conduct on school premises or during a school-sponsored activity or to maintain the educational environment. They should also be summoned for the purpose of maintaining or restoring order when the presence of officers is necessary to prevent injury to persons or property.

Administrators, with the position of at least Program Coordinator or designee, and with the advice of the Collaborative’s attorney, have the responsibility and the authority to determine when the assistance of law enforcement officers is necessary within their respective jurisdictions. The Collaborative’s administrator shall at all times act in a manner which protects and guarantees the rights of students.

Objectives

- I. Investigation conducted in the educational environment
 - a. Initiated by School Administrators
 - i. Conducted by Administrators
 1. Program Coordinator’s designee shall have the authority and duty to conduct investigations and to question students pertaining to infractions of school rules. Such investigations shall be conducted in a way which does not unduly interfere with school activities.
 - ii. Conducted by Law Enforcement Officers
 1. Under normal conditions, police officers will contact the Program Coordinator or his/her designee upon entering a school building.
 - iii. Violators of Criminal Law
 1. During the investigation of a violation of school rules, it may come to the attention of the administrator that the investigated activity may also be a violation of criminal law.
 2. The Program Coordinator, following consultation with the Collaborative’s attorney, shall determine when law enforcement officers shall be contacted.
 3. Students are not to be released to police authorities unless police have proper authority to take the student into custody.
 4. If the investigation has centered on any particular student suspected of such alleged criminal activity, the procedure for taking students into custody by the police set forth in Section II shall be followed.
 - b. Questioning of Students During Investigation: Due Process
 - i. Violations of School Rules
 1. In instances where school rules have allegedly been violated, the Program Coordinator or designee may contact the suspected rule violator or potential witness to the infraction.
 - a. The suspect student should be advised orally of the nature of the alleged offense and of the evidence, if any, against the student.

- b. In questioning a potential student witness to an alleged disciplinary infraction, care should be taken by the administrator to ensure that there is a reasonable likelihood that the student was indeed a witness. School officials should not engage in detailed questioning of students at random, without reasonable cause, in the hope of gathering information as to school misconduct and the reason to believe that they were a witness.

- ii. Violations of Criminal Law

- 1. During the investigation of the violation of school rules, it may come to the attention of the administrator that the investigated activity may also be a violation of criminal law. In proceeding with the investigation, the Program Coordinator with the advice of the Collaborative's attorney, will ascertain whether there is sufficient jurisdiction to believe that a criminal offense was committed and that it warrants contacting law enforcement officials.

- II. Taking a Student into Custody

- a. Students may not be released to the law enforcement authorities voluntarily by school officials unless the student has been placed under arrest or unless the parent, guardian, or representative and student agrees to the release. Administrators shall make reasonable objections to law enforcement authorities who attempt to remove students from school without placing them under arrest or without acquiescence of the parent, guardian, or representative and the student. When students are removed from school for any reason by law enforcement authorities, every reasonable effort will be made to contact the student's parent, guardian, or representative immediately. Such effort shall be documented. Whenever a student is removed from school without an arrest being made, or without acquiescence of the parent, guardian, or representative and the student, the administrator shall immediately contact a superior of the law enforcement officers involved and make an objection to the removal of the student. The Executive Coordinator's office shall be notified immediately of any removal of a student from school by law enforcement officers under any circumstance.
- b. The Program Coordinator shall make reasonable efforts to persuade law enforcement officers not to make arrests or to take students into custody on school premises.
- c. When it is necessary to take a student into custody on school premises, the law enforcement officer shall contact the school Program Coordinator and relate the circumstances necessitating such action. When possible, the Program Coordinator shall have the student summoned to the office where the student may be taken into custody.
- d. When an emergency exists, the school's Program Coordinator shall summon law enforcement officials to the school to take a student into custody.

- III. Coordination of Policies by Law Enforcement Officers

- a. School administrators shall meet at least annually with local law enforcement officials to discuss the school system's policy and rules regarding law enforcement contacts with the school system. Law enforcement officials will be asked to instruct their staff as to the terms of the school's policy and rules.

- IV. K9 Dogs on School Grounds without Prior Notification

- a. For the welfare and safety of the entire student body, K9 dogs may be brought on to the school grounds.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

A student is expected to come to school dressed in a manner which is appropriate for a learning environment, and that does not compromise the health and safety of the school community. Although a student's style of dress is an individual statement of who they are, the Collaborative has the right to restrict certain aspects of dress which are disruptive or distracting to the education process.

Students are expected to report to school dressed according to Independence Academy's dress guidelines. They must not wear anything that interferes with the educational process or that is a danger to the health and/or wellbeing of a student's physical or emotional safety.

- Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times.
- Tank tops are not allowed.
- Pants must be free of revealing holes and or tears.
- Bathing suits or beach wear is prohibited
- Any clothing which depicts an obscenity, which contains a message advocating or advertising the use of drugs, alcohol or weapons, or is pornographic, is prohibited.
- Any clothing which depicts any offensive or racially charged material is prohibited
- Students will be encouraged to practice proper hygiene at all times.
- Chains are forbidden when misused or not jewelry.

The administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of clothing consistent with these guidelines. A student whose dress is considered inappropriate for school will be required to make arrangements for other, more appropriate, dress and may be removed from school, pursuant to discipline procedures in this handbook.

ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELs)

North River Collaborative ensures that ELs are taught to the same academic standards and curriculum as all students and provides the same opportunities to master such standards as students, including the opportunity to enter academically advanced classes, receive credit for work done, and have access to the full range of programs. In addition, the Collaborative uses grade appropriate content objectives for ELs that are based on the district curricula in English Language Arts, History, and Social Science, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering, taught by qualified staff members.

Information in notices, such activities, responsibilities, and academic standards, provided to all students is provided to English Learners in a language and mode of communication that they understand. Information provided to students about extracurricular activities and school events is provided to English Learners and to their parents/guardians in a language they understand. The Program Coordinator works in conjunction with the district to ensure an interpreter is provided for IEP meetings. The IEP document is provided in both English and the primary language of the home.

North River Collaborative works directly with families and our school district partners, or responsible Local Education Agencies (LEA), to support English Language Learners (ELLs) in our educational programs. Our goal is to support ELLs and their families through outreach, interpretation services, translation services, and support of the policies and procedures that exist through the responsibilities of the LEA for students in our educational programs. North River Collaborative will work flexibly with our school district partners to assist in the screening, scheduling of services, and any state assessment needs that our ELL students require. Additionally, North River Collaborative serves as a regional support for ELL professional development and program enhancement as the lead for a Title III group grant through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are provided for IA students to complement the classroom and counseling curriculum, facilitate generalization of specific skills, build recovery capital, and/or to address target IEP goals. IA staff plan and organize field trips based on the needs of their individual students. Parent/guardian permission slips must be submitted for all field trips. Should you desire that your child not participate in a field trip, please notify the classroom teacher or Program Coordinator in advance in order for alternative educational programming be

arranged for your child. Eligibility for field trips is determined using criteria set forth in the “Standards of Community Excellence” (see *Appendix E “Standards of Community Excellence”*).

Behavior is always expected to reflect favorably on the school. Students are to be dressed appropriately for the trip. Parental permission slips must be submitted before a student will be allowed to attend any field trip. All rules and policies described in the student handbook apply.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys orders promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly and orderly as possible. Fire drill procedures are posted in each room and will be reviewed by the teacher. Fire Drills will take place four times a year.

GRADING

Independence Academy operates on a two semester calendar year that includes four grading terms. Minimum passing grade is set by each student’s sending school district.

Students enrolled in the Upper Course and Lower Foundations will continue to work on the academic work provided to them by their sending district.

Grades on transcripts and report cards are literal and the numerical averages are reported to districts. If a student has a significant number of excused absences in a given marking period or their enrollment occurs in the middle of a marking period, they may receive a grade of “Incomplete (I)” and receive a grade once their work is made up or complete. Our numerical averages typically follow this scale:

A +	=	97-100	C+	=	77-79
A	=	94-97	C	=	74-77
A-	=	90-93	C-	=	70-73
B+	=	87-89	D+	=	67-69
B	=	84-87	D	=	64-67
B-	=	80-83	D-	=	60-63

Graduation Requirements

Each student will be required to meet his/her/their sending school’s graduation requirements. In addition, each student must develop a post secondary plan upon admission that will guide his/her/their individual academic and personal goals. Students will be awarded a diploma from their sending school district. In rare circumstances, Independence Academy and the student’s sending district may agree to confer a diploma based on alternative graduation requirements set forth by Independence Academy and the student will receive an Independence Academy diploma. Each year a graduation ceremony is held at Independence Academy for those students who have met their local graduation requirements. It is up to each student’s sending district as to whether a student may also participate in their sending district’s commencement exercises. It is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to determine whether a student is eligible to participate in their sending school’s graduation ceremony.

Homework Policy

Homework will vary according to level and course, and is up to the discretion of the teacher. Students should expect to be assigned wellness/personal development homework on a nightly basis.

Report Cards / Progress Reports

Independence Academy academic reports are issued to the students and the school districts at the midpoint and end of each quarter. Report cards are sent electronically via email to all sending districts of students. It is the

expectation that the sending district incorporates the students' grades earned at Independence Academy into the student's transcript.

Student Transcripts

Any student who enrolls at Independence Academy is expected to be enrolled in their district of residence. When a student is accepted at IA, the sending district is notified and there is regular communication around each students' grades, attendance, and discipline. All grades are reported back to the district of residence as they remain the custodian of the student's permanent record, including the student transcript. Any request for an official transcript of student grades must be made to the district of residence.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

The school counselor will work closely with each student's sending district to ensure that all credits and graduation requirements are being met. There will also be regular communication between the school counselor at Independence Academy and the student's sending district with regards to attendance and overall student behavior. The student will meet with the school counselor to set up an individualized post-secondary plan. The school counselor will also continually work with each student on academic, family or social emotional issues that may arise that could impede a student's academic success. The school counselor will work with students attending the Upper Course and Lower Foundations program to coordinate the receipt, accessibility, and return of any completed school work during their enrollment in those tiers.

HAZING

The North River Collaborative forbids hazing of any form. Any student who has engaged in hazing shall be subject to disciplinary actions. Any employee who has engaged in hazing will be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action. In accordance with GL. c.269, should an instance of hazing occur, Sections 17-19 shall be adhered to.

Chapter 269, Section 17, the Crime of Hazing

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

The term "hazing" shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug of 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.

Chapter 269, Section 18 – Duty to Report Hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined above and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

Chapter 269, Section 19 – Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Requirement

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 to 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 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 institutions 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 institutions which fail to make such report.

HEALTH SERVICES

The NRC complies with all Mandated School Health Services as specified by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Independence Academy has a part-time Registered Nurse assigned to the program. The role of the professional school nurse is to facilitate the health and wellness of each student to enhance the opportunity for academic success. Responsibilities in this setting include but are not limited to the following: development of an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) as needed, overseeing third-party drug screening, maintaining appropriate health records as necessary, providing training and professional development to staff, and the facilitation of medication delegation for applicable students.

Please talk with the school nurse if your student has a specialized medical need or diagnosis which must be assessed, managed, and/or monitored during school hours such as a life-threatening allergy, diabetes, or seizure disorder. If a student requires medications during hours when the nurse is unavailable, the nurse will contact parents/guardians to review the medication delegation process and obtain all appropriate approvals in compliance with the Department of Public Health's guidelines.

It is important to have up-to-date information regarding emergency phone numbers, addresses and names of contact persons, health insurance, allergies, medications, medical history, immunization records, and physical exams on file at school. If there is a change in any of this information, please notify the school as soon as possible.

In the event of a medical or psychiatric emergency, every effort to contact the parent or guardian will be made first. If no contact can be made, your child will be taken to the nearest emergency room.

Please help the program nurse care for your child by:

- updating the phone numbers on your child's emergency card so the school can always reach you;
- notifying the nurse when your child has any illness chronic or acute;

- communicating with the nurse directly if medication, health needs change or if the student was exposed to a communicable disease; and
- informing the nurse if there is an event at home or in the family that may impact your child at school such as death of a beloved pet, serious illness or death of a family member.
- Please keep your child home from school if he/she has:
 - a temperature 100 degrees F or above; student must be fever free without the use of fever reducing medicine (i.e., Tylenol or Motrin) for 24 hours before returning to school.
 - vomiting, diarrhea; student must be vomitus free for 24 hours before returning to school
 - Contagious or infectious diseases including:
 - strep infections of any kind, ringworm, conjunctivitis, or impetigo. These are all contagious infections and must be treated with medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school;
 - rash of unknown origin—this may indicate many different things and should be checked by your pediatrician;
 - pain should be taken seriously, especially in young children. Earaches, toothaches, and headaches should be evaluated.

