READS ACADEMY
STUDENT HANDBOOK

44 Bedford St. Middleboro PreK-6 and 7-12+ Campus
&
West Bridgewater Middle-Senior High School 9-12 Classroom



2026-2027

READS Academy
Therapeutic Day School Programs

READS Academy, PreK-12+
44 Bedford St.
Middleborough, MA 02346
(508) 947-3634

READS Academy at West Bridgewater Middle-Senior High School
155 West Center Street
West Bridgewater, MA. 02379

READS Academy Administration Team

Amy Saraiva M.Ed., CAGS
Program Director, Grades PreK-12+
asaraiva@readscollab.org

Missy Schortmann Sorrenti M.Ed., CAGS
Assistant Program Director, Grades PreK-12+
msorrenti@readscollab.org

Carrie Smith, LICSW
Clinical Director, PreK-6
csmith@readscollab.org

Doreen Souza, LICSW
Clinical Director, 7-12+
dsouza@readscollab.org

Neal Klayman
Team Chair
rklayman@readscollab.org

The Parent/Guardian signature form is on page 76.

Important Information

If you require this, or any other document, translated into a different language, please notify the READS Academy Program Director or Secretary.

Si vous avex besoin d'une traduction de ce document ou d'un autre document, veuillez le signaler au directeur du lycee.
(French)

Si necesita una traduccion de este documento u otros documentos, por favor notifique Ud. A la directora de la escuela.
(Spanish)

Se necessita isto, ou qualquer outro documento tradiziu numa linguagem differente, por favor notifica o director de escoloa.
(Portuguese)

READS Collaborative

Non- Discrimination Policy: Notice of Equal Opportunity

READS Collaborative reaffirms that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, homelessness, status as a veteran, limited English-speaking ability, or any other protected class under the law in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its program or activities. Consistent with M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5, READS Collaborative also affirms the commitment to maintain a school and work environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, homelessness, status as a veteran or limited English-speaking ability. Any harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, homelessness, status as a veteran or limited English-speaking ability will not be tolerated and will be punishable to the full extent of the law.

An employee who has concern for the well-being or safety of any student for **any reason** shall report their concern immediately to a supervisor, the Title IX Coordinator or the Executive Director.

If you have any questions about the collaborative's policy, please contact the Title IX Coordinator: **Alisa Poh, Title IX Coordinator**, READS Administration Office, 105 East Grove St., Middleboro, MA 02346 Telephone: 508-947-3634 x1123; apoh@readscollab.org.

The Title IX Coordinator will receive all formal complaints regarding discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, homelessness, status as a veteran or limited English-speaking ability or any other protected class under the law.

1. Formal Resolution Process: A formal resolution process will occur when (a) a report of a discrimination or harassment is made in writing to the Title IX Coordinator. Refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy for allegations of sexual harassment.
2. The Title IX Coordinator will document your complaint and immediately notify the Executive Director and personnel responsible for investigating the complaint. An investigation will be conducted promptly. The Executive Director will make a final determination on whether there has been a violation of the Collaborative's policy within ten (10) days after the conclusion of the investigation. If there has been a violation, the Executive Director will take action.

If you should have a complaint or concern that there has been discrimination or harassment, you may also utilize the following procedure:

- Informal Resolution Process: If an informal process is sought, the program director may meet with the complainant and other persons who might have information about the issue promptly and will attempt to resolve the issue.
- Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to: The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education, 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor Boston, MA 02109-3921 Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172.

READS Academy Program Mission

"The mission of READS Academy is to facilitate a student's personal growth educationally and emotionally, and to provide a structure for developing academic skills and social-emotional learning competencies."

READS Academy Goals

- Gather academic, vocational, psychological, environmental and behavioral data that is necessary to develop an appropriate educational planning for the student with clearly identified transition criteria.

- Periodically assess students' academic, social-emotional, behavioral, vocational, and intellectual functioning to measure growth over time.