***Your child must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication prior to returning**

Preventing the Spread of Disease

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease at your child's school is to be aware of warning signs. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association recommend that any child who demonstrates the following signs, symptoms, or diseases should be excluded from school or should be sent home when they develop. North River Collaborative also follows these guidelines.

When the signs, symptoms, or disease appear	You should exclude child until
Fever 100 with behavior changes or other symptoms of illness	Doctors indicate that is OK to return to school; fever free for 24 hours
Unusual lethargy, uncontrollable coughing, irritability, constant crying, difficulty breathing, or other unusual symptoms	Doctor indicates that it is OK to return to school.
Uncontrollable diarrhea-increased number of loose bowels	Until Diarrhea stops
Vomiting-2 or more times in 24 hours	Vomiting stops or Doctor indicates it is OK to return to school
Mouth sores with drooling	Doctor indicates it is non-infectious
Rash with fever or behavior changes	Doctor indicates it is non-infectious
Pink or red conjunctivitis with yellow or white discharge	24 hours after treatment is initiated
Severe respiratory symptoms which limit the child's comfortable participation in activities or significantly increase the level of care necessary	Symptoms are resolved to the point where standard routines or activities will no longer be affected.

Health Records

The NRC program staff maintain individual student health records. The records include medical information including physicals, immunization records, mandated screenings, and health history completed by the parent/guardian when the student entered the program. In the event clarification is needed on a signed physician's order, the program coordinator may contact the student's physician for the necessary information. Parents/guardians are asked to communicate student health concerns and medical reports to the program coordinator. Access to the student health record is restricted to program staff on a need-to know basis only.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunization requirements are revised periodically to reflect the most recent recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). All students in school settings must be immunized in accordance to DPH requirements in order to attend school. All students should have on record a certificate of immunization documenting that the student has been successfully immunized in accordance with current DPH recommended schedules against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), hepatitis B, varicella and other communicable diseases as specified from time to time by the department. Any exceptions will be by MD order or for religious reasons or if the student is homeless and cannot easily provide the records.

The program coordinator shall be up to date in his or her knowledge of the DPH recommended schedules and shall monitor each student's schedule of immunization as is currently recommended. The program coordinator shall review yearly all students' records to assure that the student records are current. The immunization record shall be kept current in the student health record. It is important that the program nurse notify parents if immunizations are past due. The program coordinator shall assure that any student entering the school system is appropriately immunized. Some students entering school have not been immunized on schedule or lack immunization documentation. Regional MIP (Massachusetts Immunization Program) epidemiologists can provide recommendations for children who are behind schedule.

INTERNET USE/ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Introduction

NRC understands the vital role that technology plays for both students and staff in education and is therefore committed to providing both hardware and software, as well as support for that purpose.

Collaborative Property

All aspects of the NRC's Technology Network (the "Network"), which includes computer, technology and communications systems, hardware, software and all message contents, Internet access, electronic mail capability, voice mail, and all uses of any stationary/cell telephonic equipment owned by the Collaborative are the property of the Collaborative. The Network is not a resource intended for use as a public forum or for any purpose that is not directly related to the delivery of educational services.

For users to be permitted to gain independent access to the Network, they must agree to and abide by the rules set out below. For students under 18, parents must also provide written permission forms before the student will be permitted to gain independent access to the Network. If the Collaborative does not receive a signed user agreement and parent permission form, students will not gain independent access to the Network but may still have exposure to the Internet during classroom instruction.

NRC reserves its right to seek restitution from any user for costs incurred by the NRC, including legal fees, due to such user's inappropriate use of the school's technology resources.

All hardware owned, distributed, and loaned to the user is the responsibility of that user to return in the same condition as when supplied. It is the responsibility of the user to report abuse of NRC technology immediately to the Program Coordinator. A user should not attempt to log on as a system administrator as that will result in a cancellation of user privileges. All computers and hardware NOT owned by NRC must be approved for use with the Program Coordinator beforehand.

Review and Monitoring of the Network

The Collaborative reserves the right to monitor and review the Network, including without limitation e-mail messages, Internet access, telephone calls, and voicemail. This includes Internet sites visited, duration of Internet use and files which have been viewed, accessed, or downloaded. In addition, all incoming and outgoing emails are archived through our email host.

The computers, Internet, and email are not private. Your access code or password does not give you any right to privacy with respect to using the Collaborative's email and Internet systems. At any time, and without prior notice, NRC reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store any and all usage of technology devices.

User Responsibility

All users must adhere to this acceptable use policy which includes both responsible use and prohibited use. Responsibility of use includes the day-to-day operation of technology, securing or locking a device when not at the device, logging off the Network at the end of a work session or at the request of the system administrator, and keeping all passwords to the Network secure. All electronic contact should be through the Collaborative's email, website, and telephone system.

The Collaborative assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees; any financial obligations arising out of unauthorized use of the Network for purchase of products or services; any costs, liability or damages caused by user's violation of these policies; and any information or materials transferred through the Network.

Use of any information obtained via email, the Internet, or other sources is at the risk of the user. NRC specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet.

NRC, through its ISP provides content filtering that is CIPA compliant. CIPA is the acronym for Children's Internet Protection Act. Our content filtering software is updated on a regular basis and sites can be blocked per our request. The software is in place to help protect our students from obscene or questionable material that is not educationally relevant. The Collaborative will make every reasonable effort to monitor our Network, Internet traffic, and content filters to ensure student safety.

Disclaimer of Liability: while safeguards are in place to protect our students from offensive material, no filter is 100% effective. The Collaborative disclaims all liability for the content of material that a student may access on the Internet, for any damages suffered in the course of or as a result of the student's Internet use, and any other consequences of a student's Network use. Under certain conditions, Massachusetts General Law (MGL) holds that email is public record and must be available for public inspection.

NRC makes no guarantee regarding the reliability of the data connection. Additionally, NRC shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the Network.

Prohibited Use of the Network

It is not permissible to use the Network to:

- engage in unlawful or inappropriate behavior;

- use the Network for financial gain or for any commercial, political, gambling, or any illegal activity;
- transmit material that contains offensive or harassing remarks based on age, disability, race, color, age, gender identity or expression, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, homelessness, religious creed, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, and/or genetic information, or any other classification protected by law;
- transmit sexually explicit material, including messages, pictures, jokes and cartoons;
- access or visit websites that contain sexually explicit, racist or other offensive material, or post messages at such websites;
- pirate software or download or transmit software programs or any other copyrighted or trademarked materials;
- identify or share the location of inappropriate materials;
- leave one's computer logged in but unsecured or leaving password information available for others to assume your ID;
- engage in cyberbullying as defined in Chapter 92 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2010, that is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by such things as electronic mail, internet communications, instant message, text message or facsimile;
- engage in the use of spam or other unauthorized use of distribution lists for emails. This includes creating or forwarding chain letters or pyramid schemes of any type;
- use games, whether downloaded or web-based without permission;
- use the Network in any way which results in a potential claim concerning a copyright and/or trademark;
- use proxy websites that allows a user to browse the Internet anonymously and intentionally bypasses NRC's firewall and content filters;
- participate in any communications that facilitate the illegal sale or use of drugs or alcohol or to facilitate criminal activity;
- attempt to log into or access another person's files, any attempt to access Network applications or system date that the user does not have permission to;
- disrupt Network/computer performance by or attempting to change configurations or attaching devices, physically or wirelessly to the Network;
- gamble;
- participate in any communications that threaten, intimidate, or harass any other person or violate any local, state, or federal laws;
- any form of vandalism, including damage to computers or hardware, and disseminating
- malicious software programs such as viruses that disrupt the operation of the Network. Disassembling computer equipment is considered vandalism as well; and
- use technology for commercial activities or product advertisement.

Please note that the NRC student acceptable use policy does not nullify the host schools' handbook policy, which must be adhered to as well.

Violation of this Policy

The use of the Network is a privilege, not a right, which may be revoked at any time. Any violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action. It should be further understood that transfer of certain kinds of materials is illegal, and punishable by fine and/or jail sentence.

Classroom-based

The Collaborative's employees are responsible for ensuring that classroom-based computer use is in compliance with both NRC's and the host school district's policies regarding acceptable use and the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Computer

Use

LOST AND FOUND

Personal belongings that are lost during the course of the school day are not the responsibility of the school. A student should report any missing items to the staff as soon as possible. Any found articles should be turned in to the office where they may be claimed by the rightful owner.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

North River Collaborative affirms its responsibility to provide for the safety and well-being of students. This responsibility extends to complying with the Massachusetts Mandatory Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Statute, Chapter 119, Section 51A, which mandates that certain persons in their professional capacity report child abuse and neglect when there is reasonable cause or suspicion to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) has been abused or neglected. It is expected then, that when any staff member in his/her professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering from the effects of any form of child abuse and neglect, that the staff member will report his/her concerns to the Program Coordinator, and appropriate action will be taken.

MCAS

Students are required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to demonstrate competency in ELA, Math and Science. Depending on the graduation requirements set forth by the student's sending district the MCAS may be used in order to determine eligibility for a high school diploma. Students at Independence Academy will participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing. This testing may be taken with accommodations or through alternative assessment, as determined by the student's IEP or 504 team, as applicable. The curricula at Independence Academy follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks/Common Core Curriculum and the teachers strive to help students feel prepared both academically and emotionally to demonstrate competency on each aspect of the MCAS. For a schedule of MCAS testing for the current school year please visit www.iarecoveryhs.org. Students enrolled in the Upper Course will be expected to return to their district in order to participate in MCAS testing and those absences will be excused.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of the medication policy is to provide a standard consistent with state regulations. This is done to assure the safe administration of medication through the duration of program hours. This will include both prescription and non-prescription medications. The goal of this medication policy is to ensure that students requiring medications during program hours will be able to attend, and to ensure that medications are safely administered and stored in the program setting.

Medication Administration Plans:

The Collaborative nurse, in collaboration with the parents or guardian whenever possible, shall establish a medication administration plan for each student receiving medication.

Medication Orders:

The program nurse shall ensure that a proper medication order form from a licensed prescriber is renewed as necessary. In accordance with standard medical practice, a medication order from a licensed prescriber shall contain:

- the student's name;
- the name and signature of the licensed prescriber and business and emergency phone numbers;
- the name, route and dosage of medication;
- the frequency and time of medication administration;
- the date of the order;
- a diagnosis and any other medical condition(s) requiring medication, if not a violation of confidentiality or if not contrary to the request of a caregiver or student to keep confidential;
- specific directions for administration

A medication administration plan shall contain:

- the name of the student;
- a medication order from a licensed prescriber, which meets the requirements of 105 CMR 210.005(D)(1);
- the signed authorization of the caregiver
- any known allergies to food or medications;
- the diagnosis, unless a violation of confidentiality or the caregiver or student requests that it not be documented;
- any possible side effects, adverse reactions or contraindications;
- the quantity of medication to be received by the school from the caregiver;
- the required storage conditions;
- the duration of the medication order;
- the designation of unlicensed school personnel, if any, who will administer the medication to the student in the absence of the school nurse, and plans for back-up if the designated personnel are unavailable;
- plans, if any, for teaching self-administration of the medication;
- with caregiver permission, other persons, including teachers, to be notified of medication administration and possible adverse effects of the medication;
- when appropriate, the location where the administration of the medication will take place;
- a plan for monitoring the effects of the medication.

The school nurse has final decision-making authority for the provision of medication administration in the case of field trips and other short-term special school events, which may include nursing staffing, delegation of medication administration, or a combination of nursing staffing and delegation of medication administration.

Special Medication Situations:

- **Short-term prescription medications:** Those medications of ten school days or less. The pharmacy labeled container may be used as the prescriber's order. A written note from the parent must also accompany the medication, stating parental permission to dispense.
- **Over the counter medications:** Written physician and parental authorization shall also accompany these.
- **Investigational new drugs:** May be administered in school with written order by a licensed prescriber, written consent of the parent or guardian, and a bottle with pharmacy label.

The MA Department of Public Health has determined that a parent, guardian/guardian-designated responsible adult shall personally deliver all medications to be administered by the school nurse. As a reminder, the following policies must be adhered to in order that your child can safely receive medications at school.

- The Program Nurse receiving the medication shall document the quantity of the medication delivered with the parent. No more than thirty days (30) supply of medication for the student shall be stored at the school. with the exception of multidose devices, which may contain more than a 30-day supply.
- The medication must be in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container.
- In extenuating circumstances, as determined by the school nurse, the medication may be delivered by other persons, provided, however, that the nurse is notified in advance by the parent or guardian of the arrangement and quantity of medication being delivered to the school.
- All medications, including "over-the-counter" medications, will require written authorization from you and written order from your child's physician. These forms will be updated yearly.
- For short-term medications, i.e., those requiring administration for ten school days or fewer, the pharmacy labeled container may be used in lieu of the physician's order; if the nurse has a question, she may request a physician's order.
- Where possible, all unused, discontinued, or outdated medications shall be returned to the parent/guardian and return appropriately documented. If the parent is unable to pick up medications, such medications may be destroyed with parental consent by the nurse in accordance with any applicable policies of the Mass Dept. of Public Health. All medications shall be returned at the end of the school year.

- The policy will continue for those students who require emergency medications (i.e. Diastat) to be stored in their backpacks during van transport. However, the medication shall be checked and documented by the nurse upon arrival and departure.
- Private duty nurses, who travel on the van to school with individual students, must give all medications discrepancy upon arrival; the student's parents shall be notified immediately to the North River Collaborative Program Nurse to be secured during program hours.

Procedures for Administration of Prescription Drugs:

To ensure that safe medicating occurs in the school setting, the following steps shall be practiced **BEFORE** the administration of any medication:

- Positively identify the student
- Assure the proper medication as ordered
- Assure the ordered medication time
- Assure the correct dosage
- Assure the correct route of administration

Following this practice each time a medication is administered will help eliminate medication errors.

Medication Errors:

A medication error includes any failure to administer prescription medication as prescribed for a particular student, including failure to administer the prescription medication:

- Within appropriate time frames
- In the correct dosage
- In accordance with accepted practice
- To the correct student

Should a medication error result in a medication emergency, i.e., any reaction or condition related to the health or well-being of the student, the nurse shall respond accordingly. Parents must be notified of all medication errors. Should the nurse discover there is no medication to administer, that nurse shall contact the parent by telephone and notify the parent. The nurse shall ask the parent to deliver the medication to the classroom if possible for administration.

Medication errors, as defined, shall be documented by the program nurse on a Medication Error Report. These reports shall be retained by the nurse and made available to the Department of Public Health upon request. All suspected diversion or tampering of drugs should be reported to the Department of Public Health, Division of Food and Drugs. All medication errors resulting in serious illness requiring medical care shall be reported to the Department of Public Health, Bureau of Family and Community Health.

Handling, Storage, and Disposal of Prescription Medications:

- The prescription medication must be in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container and shall be stored in its original pharmacy or manufacturer labeled containers in such a manner as to render it safe and effective.
- All prescription medications to be administered by the program nurse shall be kept in a securely locked cabinet. Prescription medications requiring refrigeration shall be stored in either a locked box in a refrigerator or in a locked refrigerator maintained at temperatures between 36°F (2°C) to 46°F (8°C). Medications requiring freezer storage shall be stored in either a locked box in a freezer or in a locked freezer maintained at temperatures between -13°F (-25°C) to 14°F (-10°C).
- Access to stored prescription medications shall be limited to persons authorized to administer prescription medications. Access to keys and knowledge of the location of keys shall be restricted to the maximum extent possible.
- Parents or guardians may retrieve the prescription medications from the school at any time.

- Where possible, all unused, discontinued, or outdated prescription medication shall be returned to the parent or guardian.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

For purposes of this policy and procedure, "school" includes school-sponsored events, trips, sports events, similar events connected with school or employment. Any retaliation against an individual who has complained about discrimination, including harassment, or any retaliation against any individual who has cooperated with an investigation of a discrimination, harassment, or retaliation complaint, is also unlawful and will not be tolerated.

NRC takes allegations of discrimination, including harassment, seriously and will respond promptly to complaints. Where it is determined that conduct that violates the law and this policy has occurred, the Collaborative will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

“Discrimination” includes conduct that excludes a person from participation in, denies an individual the benefits of, or otherwise subjects an individual to different treatment on the basis of race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, military service, gender identity or expression, pregnancy and pregnancy-related medical conditions, or any other classification protected by law. Harassing conduct involving these bases can be a form of discrimination.

“Harassment” is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on: race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sex (under state law), sexual orientation, military service, gender identity or expression, pregnancy and pregnancy-related medical conditions. Harassment is prohibited by the North River Collaborative and violates the law.

Examples of harassment include:

- Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group based upon the criteria listed above.
- Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group described above because of one of the criteria listed above.
- Any action or speech that contributes to, promotes, or results in a hostile or discriminatory environment to an individual or group described above.
- Any action or speech that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent that it either (i) interferes with or limits the ability of an individual or group (as described above) to participate in or benefit from a school program or activity of the North River Collaborative; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

Many forms of harassment have been recognized as violations of the civil rights laws (including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA, Title VI, and state statutes like M.G.L. 151C) by federal courts, state courts, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

The definitions of discrimination and harassment are broad. Unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a school environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating may constitute discrimination or harassment.

Below, you will find various Civil Rights laws that govern the prohibition of discrimination and harassment. The complaint procedure for reporting complaints of discrimination and harassment based on these laws can be found below:

Various Civil Rights Laws:

Title II: *Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990*

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of educational programming and activities.

Title VI: *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on race, color, and national origin.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on disability. Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides that no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States of America shall solely, by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. All staff members are required to ensure that we are in compliance with this law and are also required to report any violation or non-compliance issues.

MGL, Ch. 76, Section 5: *Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5 (Commonly known as Chapter 622)*

Prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion and sexual orientation. The law reads as follows: "No person shall be excluded from, or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, gender, religion, disability, national origin or sexual orientation." This law makes it clear that all aspects of public-school education must be fully open and available to members of both sexes and of minority groups. No school may exclude a child from that public school on account of race, color, sex, religion or national origin of such child. On June 24, 1975, the Massachusetts Board of Education approved regulations for Chapter 622. These regulations address five areas of school policy: school admissions, admission to courses of study, guidance, course content, and extra-curricular and athletic activities.

Complaint Procedure: Reporting Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment

If any North River Collaborative student, parent, or employee believes, in good faith, that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment or any other form of harassment or discrimination described above, the individual has a right to file a complaint with the North River Collaborative. This may be done informally or formally, as described below.

Teachers or staff members who observe or receive reports of incidents of harassment or discrimination involving students shall report such incidents immediately to the student's Principal/Program Coordinator. Teachers or staff members aware of harassment or discrimination involving any employee shall report such incidents to the Principal/Program Coordinator or the Collaborative's Civil Rights Coordinator listed below.

Please note that while these procedures relate to the North River Collaborative's policy of promoting an educational and workplace setting free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, as detailed further in this policy, these procedures are not designed nor intended to limit the North River Collaborative's authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which the North River Collaborative deems unacceptable.

Complaint Procedures Contacts

Kelli O'Brien McKinnon, Human Resource Manager, North River Collaborative

Civil Rights Coordinator
198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
(781) 878-6056 Ext. 100

Any students, parent/guardian, or employee who wishes to initiate the formal complaint process may put their complaint in writing to the building Principal or Program Coordinator or the North River Collaborative Civil Rights Coordinator. Any Principal or Program Coordinator receiving such a complaint shall immediately forward the complaint to the Civil Rights Coordinator listed above, who will then begin the formal procedure described below.

Any teacher or other employee who receives a formal complaint of discrimination or harassment shall immediately forward the complaint to the building Principal or Program Coordinator or Civil Rights Coordinator. Any Principal or Program Coordinator receiving such a complaint shall immediately forward the complaint to the Civil Rights Coordinator listed above, who will begin the formal procedure described below.

The Civil Rights Coordinator shall handle the investigation of a formal complaint or oversee the investigation of a formal complaint unless the Executive Director chooses to investigate the complaint or designates another person to investigate it on his/her behalf. Any complaint about an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. Any complaint about the Executive Director should be submitted to the chairperson of the Board, who should consult with legal counsel concerning the handling and investigation of the complaint.

Disciplinary Action

If it is determined that harassment or discrimination has occurred by a student or employee, then disciplinary action may be taken appropriate to the circumstances regardless if it is handled through the informal or formal resolution process. Such action may include consequences up to and including termination of employment for staff and up to and including suspension or expulsion for students.

Internal Complaint Procedure

A. Informal Resolution of Discrimination and Harassment Complaints

Before initiating the formal procedure, the student/parent/employee may wish, if possible, to resolve the complaint on an informal basis through discussion. A student or parent can discuss the issue with the building Principal or Program Coordinator. An employee can discuss the issue with his/her Principal or Program Coordinator.

The person receiving the complaint shall attempt, within his/her authority, to work with the individual to resolve the issue fairly and expeditiously within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution from the informal process, or if he/she does not choose informal resolution, then he/she can begin the formal complaint procedure described below.¹

Any resolution or disciplinary action taken by a Principal or Program Coordinator as a result of an investigation or discussion during the informal resolution process should be put to writing and forwarded to the Civil Rights Coordinator.

B. Formal Resolution of Discrimination and Harassment Concerns:

A student, parent, or employee who is not satisfied with the informal resolution process or who chooses not to participate in the informal resolution process may initiate the formal complaint procedure at any time by putting

¹ Informal resolution may not be appropriate in all cases, including but not limited to more severe or egregious allegations of discrimination or harassment.

the complaint to the Principal/Program Coordinator or Civil Rights Coordinator. An employee, at the request of the student, may put the complaint in writing for the student. Principals or Program Coordinators who receive written formal complaints should immediately forward the complaint to the Collaborative Civil Rights Coordinator.

What the complaint should include

The student/parent/employee's complaint should include: the name of the individual making the complaint, the name of the individual aggrieved, the name of the individual(s) accused of committing the harassing or discriminatory practice, the location of the school/department where the alleged discriminatory practice occurred, the basis for the complaint, witnesses (if any) and the corrective action the student/parent/employee is seeking. If the complaint does not contain this information, the Principal/Program Coordinator or Collaborative Civil Rights Coordinator will ask the complainant for this information.

When to file a complaint

Efforts should be made to file such a complaint within twenty (20) calendar days after the alleged discriminatory practice occurred in order for an expeditious investigation to be conducted, unless extenuating circumstances exist. However, the North River Collaborative will investigate any complaint no matter when it is filed.

What will happen after the complaint is filed

Promptly after receiving the complaint, the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee, as permitted pursuant to Section III(B)(i) of this section) will conduct the necessary investigation, including making good faith efforts to gather all relevant evidence for consideration. In the course of his/her investigation, the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee shall contact those individuals that have been referred to as having pertinent information related to the complaint. This process will generally include, at a minimum, contacting the complainant; and the person against whom the complaint was filed and/or the appropriate authority involved; interviewing witnesses; and considering relevant documentation. During this process, complainants will have the opportunity to present witnesses and other relevant evidence to the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee conducting the investigation.

The Civil Rights Coordinator or designee should use appropriate interim measures during the investigation of a complaint to ensure that a complainant is free from discrimination and/or harassment during the pending investigation.

Barring extenuating circumstances, the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee, will complete the investigation as soon as practicable and normally not later than thirty (30) working days. When more than thirty (30) working days is required for the investigation, the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee shall inform the complainant that the investigation is still ongoing.

After completing the formal investigation of the complaint, the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee shall make a decision on the complaint and shall inform the complainant and the person(s) against whom the complaint was made of the results of the investigation in writing. In the case of a student who is found to have violated this policy, the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee will take appropriate action. In the case of an employee who is found to have violated this policy, the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee may refer the matter to the Principal/Program Coordinator or Executive Coordinator for appropriate action. In all cases, if the Principal/Program Coordinator is the designee, then he/she can make a decision on the complaint, inform the complainant and the person(s) against whom the complaint was made of the results in writing, and take appropriate action if necessary provided they first notify the Civil Rights Coordinator once the complaint is made.

What you can do if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint procedure

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, he/she can appeal this finding to the Executive Director within five working days.