- Utilize a team approach to identify and implement an individualized plan for students, pulling together all parties necessary to coordinate successful development and implementation of the student plan.

- Teach the norms and values of society and help students learn to accept and respect social differences through teaching, modeling and role-playing appropriate responses that promote equity and respect for diversity.

- Provide individually designed academic instruction to meet the expectations of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and accommodate every student's learning style.

- Provide immediate, consistent and specific feedback regarding behavior skills to students and assist them to identify and practice alternate behavioral responses.

- Provide consistent and concrete feedback to parents and other concerned professionals regarding the student's progress, successes and challenges

- Provide a therapeutic setting which supports the student's emotional and social development, provides encouragement and instruction to learn new skills, and opportunities to practice new skills in a safe structured environment that can be generalized to all life domains

READS Creed

We, the students and staff at READS Academy:

- ⭐ Accept differences and believe in each other's strengths,
- ⭐ Strive to learn and achieve to the best of our abilities,
- ⭐ Encourage every member of our school community to make positive connections,
- ⭐ Persevere through tough times, and
- ⭐ Treat each other with respect, kindness, honesty and acceptance to foster a safe learning community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Academic Honesty Page 9
Admissions Procedures Page 9
Anti-Hazing Policy & Procedures Page 10
Arrivals / Dismissals Page 12
Assessment and Monitoring of Student Progress Page 12
- READS Analytics Overview Page 12
- Academic Skills: Data Collection (Grades 7-12+) Page 13
- Behavioral Skills: Data Collection (Grades PreK -12+) Page 14
- Behavioral Support Plans Page 15
- Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports Page 15
- SEL Competencies: Data Collection (Grades PreK-12+) Page 16
- Employability Skills Data Collection (Grades 7-12+) Page 18
- Attendance Page 19
- Excused Absences Page 19
- Dropout Prevention Page 20
- Notification Requirements for Unexcused Absences Page 20
- Notification Requirements for Extended Absences Page 20
- Alternative Educational Resources Page 21

Bathroom Use Page 21
Bullying Prevention & Intervention Page 21
Breakfast/Lunch Program Page 24
Classroom Team Collaboration Page 24
Classwork Page 24
Collaboration / Communication Page 25
Complaints Page 25
Counseling Page 25
Curriculum Page 26
Disciplinary Philosophy: Prevention of Exclusion and Suspension Page 26
- Disciplinary Procedures Page 26
- Disciplinary Offenses 37H or 37H1/2 Page 27
- Disciplinary Procedures 37H or 37H1/2 Page 27
- Disciplinary Procedures Under 37H ¾ Page 27
- Alternative Remedies Page 27
- Detention Page 28
- Suspension Policy Page 28
- In School Suspension Page 28
- Out of School Suspension: Short Term Page 30
- Out of School Suspension: Long Term Page 30
- Expulsion Page 30
- Emergency Removal Under 37H3/4 Page 30
- Emergency Termination of Enrollment Page 31
- Notification of Suspension Under 37 H3/4 Page 31
- Program Director/Principal Hearing Page 32
- Program Director/Principal Hearing – Short Term Page 32
- Program Director/Principal Hearing – Long Term Page 33
- Executive Director Hearing Page 34

- Exclusion from Extra Curricular Activities Page 35
- Education Services and Academic Progress Page 35
- Student Discipline/Data Reports Page 36
- Manifestation Determination Page 36

Student Expectations Page 38

- Dress Code Page 38
- Field Trips Page 39
- Grading Policy Page 39
- Graduation Requirements Page 40
- Homework Page 41
- Honor Roll Page 41
- MCAS Participation Page 42
- Personal Hygiene Page 42
- Personal Property Page 42
- Physical Education Program Page 42
- Smoking/Vaping Page 44
- TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION Page 45
  - Personal Electronics/Cell Phone Page 45
  - Technology Policy Page 46
  - Telephone use Page 46
- Time-Out/Student Separation Procedures Page 47
- Transition Criteria/Support Page 48
- Transportation Page 49
- Vandalism / Destruction of School Property (Refer to Discipline Policy) Pg 49
- Weapons /Assault of Educational Personnel (Refer to Discipline Policy) Pg 49
- Work Based Learning Page 52