The Executive Director will review the information considered by the Civil Rights Coordinator or designee, collect any additional information he/she believes is necessary to make an informed decision and shall issue a

written decision to the complainant and the person against whom the complaint was made. Again, strict timelines cannot be set for conducting the investigation because each set of circumstances is different. However, the Executive Director will make sure that the complaint is handled as quickly as feasible and will strive to complete the investigation within ten (10) working days.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, or if he/she does not choose either of the internal resolution processes, he/she may follow the external complaint procedure described below.

Executive Director Contact

Paul Tzovolos, Executive Director, North River Collaborative
198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
(781) 878-6056 Ext. 100

External Complaint Procedure

Any student, parent, or employee who chooses not to use the Collaborative's internal complaint procedures or who is not satisfied with the Collaborative's internal complaint procedures may file a complaint of discrimination or harassment with an appropriate state or federal agency. Some of these agencies (MCAD and EEOC) have a short window in which a claim can be filed (300 days).

1. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: 617-727-2202
TTY: 877-521-2172

OR

MA Commission Against Discrimination
Boston, MA 02108
Telephone: 617-994-6000
TTY: 617-994-6196

2. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of parents:

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: 617-727-2202
TTY: 877-521-2172

3. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of employees:

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: 617-727-2202
TTY: 877-521-2172

OR

MA Commission Against Discrimination
Boston, MA 02108
Telephone: 617-994-6000
TTY: 617-994-6196

OR

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114
Telephone: 617-727-7441
TTY: 617-878-9819

General Complaint Policies

- No reprisals or retaliation shall be invoked against any person for processing, in good faith, a complaint, either on an informal basis or formal basis, or for participating in any way in these complaint procedures.
- No reprisals or retaliation shall be invoked against any person who, in good faith, has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in any investigations, proceeding, or hearing of a complaint or for otherwise participating in any way in these complaint procedures.
- Whenever possible, a conference should be scheduled during a time that does not conflict with regularly scheduled work and/or school programs.

- The North River Collaborative will work with an individual who files a complaint of discrimination or harassment, which includes conducting an investigation and holding conferences, in order to fairly and expeditiously resolve the complaint.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT POLICY

This policy complies with the revised physical restraint regulations at 603 CMR 46.01 et seq., effective on January 1, 2016

Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. Physical restraint shall only be used when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Furthermore, any such physical restraint shall be administered so as to prevent or minimize any harm to the student.

This policy shall be reviewed annually and provided to NRC staff and made available to the parents/guardians of enrolled students. Nothing in this policy precludes any teacher, employee, or agent of NRC from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

1. Methods for Preventing Student Violence, Self-Injurious Behavior, and Suicide

- A. Student behavior and emotional needs are addressed in a proactive manner through Functional Behavioral Assessments, Behavior Support Plans, or Individual Education Plans. These tools are used in an effort to change behavior prior to it becoming unmanageable in the school environment.
- B. De-escalation techniques specific to the student may be incorporated in the student's Behavior Support Plan or Individual Education Plan and utilized by staff. De-escalation techniques may include, but are not limited to:
 - Identification of behaviors that could lead to a crisis.
 - Use of verbal and nonverbal techniques to defuse hostile behavior and resolve a crisis before it can become violent, self-injurious or suicidal.
 - Use of therapeutic counseling/positive behavior supports.
 - Assessment of risk levels and consideration of issues that impact decision making.
 - Use of disengagement skills to avoid injury if behavior becomes physical.
 - Use of respectful, humane, non-coercive interventions.
 - Use of positive reinforcement embedded throughout.
 - Use of a least restrictive approach that requires a range of options. This includes a series of evidence-based interventions that can be flexibly adapted to the specific circumstances.

2. Methods for Engaging Parents/Guardian

- A. NRC informs parents/guardians about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure through the intake process and student handbooks.
- B. Any parent with concerns about the use of physical restraint in any program within NRC may request a meeting with the program Principal/Program Coordinator or the Executive Director to discuss such concerns. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint of a student may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may also make use of the Grievance Procedure described in Section 10, below.

3. Alternatives to Physical Restraint and Methods of Physical Restraint

- A. Alternatives
Physical restraint shall not be used unless less intrusive behavior interventions and supports have been unsuccessful or deemed inappropriate by school staff. Such alternative interventions include,

but are not limited to:

- Positive behavioral interventions
- Verbal redirection
- Verbal directive to cease behavior
- Opportunity for a break
- De-escalation techniques
- Application of earned tokens/rewards/reinforcers
- Opportunity for time-out
- Physical escort to a separate space for supervised therapeutic intervention/time out
- Individual Behavior Support Plan

B. **Methods of Physical Restraint**

Physical restraint shall not be used as a means of discipline or punishment: if the student cannot be safely restrained due to medical contraindications which have been documented by a licensed physician and provided to the Collaborative; as a response to property destruction, disruption, refusal to comply with rules or staff directives, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Physical restraint shall not be used as a standard response for any individual student. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.

The following forms of physical restraint shall only be administered by trained personnel, using only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or other member(s) of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

These include holds and restraints utilized through *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®* as developed by Crisis Prevention Institute including the *Child Control Position* and the *Full Body Control Position* and holds and restraints utilized through *Safety Care™* as developed by Quality Behavioral Services including the *One Person Stability Hold*, the *Two Person Stability Hold and Escort*, and the *Chair Stability Hold*.

The staff member(s) administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation. Staff shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student during restraint, and the student shall be immediately released from the physical restraint if the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress.

All physical restraints must terminate as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger, or if the student indicates that he/she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress. If any physical restraint approaches twenty (20) minutes, staff will obtain the approval of the Program.

Coordinator/Principal or his/her designee to continue the restraint based upon the student's continued agitation. All physical restraints shall be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.00.

4.

Prohibited Forms of Restraint

- A. Medication restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion restraint, as defined in 603 CMR 46.02, are prohibited in the programs of NRC.
- B. Any form of physical restraint used in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00 is prohibited in NRC.
- C. NRC will not use prone restraint unless the circumstances below have been documented in advance. Prone restraint, as defined in 603 CMR 46.02, shall only be permitted under the following, limited circumstances:
 - The student has a documented history of serious self-injury and/or injuries to other students or staff;
 - All other forms of physical restraint have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or

the safety of others.

- There are no medical contraindications documented by a licensed physician;
- There are no psychological or behavioral contraindications documented by a licensed mental health professional;
- The student's parent/guardian has provided voluntary, informed, written consent to the use of prone restraint; and
- The Program Coordinator/Principal, or designee, has provided written approval.

5. **Staff Training, Physical Restraint Reporting, and Follow-Up Process**

A. **Staff Training:**

- All staff/faculty will receive training regarding the Collaborative's physical restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment.
- Required training for all staff will include review of the following:
 - a) NRC Physical Restraint and Behavior Support Policy
 - b) School/Program-level physical restraint procedures, including the use of time-out as a behavior support strategy;
 - c) The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing physical restraint;
 - d) Interventions which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and alternatives to restraint;
 - e) When in an emergency, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety consideration, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used;
 - f) Administering physical restraint in accordance with medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student.
 - g) Identification of NRC staff, or staff of the public school district in which the NRC program is housed, or NRC staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section (a) (iii)) in the use of physical restraint.
- **In-Depth Training**
 - h) At the beginning of the school year, the Program Coordinator/ Principal will identify those designated staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.
 - i) Designated staff members shall participate in approximately sixteen (16) hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint, with at least one refresher training annually.
 - j) In-depth training will include:
 1. Appropriate procedures for preventing the need for physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint;
 2. A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of students that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
 3. The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
 4. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;
 5. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and

6. Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects.
- B. Physical Restraint Reporting:
- Report to the Program Coordinator/Principal:
 - a) Staff shall verbally inform the Program Coordinator/Principal of any physical restraint as soon as possible and by written report within one (1) school day.
 - b) The Program Coordinator/Principal or designee shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of physical restraint.
 - Report to Parent/Guardian of Physically Restrained Student:
 - c) The Program Coordinator/Principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent/guardian of the physical restraint within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - d) The Program Coordinator/Principal or designee shall provide the parent/guardian a written report of the physical restraint within three (3) school days. This written report may be provided via email, if the parent/guardian has provided the Collaborative with an email address.
 - e) The parent/guardian and/or student may respond to the Program Coordinator/Principal or designee to comment on the use of the physical restraint and the information in the written report. The parent/guardian and/or student may also pursue the Grievance Procedure described in Section 10, below.
 - Report to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE):
 - f) Whenever a physical restraint results in injury to the student or any school community member, the Collaborative shall send a copy of the written report to DESE within three (3) school days. A copy of the ongoing physical restraint log from the past thirty (30) days will also be provided to DESE.
 - g) NRC shall also report physical restraint data annually to DESE, as directed by DESE.
 - Report to Law Enforcement and Other State Agencies:
 - h) Nothing in this policy prevents any individual from reporting a crime to the appropriate authorities;
 - i) Nothing in this policy prevents any individual from exercising their responsibilities as a mandated reporter under M.G.L, c. 119, §51A.
- C. Follow-Up Procedures:
- After a student is released from a physical restraint, staff shall implement follow-up procedures, including:
 - a) Reviewing the incident with the student, as appropriate, to address the behavior that precipitated the physical restraint;
 - b) Reviewing the incident with the staff member(s) who administered the physical restraint to ensure proper restraint procedures were followed; and
 - c) Consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the physical restraint, if any.

6. **Procedures for Periodic Review of Physical Restraint Data**

- A. The Program Coordinator shall conduct a weekly review of physical restraint data to identify individual students who have been restrained multiple times during the week, and if any such student(s) is identified, will convene a review team to assess the student's needs.
- B. If such a student(s) are identified, the Program Coordinator shall convene a review team to assess the student(s) needs. The Program Coordinator will determine the composition of the review team that at a minimum will include the Special Education Teacher and Board-Certified Behavior Analyst associated with the student. A record of the review will be made available to parent/guardian upon request. At minimum, the review team's assessment will include:
 - The written reports of restraints

- Parent/student comments on such reports if any
 - Analysis of circumstances leading up to each restraint
 - Factors that may have contributed to escalation of behavior
- A written plan of action to reduce or eliminate future use of restraint; this may include recommendation for Functional Behavior Assessment and/or Behavior Support Plan
- C. The Program Coordinator will conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data to consider patterns and determine whether modifications to the school's policies, additional staff training, or other action are appropriate to reduce restraints.

7. **Procedures to Meet and Ensure Reporting Requirements of 603 CMR 46.06**

- A. The staff who administered the restraint will verbally inform the Program Coordinator as soon as possible and by written report within 24 hours. The Program Coordinator maintains an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint. The Program Coordinator will convene a review team in the event of multiple restraints. In the event of injury sustained by staff or students during a physical restraint, the Program Coordinator will complete an injury report within 3 days and review with the Executive Director or Designee and file the report with DESE. The Program Coordinator will follow internal North River Collaborative guidelines to report staff injury.
- B. Program staff receive annual training to work with children, adolescents, or adults who may exhibit challenging or dangerous behavior. This training includes prevention and behavior support, time-out, de-escalation techniques, alternatives to physical restraint, and types of permitted physical restraints. A Board-Certified Behavior Analyst works in conjunction with the classroom teacher to monitor individual student Behavior Support Plans and the application of protocols in Learning Center programs.

8. **Procedure for Providing Timely Oral and Written Notice to the Parents/Guardians of any Student Who Undergoes Physical Restraint**

Staff who administered the restraint will verbally inform the Program Coordinator as soon as possible and in writing within 24 hours. Staff who administered the restraint will notify Parents/Guardian within 24 hours and will generate a written report within 3 working days.

9. **Procedure for the Use of Time-out**

- A. As part of de-escalation strategies, NRC programs may use time-out for the purpose of calming. The teacher or BCBA, if on site, shall be responsible for implementing such procedures when necessary. During the time-out, the 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 purpose of calming; doors to such space shall remain unlocked. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed. Use of time-out may be included in the student's Behavior Support Plan.
- B. The Program Coordinator will give approval for time-out lasting more than 30 minutes. In the absence of the availability of the Program Coordinator, the Program Coordinator will assign on-site designee to give approval. The designated staff (BCBA, Nurse, Lead Educator, Special Education Teacher) will have behavior training. Staff will report the use of time-out procedure to the Program Coordinator as soon as possible and within 24 hours and provide a written report including length of time, reasons for the intervention, who approved the procedure and who monitored the student during the time out. The Program Coordinator will review time-out data to consider patterns and determine whether modifications to the school's policies, additional staff training, or other action are appropriate to reduce use of time-out, and therefore minimize time away from learning.

10. **Grievance Procedures**

This grievance procedure is established to ensure methods are in place for receiving and investigating complaints regarding physical restraint practices. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint of a student may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may file a complaint by utilizing this procedure:

The complaint must be submitted in writing or on audiotape to the Program Coordinator/Principal or Executive Director. The Program Coordinator/Principal will meet with the complainant within ten (10) school days of receipt of the complaint and will notify the Executive Director. If the Program Coordinator/Principal is implicated in the complaint, the meeting and investigation will be conducted by the Executive Director.

A thorough investigation will be conducted which may include interviewing witnesses, staff, and/or the student; reviewing all written documentation leading up to and pertaining to the incident and all reports filed with either the Program Coordinator/Principal or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

A written report of the investigation will be developed and provided to the complainant.

POLICY ON ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE

The North River Collaborative Board prohibits the possession, use, purchase or sale, or consumption by students of alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs on school/Collaborative property or at any school/Collaborative function. "Tobacco products" are any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed, or ingested by any other means, including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff, electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes, electronic pens, electronic hookah, liquid nicotine, "e-liquids" or other similar products (regardless of nicotine content) that rely on vaporization or aerosolization. "Tobacco product" includes any component or part of a tobacco product. "Tobacco product" does not include any product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration either as a tobacco use cessation product or for other medical purposes and which is being marketed and sold or prescribed solely for the approved purpose.

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages upon arrival to school, during attendance at school, or participation in a Collaborative/school-sponsored activity, will be removed from that activity and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students and their belongings are subject to search as soon as they enter the school building. If there is reasonable suspicion that a student is either under the influence of substances and/or in possession of a substance or paraphernalia during school hours, Independence Academy reserves the right to search that student's belongings and person. The student may be assessed clinically and/or medically to determine if further action is required or medical attention is necessary. In the event that a student or their possessions are subjected to a search where drugs and/or alcohol are found, the Program Coordinator will notify the parent/guardian immediately and the student will be suspended immediately from school and may be terminated from Independence Academy depending on the circumstances of the event. If necessary, the Program Coordinator shall notify the local police. Any student found to be under the influence during the school day will be required to be dismissed immediately by a parent/guardian or may be transported for further medical attention. If it is confirmed that any student shares substances with another student during the school day, that student will be immediately withdrawn from the program.

This policy shall be posted on the NRC and IA websites, and notice shall be provided to all students and parents of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the Collaborative shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

PROCEDURE ON POSSESSION, USE, DISTRIBUTION OF, OR BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL AND/OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

➤ User in School

When the school reasonably believes that a student has used or is using alcohol or controlled substances (when not prescribed for the student by a physician and/or not administered in compliance with the Medication Policy) on school grounds, at school-sponsored functions, or on transportation provided by the school system, the parent/legal guardian of the student and the sending school will be informed, and a conference must be held immediately. A suspension of up to ten (10) school days may be imposed subject to a possible termination or longer suspension pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 sect. 37H for drugs and 37H3/4 for alcohol.

➤ **Possession**

The parent/guardian of any student who has controlled substances or alcohol in his/her possession on school grounds or at a school-sponsored function will be called to the school immediately for a conference. The school will also notify the proper contact person at the police department. A suspension of up to ten (10) school days will be imposed subject to a possible termination or longer suspension pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 sect. 37H for drugs and 37H3/4 for alcohol.

➤ **Distribution or Sale in School**

The parent/guardian of any student selling or distributing alcohol or a controlled substance on school grounds, at school-sponsored functions, or on transportation provided by the school system shall be called to school immediately; the police will also be notified. A suspension of up to ten (10) school days will be imposed subject to a possible termination or longer suspension pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 sect. 37H for drugs and 37H3/4 for alcohol.

In the event that the parent/guardian decides that the student needs assistance from a physician, clinic, counselor, drug rehabilitation program, or any other professional or professional agency which can help the student address his/her use or possession of alcohol or controlled substance, the school will forego application of the policy so as to assist the parent/guardian and the student, rather than penalize the student.

The policies proposed here are designed to ensure assistance for users and protection of the school population from sellers. We feel that no single answer fits all cases and that each must be judged individually. However, as much as we are concerned with the individual and his/her welfare, our responsibility also includes the welfare of the entire student body. This must be a basic consideration in deciding each case.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

All members of Independence Academy are expected to respect school property at all times. Destruction of the property belonging to the Academy, staff members, the student or other students will not be tolerated and appropriate consequences up to and including payment for damages and criminal charges will be enforced.

Students are personally liable (responsible) for their actions which result in the loss or damage of property of others or the school, and for behavior which interferes with the rights, civil rights, and education of other students. Any student experiencing or witnessing such violation of rights or property is requested to report such incidents to a member of the faculty or administration.

PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM KNOWN ALLERGENS

All school personnel must be knowledgeable about hypersensitivity reactions and anaphylaxis so they are better able to respond to a student who may have a severe allergic reaction.

The North River Collaborative, in collaboration with the parent, host school, classroom, teacher, program nurse, and student, shall make every attempt to keep the student away from the causative allergen.

The following guidelines shall be used with known allergies:

➤ **Parents' Responsibility:**

1. The parent shall inform the school of their child's allergies.
2. The parent shall provide the school with physician's instructions for administering medication.

3. The parent shall provide the school with an up to date injection kit and keep them current.
- Program Nurse Responsibility
 1. The program nurse shall consult with, and provide information to, the parents, student, and school personnel regarding children with allergies.
 2. The program nurse shall participate in in-service and auto-injector training.
 3. The program nurse shall assist in developing emergency response plans.
 4. The program nurse shall refer known cases of anaphylaxis to teachers, staff, and school administrators.
 5. The program nurse shall assure an up-to-date injection kit is available and kept in a safe, locked, yet accessible place.
 6. The program nurse shall develop an emergency protocol for each anaphylactic student, to be posted in the classroom.
- Teacher Responsibility
 1. The teacher shall encourage students not to share lunches or trade snacks, and choose allergy free foods for classroom events.
 2. The classroom teacher shall choose work materials that are allergy-free.
- Staff Responsibility
 1. All personnel shall assist in creating an allergy-free environment for the student with known allergies.
 2. All staff should be able to recognize symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction.

All students who have an anaphylactic reaction should be transported to the hospital for medical attention even if the epinephrine has been administered and the individual appears to be recovering.

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA) NOTIFICATION

PPRA affords parents of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)–

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and

3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)

•Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –

1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

North River Collaborative has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. North River Collaborative will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. North River Collaborative will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. North River Collaborative will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the Collaborative has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this direct notification requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

PROVISION AGAINST BUSES IDLING

Buses and vehicles are not to be left idling at schools. Whenever a bus or vehicle arrives, the driver is to secure the bus or vehicle and shut the engine down as soon as possible. No bus or vehicle will be left at idle in excess of five minutes of anticipated idling time.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Students may either bring their own lunch from home or they may receive free lunch at Independence Academy provided through the Brockton Public Schools lunch program. For more information please visit <https://www.bpsma.org/schools/school-lunch-program> for more information. Any student who meets the free and reduced lunch requirements may apply for free and reduced lunch by completing the necessary forms. Lunchtime is “open campus”. Students can be outside of the building without leaving school grounds during lunch break as long as staff supervision is available. However, a student’s privilege to be outside during lunch can be revoked by a staff member at any time.

Students will be allowed to have food/beverages in the classroom at the teachers’ discretion. The Program Coordinator reserves the right to revoke food/beverage privileges for any student. For more information, please see the Massachusetts Standards and Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-29 effective August 1, 2012.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Searches or seizures involving the student’s person or personal property may be conducted when a reasonable suspicion exists. Circumstances which may lead to reasonable suspicion to conduct a student search include any suspicion that a student has violated the law or the rules of the school. Illegal items (weapons, drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, stolen property, etc.) or other items reasonably determined to be a concern to the safety and security of the school and its members may be seized by the program staff. Searches, which could involve a metal detector wand, may be conducted when there is reasonable cause to suspect the presence of drugs or weapons on school property or on any person within the school environment. Items which are used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be temporarily removed from the student’s possession. This includes, but is not limited to, radios, cell phones, laser pointers, iPods/iPads, and any other unauthorized electronic device. Given the nature of the work at Independence Academy, specifically around substance use and recovery, sometimes it is necessary to conduct random searches when there is reasonable suspicion of a potential violation of the expectations of the school

Policy on Search and Seizure

➤ School Property

Desks are the property of the school and are subject to periodic inspection under the authorization of the Program Coordinator or his/her designee at any time. The following rules shall apply to the specific search of school property assigned to a specific student (desk, etc.) and the seizure of any illegal items found therein:

1. Search of an area assigned to a student should be made in the presence of a witness, and when possible, in the presence of the student.
2. Illegal items (weapons, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverages, stolen property, etc.) or other items reasonably determined to be a threat to the health and safety or security of the student and/or others, may be seized by the Collaborative authorities.

➤ Reasonable Cause

When reasonable cause exists, a student and his/her property (coat, purse, backpack) may be searched under authorization of the Program Coordinator or his designee. A student search is reasonable if:

1. There are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student has violated or is violating either the law or rules of the school.
2. The search itself is conducted in a manner reasonably related to its objectives and limited to areas and objects that reasonably could be expected to contain the items being sought given the nature of the infraction and given the age and sex of the student.

➤ Temporary Removal

Items which are used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be temporarily removed from the student's possession. This includes radios, cell phones, laser lights, beepers, iPods/iPads, or

any other unauthorized electronic devices.

➤ **Search Warrant**

A student search, including desks, backpacks, jackets and lockers, may be done by police or other law enforcement officials if there is a valid search warrant or, in certain cases, if a valid arrest was made. Such searches must be carried out in the presence of a school official.

SERVICE ANIMALS

The NRC does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The NRC will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

NRC acknowledges its responsibility to permit students and/or adults with disabilities to be accompanied by a “service animal” in its buildings, in classrooms, and at school functions, as required by the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and its implementing regulations found at 28 CFR Part 35.

For purposes of this policy, a “service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability”. The regulations further state that “a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability”. Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets.

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the Superintendent and Program Coordinator/Designee.

- The animal must be “required” by the individual with a disability. The animal must be “individually trained” to do work or a task for the individual with a disability. The task performed by the service animal must address one of the following needs for the disabled individual: physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual and other mental disability.
- For students on an IEP or 504 plan, if a request is made to allow the student to have a service animal at school or at a school-sponsored function, the IEP or 504 Team will consider the request, and whether it can provide services and/or accommodations that would serve the stated purpose of the service animal. If the Team determines that it can meet the student’s needs and proposes alternative accommodations and/or services, then the request for the service animal will not be added to the IEP or 504 Plan.
- The North River Collaborative is responsible for providing a safe learning environment for students, teachers and staff. If the presence of a service animal poses a health or safety risk to another member of the school community, as documented by a physician, the school will weigh the needs of all parties and will put forth a plan to provide reasonable accommodations.
- Only a dog or a miniature horse may qualify as a service animal pursuant to Title II of the ADA. No other species of animal, whether wild or domestic, will be permitted in schools as a “service animal”.
- Owners of a service animal must provide annual proof that the animal is up to date on all of its required vaccinations.
- All service animals must be spayed or neutered.
- All service animals must be treated for and kept free of fleas and ticks.
- All service animals must be kept clean and groomed to avoid shedding and dander.
- A service animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler’s control.

- Owners of service animals are liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to other students, staff, visitors, and/or property. The student's parent or legal guardian will be required to sign a waiver of liability prior to the service animal coming to the school or to the school sponsor's activity.
- Removal of a Service Animal: A school administrator may ask an individual with a disability or his parents to remove a service animal from a school building, a classroom, or from a school function if any one of the following circumstances occurs:
 - a. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it.
 - b. The animal is not housebroken.
 - c. The animal's presence would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the service, program, or activity.
- The North River Collaborative is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal, including walking the animal or responding to the animal's need to relieve itself.
 - d. The school district is not responsible for providing a staff member to walk the service animal or to provide any other care or assistance to the animal.
 - e. Students with service animals are expected to care and supervise their animal. In the case of a young child or a student with disabilities who is unable to care for or supervise his service animal, the parent is responsible for providing care and supervision of the animal. Issues related to the care and supervision of service animals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis in the discretion of the building administrator.