Emergency Procedures Page 52
English Language Learner Students Page 53
Extended School Year: Summer Program Schedule Page 54
Incident Reports Page 54
Interns / Volunteers Page 54
Legal Status Page 54
Legal System Interventions Page 55
Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse Page 56
Medication Policy Page 57
Parent/Guardian Consents/Involvement Page 58
Physical Restraint Overview Page 59
Physical Restraint Protocol Page 60
Re-Entry After Hospitalization Page 62
Runaway Students Page 62
School Schedule/Extended School Year Schedule Page 63
Sexual Harassment Policy Page 64
Snow Days Page 75
Student Records Page 75
TEAM Meetings Page 76
Visitors Page 76

Guardian Signature Page Page 77

ACADEMIC HONESTY

READS Academy supports a learning environment where honesty is valued. Academic dishonesty compromises this standard and will not be tolerated.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism: The act of taking ideas, writings, etc. from another source and passing them off as one's own.
- Giving or receiving information during quizzes, tests, or examinations.
- Collaboration on assignments or reports after being directed otherwise.
- Unauthorized use, receipt, or distribution of quiz, test, or examination items or questions.
- Unauthorized use or misuse of technology and/or copying or misuse of computer disks.
- Copying another student's homework or classroom assignment.
- False information included in college, scholarship, or financial aid applications.
- Cheating in any form.

A violation of this policy will result in the following consequences:

- Parent/guardian notification.
- A failing grade (0) for the academic assignment.
- The student's work will continue to be closely assessed and monitored
- May result in consequences, as determined by classroom staff and the Program Director.
- Other appropriate action may be taken in accordance to the specific circumstances of the incident.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

The intake team consists of the Program Director and/or Clinical Director, a counselor, and a teacher. Other members of the team include the student, the parent/guardian, a representative from the sending school district, representatives from human service agencies working with the student, or any party invited by the parent.

Students and their parent/guardian(s) are provided opportunities to tour the program. In addition, students are provided with an opportunity for a visit day(s) that is mutually agreed to by parent/guardian(s) and Academy staff.

Upon admission, parent/guardian is provided a packet of information that includes:

- Releases of Information, including School Health Records and medical records as appropriate, release form for photos, and Emergency Contact/Release Information.
- Consent Forms for Student Handbooks, Medication Administration, updated guidance on Seclusion, Emergency Medical Intervention, Internet Policy, and confirmed transportation information.
- Course of Studies
- Acknowledgement of policies and procedures including but not limited to, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, Anti- Hazing Policy (Grades 9-12), and all other

policies that require notification/acknowledgement of receipt in accordance with DESE regulations.

The decision for admission into the program is reached through an agreement between all members of the IEP Team. An IEP and Team Determination of Placement must be developed and signed prior to the student's official enrollment.

The student's Massachusetts School Health record must be reviewed by the school nurse prior to admission. The school nurse monitors all student immunization records, in accordance with current Department of Public Health Regulations. Detailed information is available in the READS Academy Health Manual, or by contacting the school nurse directly.

Admission to the high school: The student's most current high school transcript, report cards, and MCAS scores must be submitted by the sending district and reviewed by READS Academy 7-12+ Clinical Director prior to admission to assure appropriate grade placement of any student entering the high school.

ANTI-HAZING POLICY & PROCEDURES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Anti-Hazing Law
Chapter 269: Section 17. Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

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

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.
Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Chapter 269: Section 18. Failure to report hazing

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

Chapter 269: Section 19. Copy of Secs. 17 to 19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report

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

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

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

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

In compliance with An Act Prohibiting the Practices of Hazing, M.G. L. c 269 17-19, and the state anti-hazing reporting regulations, 603 CMR 33.00, READS Academy has adopted the following policy, which was approved by the READS Collaborative Board of Directors on November 18, 2010.