The Executive Director of the North River Collaborative or designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance animal in school facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (TITLE IX)

Under Federal law, The North River Collaborative has a commitment to maintaining a workplace and educational environment where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination such as harassment on the basis of sex, are not tolerated. Discrimination, including harassment, is contrary to the mission of the North River Collaborative and its commitment to equal opportunity in education.

The North River Collaborative does not discriminate against students, parents, employees, or the general public. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to the North River Collaborative, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of the North River Collaborative on account of sex (M.G.L. c. 76 §5). Additionally, the North River Collaborative does not tolerate harassment based upon sex.

Definition of Terms:

Under state law, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's advancement (quid pro quo harassment);
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions;
- Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties; or
- The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Under Federal law, sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct ("quid pro quo harassment");
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity ("hostile environment harassment"); or

- “Sexual assault” as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), “dating violence” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), “domestic violence” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or “stalking” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30)

If an allegation potentially fits under the Federal law definition, it will be examined under Federal and state law concurrently using the below procedures.

The Collaborative will promptly address all allegations of sexual harassment of which it has actual knowledge, and which are alleged to occur in the school’s programs and activities, including locations, events, and/or circumstances in which the Collaborative exercises substantial control, in a way that is not deliberately indifferent.

The following additional definitions apply:

- “Actual knowledge” means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to any employee of the Collaborative, except that this standard is not met when the only official of the Collaborative with actual knowledge is the respondent (where the respondent is an employee). Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability or constructive notice is insufficient to constitute actual knowledge. Complaints will be addressed whenever the Collaborative has actual knowledge of the allegation.
- “Administrative leave” means placing an employee on leave pursuant to state law. Nothing in the Title IX regulations precludes a recipient from placing a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a grievance process, provided that Massachusetts laws are followed.
- “Consent” means cooperation in act or attitude pursuant to an exercise of free will of a conscious person with informed knowledge of the nature of the act or actions. A current or previous relationship shall not be sufficient to constitute consent. Consent will not be found when submission to the act or actions is undertaken due the influence of fear, fraud, forcible compulsion, threats, and/ or the complainant possessed any legal incapacity to consent at the time of the act or actions. Consent is a defense to all types of sexual harassment.
- “Complainant” means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
- “Deliberate indifference” means a response to sexual harassment that is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.
- “Emergency removal” means the suspension or expulsion of a student on an emergency basis, consistent with state law. Nothing in the Title IX regulations precludes a Collaborative from removing a respondent from the Collaborative’s education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the Collaborative follows all procedures under Massachusetts law, undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.
- “Formal complaint” means a document filed in writing by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment and requesting that the Collaborative investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.
- “Respondent” means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
- “Supportive measures” means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient’s educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the

campus, and other similar measures. The Collaborative must maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the recipient to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures

Complaints and Reports of Sexual Harassment

Upon receiving actual notice of alleged sexual harassment without a formal complaint, staff members must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator must then contact the complainant within five school days of receiving the complaint and do the following:

- Discuss and offer supportive measures;
- Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- Explain that supportive measures may be received with or without filing a formal complaint;
- Determine whether the complainant wishes to file a formal complaint; and
- Explain to the complainant the purpose of filing a formal complaint.

The Title IX Coordinator must document in writing the supportive measures offered/provided or why no supportive measures were offered/provided. Complainant and respondents must be offered supportive measures even if they do not file a formal complaint

If the complainant declines to file a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator must consider whether to sign a formal complaint and start an investigation despite the complainant's preferences. This decision may be appropriate when safety or similar concerns lead the Collaborative to conclude that a non-deliberately indifferent response to actual knowledge of Title IX sexual harassment could reasonably require the Collaborative to investigate and potentially sanction a respondent. A Title IX Coordinator's decision to override the complainant's decision not to file a formal complaint must be documented in writing along with an explanation of why this decision was necessary in order to avoid deliberate indifference. Formal complaints may also be filed directly with the Title IX Coordinator by a complainant in person, by mail, by email, or by telephone at any time, including during non-business hours.

The contact information for the Title IX Coordinator is:

Kelli O'Brien McKinnon, Human Resources Manager, North River Collaborative
Civil Rights Coordinator
198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
(781) 878-6056 Ext. 107

The complaint may be written by the complainant, or it will be reduced to writing by either the school employee who receives the complaint, the Program Coordinator, or the Title IX Coordinator. Whether the complaint is reduced to writing by a student, parent, or staff member, the written complaint may, but is not required to, include the name of the complainant, the name of the alleged victim (if different), the name of the respondent, the location where the alleged discriminatory action occurred, the basis for the complaint, witnesses (if any), and the corrective action the complainant is seeking. This information will be made on or transferred to a Title IX complaint form maintained by the Collaborative.

There is no time limit or statute of limitation on timing to file a formal complaint. However, at the time of filing a formal complaint, an alleged victim must be participating or attempting to participate in a program or activity of the Collaborative. Additionally, the Collaborative has discretion to dismiss a formal complaint where the passage of time would result in the Collaborative's inability to gather evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility, or when the Collaborative loses responsibility for the respondent (e.g., the respondent no longer attends or is employed by the Collaborative).

If the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined in this policy even if proved, did not occur in the Collaborative's education program or activity, or did not occur against a person in the United States, then the Collaborative must dismiss the formal complaint under these procedures but

could investigate it under other policies and procedures. The Collaborative must send written notice of any dismissal.

Investigations to allegations of sexual harassment will be prompt and the formal process will be completed within a sixty school day timeframe where feasible. There may be a temporary delay of the grievance process or the limited extension of time frames for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action. Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

Written Notice

Before any investigation can begin, the Collaborative must send written notice to both parties including sufficient details. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known. The written notice must include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. The written notice must inform the parties that an impartial investigation, including any hearings and resulting disciplinary proceedings, shall be conducted by an individual that receives not less than annual training on issues relating to sexual misconduct, investigatory procedures and hearing procedures to protect the safety of students and employees and promote accountability. The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may inspect and review evidence. The written notice must inform the parties that the Collaborative's code of conduct prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If additional allegations are added during the course of the investigation, additional written notice must be provided.

Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, after notice has been issued, the Title IX Coordinator should also consider offering the parties an option for informal resolution (e.g., mediation). Informal resolution may only be offered after a formal complaint is filed, and the parties must give written consent to engage in this process. Informal resolution may not be used if the allegation is against an employee respondent. Facilitators of informal resolution will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator and must not be biased against any of the parties.

Informal resolution is entirely voluntary. Complainants may elect to pursue formal procedures at any step in the process of making their complaint, even if informal resolution has already begun. Similarly, respondents may elect to follow formal procedures and decline informal resolution.

If the complainant and the respondent feel that their grievances have been sufficiently addressed via informal resolution, then no further action needs to be taken. This voluntary conversation must occur within five (5) school days after receiving the complaint of discrimination or harassment, unless both parties agree otherwise. The results of an informal resolution shall be maintained by the facilitator, in writing.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution from the informal process, or if he/she does not choose informal resolution, then he/she can begin the formal complaint procedure described below.

Investigation

If informal resolution is not offered to or accepted by the parties, the Title IX Coordinator will designate an investigator and a decision maker, who will not be the same person. The Title IX Coordinator is free to cast himself/ herself as the investigator.

The investigator must not be biased against any of the parties at the outset of the investigation. The investigator will be responsible for interviewing parties and witnesses, finding facts, and making determinations related to

credibility, all of which will go into a written report. The investigator must avoid all questions that are protected by legal privilege, unless the privilege has been waived, and should avoid asking about the complainant's sexual history unless it is directly relevant to prove consent to the conduct at issue or to prove that the conduct was committed by someone other than the respondent.

Prior to completion of the investigative report, the Collaborative will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report.

The investigator must avoid making any final determinations of responsibility for sexual harassment.

Findings should be written in a factual way in an investigative report. Credibility determinations may not be based on an individual's status as complainant, witness, or respondent. The parties have 10 days to submit a response to the investigative report.

During the investigative process and any further hearings, complainants and respondents have a right to have advisors of their choice participate in all aspects of the proceedings. The Collaborative will provide both parties with written notice of investigative interviews, meetings, and hearings, with sufficient time to prepare.

The investigation will not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

Findings of Responsibility

After the investigator has completed the investigation, the designated decision-maker will be assigned to determine final responsibility or lack thereof for violating Title IX. The decision-maker must not be biased against any of the parties at the outset of this process.

Before the Collaborative can determine responsibility, an investigative report will be sent to the parties and the decision-maker will offer both the complainant and respondent the opportunity to submit proposed relevant, written questions to ask of any party or witness, to respond to questions posed by another party, and to offer additional limited follow-up. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

After this process is complete, the decision-maker will create a written determination regarding whether sexual harassment has occurred using a preponderance of the evidence standard.

A "preponderance of the evidence" means that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred. The decision-maker shall further recommend what action, if any, is required. If it is determined that sexual harassment occurred, the Collaborative will take steps to prevent the recurrence of the harassment and correct its discriminatory effect on the complainant and others if appropriate.

The written determination must be issued to both parties simultaneously and must include:

- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;

- Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- Conclusions regarding the application of the recipient's code of conduct to the facts;
- A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions the recipient imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity will be provided by the recipient to the complainant; and
- The Collaborative's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal (a copy of, or direct reference to, this policy will suffice).

If there is a finding that sexual harassment occurred, the Collaborative will provide remedies to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the Collaborative's education program or activity. Such remedies may include supportive measures.

Formal disciplinary actions may be imposed in the event that the preponderance of the evidence indicates a violation of this policy, up to and including expulsion or termination. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with due process rights under State law and any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

As indicated above, these procedures do not limit the Collaborative from removing a student or employee from a program or activity on an emergency basis based on immediate threats to people's physical health or safety or placing an employee on administrative leave during the pendency of the investigation.

Records

A record will be maintained for a period of seven years of any actions, including supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment and Collaborative staff will document the basis for the Collaborative's conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent.

Training

The Collaborative will ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of the recipient's education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

The Collaborative will ensure that decision-makers receive training on any technology to be used in interviews and on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.

The Collaborative also must ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, as set forth in paragraph (b)(5)(vii) of this section.

Any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment. Training materials will be posted on the Collaborative's website.

Appeals

Any party may appeal the decision in writing to the Executive Director within five (5) school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure or a dismissal on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and

- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

The Collaborative will notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties. Both parties will have a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The Executive Director or designee, as a further impartial decision-maker, will review the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the investigation and the conclusions, and issue written findings to both the complainant and respondent within thirty (30) school days of the appeal.

Contact information for the Executive Director:

Paul Tzovolos, Executive Director, North River Collaborative
198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
(781) 878-6056 Ext. 100

External Grievance Procedure

Any student, parent or employee who chooses not to use the Collaborative's internal grievance procedures or who is not satisfied with the Collaborative's internal grievance procedures may file a complaint of discrimination or harassment with an appropriate state or federal agency.

1. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division Boston, MA 02109 Telephone: 617-727-2202 TTY: 877-521-2172	OR	MA Commission Against Discrimination Boston, MA 02108 Telephone: 617-994-6000 TTY: 617-994-6196
--	----	--

2. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of parents:

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: 617-727-2202
TTY: 877-521-2172

3. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of employees:

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division Boston, MA 02109 Telephone: 617-727-2202 TTY: 877-521-2172	OR	MA Commission Against Discrimination Boston, MA 02108 Telephone: 617-994-6000 TTY: 617-994-6196
--	----	--

OR

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114
Telephone: 617-727-7441
TTY: 617-878-9819

Retaliation

Complainants and those who participate in the complaint resolution process or who otherwise oppose in a reasonable manner an act or policy believed to constitute discrimination are protected from retaliation by law and Collaborative policy. The coordinator or designee will inform all involved individuals that retaliation is

prohibited, and that anyone who feels that they have experienced retaliation for filing a complaint or participating in the resolution process should inform the coordinator. The coordinator will investigate reports of retaliation and, where retaliation is found, take separate remedial and disciplinary action.

STUDENT RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Right to Educational Records

Any student, regardless of age, shall have the right pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 34A to receive a copy of their transcript. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations afford parents and students fourteen (14) years of age or older, ("eligible student") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's educational records as soon as possible, and no later than ten (10) calendar days after the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Program Director a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Program Director will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place for the records to be inspected. The eligible student or parent may have the student record inspected or interpreted by a third party of their choice. Such third party shall present specific written consent of the eligible student or parent, prior to gaining access to the student record.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records that the parent or eligible student believed to be inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write to the Program Director, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records. Authorized school personnel include an administrator or clerical person who needs to access the record for administrative reasons, employees of the Collaborative who provide services to the student or contractors of the Collaborative who provide services to the student. It includes contractors, electronic/online vendors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to the sending school district and officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

Rights Of Parents with No Physical Custody

It is necessary for divorced parents to submit a copy of the custody agreement or order so that the school may identify which of the parents has physical custody of the child. If a parent does not have physical custody of a child, then the parent will not be allowed to access the records of his/her child unless the parent has submitted the following three documents to the Program Director:

- a written request submitted annually to the principal to access the records of his/her child,
- after the school receives these documents, the school can allow the non-custodial parent to have access to the child's records only after the school has notified the custodial parent and twenty-one days has elapsed from this notification. During that twenty-one day period, the custodial parent can obtain a court order restricting access to the child's records or he/she can submit a copy of any outstanding protective orders; if such orders are provided to the school, then the school cannot release records. The following orders would prohibit access to the non-custodial parent:
 - the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
 - the parent has been denied visitation, or

- the parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
- there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

Directory Information Notice

NRC has designated certain information contained in the education records of its students as directory information for the purpose of the FERPA and the Students Record Regulations at 603 CMR 23.00 et seq. The following information regarding the student is considered directory information: (1) name, (2) address, (3) telephone number, (4) date and birthplace, (5) major field of study, (6) dates of attendance, (7) degrees, honors and awards received, (8) post high school plans of the student. Directory information may be disclosed for any purpose in its discretion, without the consent of a parent or an eligible student.

Parents of students and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent or student, or as otherwise allowed by the FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

In 2002 Congress passed legislation that requires high schools to provide to military recruiters, upon request, access to secondary school students and directory information on those students. Both the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year 2002 reflect these requirements. In accordance with those Acts, military recruiters are entitled to receive the name, address, and telephone listings of juniors and seniors in high school. Providing this information is consistent with the FERPA, which protects the privacy of student education records. Student directory information will be used specifically for armed services recruiting purposes and for informing young people of scholarship opportunities.

Any parent or eligible student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file written notification to this effect with the Program Coordinator of the Learning Center, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370 by September 15th of the current school year.

In the event the parent does not notify the school of the parent's/student's decision to opt out by the time required, it is assumed that neither a parent of a student or eligible student objects to the release of the directory information designated.

Student Confidentiality/Records

Every student's educational and personal information is protected by laws of confidentiality. For the purpose of releasing information contained in student records, the Learning Center Programs will follow the guidelines as outlined in the Student's Records Regulations at 603 CMR 23.00 et seq. and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Authorized Collaborative personnel may access records of students to whom they are providing services when such access is required in the performance of their official duties without the consent of the student or parent. Generally, however, release of a student's records requires a signed permission from the parent or guardian, except in those circumstances listed as exceptions in the student records regulations (i.e. court order). When a student leaves the Learning Center Program all student records will be returned to the sending school district.

THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

There are several counselors that work at the school who work closely together to meet the individual needs of students. Although each counselor focuses on different aspects of our work, the counselors are all accessible to

students during the day. To ensure that counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotypes on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and homelessness, all counselors will encourage students to consider programs of study, course, and occupational opportunities on the basis of individual interests, abilities and skills. All counselors will examine testing materials for bias and counteract any found bias when administering tests and interpreting test results. Counselors will communicate effectively with ELs and disabled students and facilitate their access to all programs and services offered by the district. In addition, counselors ensure that ELs have the opportunity to receive guidance and counseling in the language they understand. Counselors will support students in educational and occupational pursuits that are nontraditional for their gender.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation provided to students by North River Collaborative (NRC) is a privilege and is not guaranteed to any student. Independence Academy and NRC reserve the right to revoke the transportation of any student if the student is unable or unwilling to follow the expectations on the van. Students who are transported to and from school by North River Collaborative must notify the transportation office (781-878-6056 x4) as soon as possible if they are going to be absent, dismissed or not need a ride to and/or from school on a particular day. Failure to notify the transportation department may result in losing the privilege of using this transportation. In the event that a student utilizing North River Collaborative Transportation has five (5) consecutive unexcused absences, their transportation will be put on hold until a meeting is held with the principal or designee. A parent/guardian does not have the authority to take a student's transportation off of hold.

Students are not allowed at any time and under any circumstances to travel on a North River Collaborative van that they are not assigned to. Additionally, students will not be allowed to be picked up by the van or dropped off by the van at any location other than the location that they have been assigned. Students traveling on the same van cannot be picked up/dropped off at each other's location.

Students are not allowed to be picked up from school by anyone that is not on their emergency contact list without prior approval from a parent/guardian.

VIDEO RECORDING POLICY

NRC has a responsibility to maintain discipline and protect the safety, security, and welfare of our students and staff, while at the same time safeguarding NRC facilities, vehicles, and equipment. As part of fulfilling this responsibility, NRC authorizes the use of video/digital surveillance cameras in NRC vehicles, in the program and common areas of NRC buildings, and in classrooms located in district schools. Digital or video recorder placements shall be based on the presumption and belief that students and staff have no reasonable expectation of privacy in public areas that occur in plain view of other students, staff, or bystanders.

Signs shall be posted on NRC vehicles, property, and classrooms to notify students, staff, and visitors that video or digital cameras may be in use. Students and others will be held responsible for any violations of school rules, NRC Personnel Policies and Procedures, or law recorded by the cameras.

NRC acknowledges that there exists an expectation of privacy in various locations within and on the North River facilities including within the lavatories, changing rooms/locker rooms, and in the nurse's offices. Cameras shall not be used to monitor inside such areas.

The Executive Director shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding the use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, as follows:

- Access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators (Executive Director or his/her designee, Program Coordinator or his/her designee)
- A video recording used for security purposes in school district buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of North River Collaborative. The right to inspect such recordings is limited

to North River personnel and as required by law.

- Any type of activity detected through the use of video surveillance cameras that might constitute a violation of the law will be reported immediately to the appropriate law enforcement officials by North River Collaborative, consistent with Federal and State law.
- All video recordings will be stored in a secure location to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality.
- In exigent circumstances, such as a building lock down or shelter in place situation or when there are other circumstances in connection with a health and safety emergency, security camera recordings may be accessed in real time by law enforcement at a location most convenient to the involved law enforcement agencies.
- Security cameras will record video only and will not record audio.

Video recordings (with the exception of those segments that constitute evidence of a crime being committed or used in connection with student or staff discipline) will be maintained for as long as there is sufficient storage space on the surveillance server or for thirty (30) days, whichever is longer, and then deleted. All such recordings shall be treated as confidential and shall not be released to individuals or agencies outside of the Collaborative except through a lawfully issued subpoena, court order or as otherwise required by law.

All video recordings will be stored in a secure location to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality. Any individual who tampers with or destroys a video surveillance camera or any part of the video surveillance system, or otherwise misuses their surveillance system, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as possible criminal charges.

NRC reserves the right to record using audio subject to applicable law.

VISITOR POLICY

To protect the confidentiality of our students, visitors to Independence Academy are generally not allowed. Exceptions to this rule are given on an individual basis and must be approved by the Program Coordinator. In order to minimize interruptions and distractions for all students, visits must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. Individuals not adhering to this policy may be liable for prosecution for trespassing as governed by G.L. Chapter 266, Section 120.

Liaison personnel from each student's sending school district are urged to meet with students to review progress on a regular basis and such meetings will be scheduled at appropriate times during the school days so as to have the least disruptive impact to the student's academics.

WELLNESS POLICY

The North River Collaborative's Wellness Policy is consistent with Federal and State laws and regulations that promote curriculum and programs for nutrition standards, nutrition promotion and education; and other school-based wellness activities.

North River Collaborative is committed to serving healthy meals to children. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural preferences and specialty diet needs.

North River Collaborative complies with 105 CMR 225.000: The Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools, and national standards per the Health, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010. The School Nutrition Standards apply to the primary sources of competitive foods and beverages, including all foods and beverages sold as a la carte items in cafeteria, school stores, school snack bars, and vending machines. The time frame to which the nutrition standards apply is the period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day, except the nutritional standards shall apply at all times to competitive foods or beverages sold on school grounds through vending machines.

Students are not permitted to have food delivered or receive any outside food during school hours.

The North River Collaborative is committed to offering school meals that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations;
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans);
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily;
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of student;
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names;
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students;
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal;
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers;
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas;
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.);
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas;
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas; and
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

The Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools do not apply to foods and beverages in curriculum related classroom-based activities, special school-sponsored events, field trips, and fundraising activities, including bake sales. These exempted items may not be sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during the meal service.

The sales of competitive foods and beverages are not used as a reward or incentive, except as documented in a child's Individual Education Plan or 504. It is encouraged that foods and beverages sold or provided during activities held beyond the school day offer options which meet the nutrition standards.

North River Collaborative will not be less restrictive than the regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections [a] and [b] of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act [42 U.S.C. 17979] and section 9[f][1] and 17[a] of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act [42 U.S.C. 1758[f][1], 1766[a] in reimbursing school lunches.

North River Collaborative must make substitutions in lunches and afterschool snacks for students who are considered to have a disability and whose disability restricts their diet. Substitutions must be made on a case by case basis only when supported by a written statement of the need for substitution(s) that includes recommended alternate foods. Such a statement must be signed by a licensed physician.

School-based wellness initiatives may address other health, safety, social, and emotional issues, including but not limited to, risky behaviors, substance abuse, tobacco prevention, bullying prevention and stress reduction. Collaboration with families and community is encouraged to support children's nutrition, lifelong activity, and healthy lifestyle.

North River Collaborative embraces a comprehensive school physical activity program. In addition to their regularly scheduled physical education classes, North River School encourages opportunities for all students to have activity breaks, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum where appropriate. Administering or withholding physical activity as a form of punishment and/or behavior management is discouraged.

The goals and implementation of a K-12 sequential physical education curriculum align with Massachusetts General Laws and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The physical education program is offered to all students, including those with disabling conditions, chronic health conditions, and special needs. Participation in the physical education program is in compliance with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law.

North River Collaborative is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. North River School strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on North River's property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information North River Collaborative is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of North River School to protect and promote students' health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with North River School's wellness policy.

Food advertising and marketing is defined as an oral, written, or graphic statement made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, North River School will consider replacing or updating scoreboards or other durable equipment over time so that decisions about the replacement include compliance with the marketing policy.)
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by North River School.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for ensuring that North River Collaborative meets the goals of the Wellness Policy and is charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that schools meet the goals of the Wellness Policy. Compliance with the Wellness Policy and implementation procedures will be ensured by the Program Coordinator.

The North River Collaborative has a School Wellness Advisory Committee to encourage development of a program that actively promotes wellness in schools and to maximize the school district's opportunities for grant awards. Students, parents/guardians, teachers, food service professionals, school health professionals, school administrators, and other interested community members can be engaged in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing Collaborative nutrition and physical activities policies through the School Wellness Advisory Committee.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race,

color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program Information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, or by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. This letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

North River Collaborative

School-Wide Education Service Plan

In accordance with Chapter 76, Section 21, North River Collaborative Program Coordinators shall ensure that students who are suspended from school for 10 or fewer consecutive days, whether in or out of school, shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension, to make up assignments and earn credits missed including, but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, papers and projects missed.

North River Collaborative principals and program coordinators shall provide educational services for all students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than 10 consecutive school days, whether in or out of school, with agreement from the student's sending district. The responsibility for education services ultimately rests with the student's school district, not the educational collaborative, since the student continues to be enrolled in the district while attending the collaborative program. However, an educational collaborative and the student's sending district may agree for North River Collaborative to provide educational services, in which case the principals and program coordinators shall notify the student and their parent of the opportunity to receive education services and arranging such services at the time that the student is expelled or placed in long-term suspension. The services will be based on and provided in a manner consistent with the academic standards for all students.