- READS Academy students will be provided with a copy of the Anti-Hazing Law at the beginning of each school year, or at the time of admission
- READS Academy students will be required to sign an acknowledgement of receiving a copy of law, and an agreement that they will comply with the law
- READS Academy will submit a secondary school anti-hazing report to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education annually, at the beginning of each school year

Any alleged incident of hazing that is reported to a member of the READS Academy faculty will be investigated according to the procedures outlined in the READS Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Any alleged incident of hazing will be reported to the local Police Department for further investigation.

Any substantiated incident of hazing that results in the issuance of a criminal complaint will result in immediate disciplinary action, up to ten days out of school suspension, in accordance with the READS Academy Handbook.

In addition, the IEP Team will convene to review the incident and determine if any changes need to be made to the student's IEP or placement.

ARRIVALS / DISMISSALS

Students are monitored by staff as they get off/on their buses in the parking lots and throughout the hallways within the school building.

If a student is to be dismissed early, a parent/ guardian must notify the school by calling the front office and/or counselor, email or send in a note that day. Students must be signed out of the office by a parent or a designated responsible adult. Upon the initial dismissal, the designated adult (18+) will be required to provide identification. A copy of their identification will be kept in the student file to document the dismissal. Students will only be released to an adult that is identified on the student's Emergency Release Form.

Given the importance of attendance, we encourage parents to schedule doctors, dentists and other appointments before or after school hours.

Students are only dismissed from READS Academy due to illness that is diagnosed and authorized by the school nurse, in accordance with Department of Public Health Regulations. Staff will make every effort to support a student throughout the school day if they are not feeling well, yet do not meet criteria to be dismissed by the school nurse.

ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF STUDENT PROGRESS:

READS Academy utilizes a data collection system that aims to reflect a whole child approach to assessing student needs and guiding intervention. Data collection allows us to assess student competencies and skills, and monitor student progress in 4 key areas of skill development that

will lead to student success: Academic Skills, Behavior Skills, Social Emotional Learning Competencies, and Employability Skills for applicable grades.

The data collection system generates data summary reports that can be reviewed by the student's Counselor, Teachers and Staff in real time to reveal patterns and adjust interventions and supports in response to student's evolving needs. Quarterly Progress Reports that summarize student performance in all four skill areas/data points are provided to parents and Special Education Directors to document student progress. Collected data is used to develop IEP Goals and Objectives, and monitor student progress.

- **ACADEMIC SKILLS: DATA COLLECTION**

Academic Skills are necessary for a student to fully engage and participate in the learning process. Academic skills are a key element of " learning how to learn." Classroom teachers assess and monitor each student's demonstration of academic skills in each subject area, which helps each student begin to identify their own strengths and challenges.

Academic skills data is collected and analyzed ***quarterly*** and used to set learning goals and objectives for each student. The data is used to identify the student's academic strengths and areas in need of improvement. Below are some areas of the academic skills monitored. Specific areas are IEP dependent.

Academic Skills:

1. *Executive Functioning*: a set of fundamental skills that include adaptable thinking, planning, self-monitoring, self-control, working memory, time management, and organization.

2. *Classroom Readiness:* a set of skills that include foundation knowledge of the subject being taught, attitudes toward learning, self regulation and understanding of expected behaviors and social communication.

3. *Learning Scenarios:* a set of skills that enables a student to participate in an experiential learning scenario that allows learners to participate in the situation they're learning about and exercise their problem-solving skills.

4. *Communication:* a set of skills that involve giving , receiving and sharing information - talking or writing, listening or reading

5. *Critical Thinking:* a set of skills that reflect an ability to think clearly and rationally about what to do or what to believe. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking

6. *Written Expression:* a set of skills that includes basic skills of handwriting and spelling, as well as the ability to express ideas and thoughts in writing using higher order components including planning, drafting, reviewing and revising

- **Behavioral Skills: Data Collection**

Behavioral skills are an important aspect of a student's personal growth and development. It is our guiding belief and philosophy that when our students are unable to meet expectations, it is because they have not yet learned the specific behavior skills, or need further opportunities to practice those skills that will lead to their ability to meet expectations.. The goal is to provide students with the opportunities they need to learn and practice these behavioral skills that will allow them to change their own behavioral responses to situations .

Students can expect staff to provide clear and reasonable directions, feedback, choices, and limits around their progress in meeting the expectations. When we clearly define academic, behavioral and social expectations for our students, and consistently provide support and positive reinforcement when they meet our expectations, our students will learn to thrive in the school environment.

Behavior Data is collected daily and is utilized to identify the specific behavior skills that students need to learn. This data guides us in identifying interventions and supports that will serve to teach students the individualized, specific behavioral skills they need to be successful in school and in the community. We gather data on five standard expectations of behavior that will lead to their success in school. These expectations stress personal responsibility. Staff consistently review these expected behaviors with students, and teach them the skills they need, and provide opportunities to practice these skills within their classroom , school and community. Below is a list of some of the behavior data that is collected. Specific data for a student is IEP dependent.

Behavioral Skills:

1. *Engage and Participate:* Be prepared for class, Listen and follow directions, Complete expected work (specific to student needs), Participate in class discussions, Ask clarifying questions, Focus on task at hand

2. *Stay in Your Assigned Area:* Stay in class, Stay in assigned area within the classroom, Maintain personal space

3. *Take Care of Property and Environment:* Keep Personal Area Organized and Clean, Respect the Property of Others, Return Class Materials to Where They Belong, Keep Distracting Items Out of Site (ie: cell phones, tech devices)

4. *Respectful and Appropriate Interactions:* Speak with the Appropriate tone and volume, Use Appropriate Language, Communicate Needs, Be Respectful and Kind To Others

5. *Transitions Appropriately:* Arrive on Time, Enter the Classroom Respectfully, Transitions Between Tasks Appropriately, Wait to be dismissed From Class, Stay with Cohort

- **<u>Behavioral Support Plans</u>**

Student Support Plans are developed and implemented for students whose behavioral data indicate that they require specialized interventions and supports.

"Taking Space" is an example of a therapeutic process that may be implemented as part of a Student's Support Plan. It involves providing a ***real-time opportunity*** to model and teach each student the specific skills and strategies they need to improve self-regulation. It is an intervention that is taught to students and utilized to teach self-reflection and self-regulation skills ***within*** the classroom and school setting. The goal is for these skills to be generalized into other environments (ie: home, community) It is a process through which students are provided an opportunity to process a stressful situation, identify precipitants or triggers, and review behavioral choices. The taking space process can be staff directed, or student-requested, depending on the student's individual needs and always focuses on self-regulation and skill development. It is incorporated into the Behavioral Support Plans.

- **<u>Positive Social/Emotional/Behavioral Interventions & Supports</u>**

As a trauma informed therapeutic day school, READS Academy adopts the most current evidence based practices to support student progress and growth. Currently, the use of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) is the model utilized by staff and students. CPS is an evidence based approach that promotes the understanding that students with challenging behavior lack the skill, not the will, to do well. Specifically, many students display weak skills related to problem solving, flexibility and frustration toleranc. CPS avoids the use of power, control and external motivational procedures and instead focuses on building relationships and teaching at-risk students the skills they need to succeed.

READS Academy also utilizes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), an evidence- based, tiered approach that integrates data collection and best practices of intervention to support student progress and growth.