In the event that North River Collaborative provides the educational services, it offers the following options:

1. Tutoring
2. Online Learning

North River Collaborative's obligations assume that the student is still a student at North River Collaborative. In the event of a student termination the Program Coordinator will try every available means to maintain the student's placement until the sending school district has had sufficient time to search for an alternative placement.

In the case of a planned termination, the school will notify the sending school district of the need for an IEP review meeting. The school district will arrange a Team meeting and will provide all parties, including the parent, and student if appropriate, notice of this meeting ten days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. The meeting will be held for the purpose of planning and developing a written termination plan for the student.

The plan shall describe the student's specific program needs, the short and long-term educational goals of the program, and recommendations for the follow-up and/or transitional services.

The Team chair shall thoroughly explain termination procedures to the student, the parents, and other stakeholders, including the sending district's administrator of special education and officials of the appropriate human service agency, if applicable.

The written termination plan shall be implemented in no less than thirty days unless the team agrees to an earlier termination date. If unable to maintain the student's placement, tutoring or online learning will be offered to the student until such time an alternate placement is identified.

In the case of an emergency termination, which shall be defined as circumstances in which the student presents a clear and present threat to health and safety of him/herself or others, the North River Collaborative program and the sending school district shall follow the procedures under 603 CMR 28.09 (12).

If the student is suspended for more than ten consecutive days a termination takes effect, tutoring or online learning will be offered to the student until such time an alternate placement is identified.

The North River Collaborative program involved in the incident will immediately notify by telephone and by letter the student's parents, any state agency involved in the student's care or program placement and the sending school district of the circumstances in which the student needs to be terminated.

Upon telephone notification of the emergency termination, the sending school district is expected to take responsibility for the student and to immediately convene an emergency Team meeting or planning to address an appropriate course of action and new placement for the student prior to termination.

If the sending school district requests, termination may be delayed up to a maximum of two calendar weeks from the date of notification in order to allow the emergency team meeting or planning to occur. Emergency termination will not be delayed beyond two calendar weeks without the express consent of both the sending district and the North River Collaborative program.

APPENDIX B

North River Collaborative

Student Media Waiver 2026-2027

Dear Parent/Guardian,

At Independence Academy we are committed to providing the best possible academic experience for all of our students. We strongly believe that we have an academic environment unlike any other school. We also pride ourselves on creating a culture of understanding and support. The staff is constantly receiving training and sharing resources that help us better serve our students both academically and socially/emotionally. We are always making attempts to share what we are doing both inside and outside of the classroom with parents, community members and friends of the school. Additionally, we believe that our school will be the best opportunity for many students to be supported in their recovery. Therefore, we also want to share with the world what we are doing at IA in the hopes that other students and families will find us and utilize our resources.

Media Permission

____ I give permission for my student to appear on the school's website or the website of a community partner/organization, any newspaper, printed promotional material, multimedia presentation, or through the Internet (Facebook, Twitter, video, blog) originating from Independence Academy. The appearance could include name, photo, video, and/or resemblance. I also grant permission for Independence Academy to publish educational and creative content created by my student (blogs, pictures, videos, etc.). It is understood that Independence Academy is not responsible for inappropriate content posted by my student or another person on any social media site that may be used in school (i.e., Instagram, YouTube, Blogs, etc.).

____ I do not give permission for my child to appear in any newspaper, website, social media account, or through the internet or print material originating from Independence Academy.

Student Name	_____
Student Signature	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	_____
Date	_____

Like us on facebook: Independence Academy – @iarecovery

Follow us on twitter: @IA_RecoveryHS

Website: www.iarecoveryhs.org

APPENDIX C

Independence Academy

Student Handbook Acknowledgement 2026-2027

I have reviewed the 2025-2026 Independence Academy Student Handbook posted on the school's website at www.iarecoveryhs.org (under "Current Students") and understand that I have the opportunity to ask questions or ask for clarification regarding all of the information, policies and procedures in the handbook at any time. If needed, I can request a hard copy of the handbook (in print form) to be mailed to me directly and that copies are also available at the school at all times. We acknowledge and agree that the student and parent/guardian will abide by the provisions incorporated in the handbook. These provisions also include the following Highlighted Sections:

- Hazing Conduct Policy
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use Prohibited Use
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Electronic Device Policy
- Physical Restraint and Behavior Support Policy
- Student Responsibilities: The Five Core Values
- Medication Policy
- Maintenance of Sobriety & Recovery Stability

By signing below, I indicate that I understand the rules and expectations of Independence Academy and agree to abide by the policies set forth.

Student Name _____
Student Signature _____
Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date _____

APPENDIX D

Independence Academy Upper Course Student Expectations 2026-2027

I understand that the policies and expectations detailed in the Independence Academy Student Handbook (www.iarecoveryhs.org/current-students/) are in full effect and any violation of those policies could result in the immediate removal of my student from the Upper Course. Additionally, all students attending the Upper Course must adhere to the fundamental student expectations listed below.

- The Upper Course hours are 8:40 AM-12:30 PM, Monday - Friday. Students must be here on time (8:40AM) and ready to work. Excessive tardiness may result in the discontinuation of a student's enrollment in the program.
- Students cannot exceed 2 unexcused absences through the 10-day period of the Upper Course. Students who have 3 unexcused absences will be unenrolled.
- Any student that would like to remain at the school after 12:30 PM must receive approval from the principal.
- Students who are suspected to be under the influence of any substance while attending the Upper Course will be sent home and may be subjected to a search of their person and their belongings. Continued reasonable suspicion of being under the influence or in possession of substances or drug paraphernalia will result in unenrollment from the program.
- All students attending the Upper Course must consent to a search of their belongings and their person when reasonable suspicion exists that the student is under the influence or in possession of substances and/or is suspected of sharing, selling, or distribution of substances to another student. Students who refuse a search when there is reasonable suspicion, will be withdrawn from the program.
- Any student found to be selling, trading, sharing, and/or in any other way distributing substances to another student will be withdrawn from the program immediately.
- All students attending the Upper Course are expected to participate in all aspects of the program. Students who continuously refuse to engage in the activities set forth by the Independence Academy staff will be unenrolled from the program.
- Any student who exhibits disruptive, avoidant, confrontational, or defiant behavior on a consistent basis will be unenrolled from the program. Examples of avoidant behavior include excessive bathroom use, time out of class, and phone use.

By signing the handbook acknowledgement form, I indicate that I understand the rules and expectations of Independence Academy's Upper Course program and agree to abide by the policies set forth.

APPENDIX E

Standards of Community Excellence

These “Standards of Community Excellence” are necessary in ensuring that all students attending IA programs have an opportunity to access, benefit from, and engage in the mission of the school. It is expected that all IA students create a culture within the school that supports all students. These standards are:

- The student upholds the school’s policies and expectations regarding substance use.
- The student treats all members of the community with respect and dignity.
- The student contributes to an emotionally and physically safe school environment.
- The student welcomes all students to Independence Academy through their words and actions.
- The student communicates respectfully with staff and is open and honest about challenges within the community.
- The student attends school consistently, arriving on time and maintaining at least 85% attendance outside of excused absences.
- The student is on time and meaningfully engaged in classes throughout the school day.
- The student makes a good-faith effort to engage in the learning and growth process of Independence Academy.
- The student actively works with staff and peers to address and resolve conflict, including taking responsibility and repairing harm when needed.
- The student respects the personal, emotional, and recovery-related boundaries of others.

APPENDIX F

2026-2027 Academic Calendar

INDEPENDENCE ACADEMY 2026-2027 CALENDAR																																																																																																																		
JULY '260 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td></tr></table>							S	M	T	W	Th	F	S				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		1-3No School 6Upper Course/ 45 Day Summer Start Date 7IA Cohort Summer Start Date					6IA Cohort Summer End Date 13Upper Course/ 45 Day Summer End Date 17-21No School 24No School/Staff Orientation 25Students First Day					AUGUST '265 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr><tr><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>							S	M	T	W	Th	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
			1	2	3	4																																																																																																												
5	6	7	8	9	10	11																																																																																																												
12	13	14	15	16	17	18																																																																																																												
19	20	21	22	23	24	25																																																																																																												
26	27	28	29	30	31																																																																																																													
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
						1																																																																																																												
2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																																																																																												
9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																																																																																												
16	17	18	19	20	21	22																																																																																																												
23	24	25	26	27	28	29																																																																																																												
30	31																																																																																																																	
SEPTEMBER '2621 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>							S	M	T	W	Th	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				7No School/Labor Day 25Term 1 Progress Reports					OCTOBER '2621 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>					S	M	T	W	Th	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31													
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
		1	2	3	4	5																																																																																																												
6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																																																												
13	14	15	16	17	18	19																																																																																																												
20	21	22	23	24	25	26																																																																																																												
27	28	29	30																																																																																																															
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
					1	2																																																																																																												
3	4	5	6	7	8	9																																																																																																												
10	11	12	13	14	15	16																																																																																																												
17	18	19	20	21	22	23																																																																																																												
24	25	26	27	28	29	30																																																																																																												
31																																																																																																																		
NOVEMBER '2616 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>							S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						2No School/Prof Dev 11No School/Veterans Day 25Early Release Day 26-27No School (Thanksgiving Recess)					DECEMBER '2617 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>					S	M	T	W	Th	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31																
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7																																																																																																												
8	9	10	11	12	13	14																																																																																																												
15	16	17	18	19	20	21																																																																																																												
22	23	24	25	26	27	28																																																																																																												
29	30																																																																																																																	
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
		1	2	3	4	5																																																																																																												
6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																																																												
13	14	15	16	17	18	19																																																																																																												
20	21	22	23	24	25	26																																																																																																												
27	28	29	30	31																																																																																																														
JANUARY '2719 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30/31</td></tr></table>							S	M	T	W	Th	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30/31	1No School/New Years Day 15Term 2 Ends (90) 18No School/MLK Day					FEBRUARY '2715 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr><tr><td>28</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>					S	M	T	W	Th	F	S		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28																				
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
					1	2																																																																																																												
3	4	5	6	7	8	9																																																																																																												
10	11	12	13	14	15	16																																																																																																												
17	18	19	20	21	22	23																																																																																																												
24	25	26	27	28	29	30/31																																																																																																												
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
	1	2	3	4	5	6																																																																																																												
7	8	9	10	11	12	13																																																																																																												
14	15	16	17	18	19	20																																																																																																												
21	22	23	24	25	26	27																																																																																																												
28																																																																																																																		
MARCH '2721 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr><tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>							S	M	T	W	Th	F	S		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				15No School/Prof Dev 26No School/Good Friday 31Term 3 Ends (135)					APRIL '2717 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>					S	M	T	W	Th	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30														
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
	1	2	3	4	5	6																																																																																																												
7	8	9	10	11	12	13																																																																																																												
14	15	16	17	18	19	20																																																																																																												
21	22	23	24	25	26	27																																																																																																												
28	29	30	31																																																																																																															
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
					1	2																																																																																																												
3	4	5	6	7	8	9																																																																																																												
10	11	12	13	14	15	16																																																																																																												
17	18	19	20	21	22	23																																																																																																												
24	25	26	27	28	29	30																																																																																																												
MAY '2720 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr><tr><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>							S	M	T	W	Th	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						7Term 4 Progress Reports 31No School/Memorial Day					JUNE '278 <table><tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>					S	M	T	W	Th	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30										
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
						1																																																																																																												
2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																																																																																												
9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																																																																																												
16	17	18	19	20	21	22																																																																																																												
23	24	25	26	27	28	29																																																																																																												
30	31																																																																																																																	
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S																																																																																																												
		1	2	3	4	5																																																																																																												
6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																																																												
13	14	15	16	17	18	19																																																																																																												
20	21	22	23	24	25	26																																																																																																												
27	28	29	30																																																																																																															
School Year Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9:00AM - 3:35PM Weds 9:00AM - 12:15PM							Summer Hours: IA Cohort: July 7 to Aug 6 Tues and Thurs 9:00am to 12:30pm Weds 9:00am to 3:00pm Upper Course/Foundations Cohorts: July 6 to Aug 13 Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs 9:00am to 12:30pm					INDEPENDENCE ACADEMY Program Coordinator: Ryan Morgan For updated calendar information throughout the year please visit: www.iaarecoveryhs.org 508-510-4091					North River Collaborative Advancing the Success of All Students																																																																																																	
First/Last Day of Summer or School Year							No School					Early Release(ER) Day					Mid/End of Term					PD Day																																																																																												