The provision of positive behavioral supports and incentives is proven to motivate some students to meet expectations that in turn, result in positive outcomes. The following is a list of examples of incentives/supports that may be offered to students:

<u>School Wide Supports/Incentives</u>
Students have the opportunity to be awarded/earn "READS Bucks" and/or Do School Differently tickets for meeting a variety of classroom and school-wide expectations. "READS Bucks" can be spent at the READS Emporium, which is a school store/consignment shop operated as part of our Work Based Learning Program. Do School Differently tickets can be turned in for other incentives.

Earning Reads Bucks and Do School Differently tickets are just some of the ways that students can begin to participate in building positive school culture.

Classroom Incentives and Supports: Classroom Supports: staff and students work together to find effective classroom supports to help all of our students find success. Some of the supports that are offered may include, but are not limited too : Break Time, Walk Outside, Computer Time, Use of Personal Technology (iPods, etc), Preferred Activity at Desk (Read, Draw, etc), Play a Game with a Staff or Peer , Order Out (Fridays – 80% average for week),
Use of Classroom Art Supplies, Buddy Time with Peer, Raffle Tickets, Additional Access to gym/wellness room

READS Academy wants students to recognize that each and every one of them are integral members of our school community. We know that every student brings unique perspectives and backgrounds, and we want to help students find their individual voice and to realize that they have the ability to make positive changes for themselves and others.

Student of the Week: Utilized by some classrooms, it celebrates the core values of READS Academy by acknowledging student progress in meeting attendance, academic, and/or behavioral expectations. Each classroom team identifies specific criteria that are geared toward the developmental needs of their students.

Monthly All-Stars: Students who have consistently met attendance, academic and good citizenship criteria for a month will be deemed an "All-Star" and will be invited to participate in a special luncheon or other incentive program.

Kewl Kid Coupons:
"Kewl Kid Coupons" were created by a group of READS Academy students. They are awarded randomly to reinforce students' positive behavioral choices. Students' Kewl Kid Coupons are then entered into weekly and monthly raffles at which time prizes are awarded to students whose coupons are chosen. Raffle prizes are purchased with funds raised by the Student Council.

READS Academy Student Council:
The READS Academy student council members (5-6th grade, middle school and high school students) work together with faculty advisors to develop proposals for positive school culture and improvement of the entire school community. The student council sponsors many fundraising activities, fun Friday events, and many fun school activities throughout the school year.

Students interested in becoming a member of the student council must complete an application which includes a brief statement of their goals and must be sponsored by at least one peer and one faculty member. Student Council Representatives are expected to attend school consistently, pass all academic classes, and demonstrate the values of the READS Creed.

- **Social Emotional Learning Competencies: Data Collection (PreK-12)**

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL- www.casel.org) is an organization whose mission is to equip educators and policymakers with the knowledge and resources to advance social and emotional learning in equitable learning environments so all students can thrive. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. CASEL defines Social Emotional Learning as " the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions."

The READS Academy SEL Competencies Assessment Tool: Utilizing the CASEL 5, Data is collected by School Adjustment Counselors upon each student's admission and quarterly. The data is utilized to identify the specific SEL skills that each student needs to develop. School Adjustment Counselors assess and monitor each student's demonstration of SEL skills in each competency area. Through the provision of individual counseling students are also given the opportunity to identify their own SEL strengths and challenges. Data collected from the SEL Assessment Tool is used to guide interventions, as well as the content of Psycho-Educational /Personal Development Groups. School Adjustment Counselors assess and document student growth in each skill area quarterly and use the assessment data to develop IEP goals and objectives for each student. The data is used to identify the student's SEL strengths and areas in need of development, and help each student identify their own strengths and challenges. School Adjustment Counselors may also ask parents, teachers, educational support personnel or other professionals working with the student to complete the SEL Assessment Tool to gather additional information or perspective of a student's SEL skills across many life domains. This process allows us to identify a student's ability to demonstrate SEL skills in various settings or in a variety of life situations.

The "CASEL 5" SEL Competencies : The "CASEL 5" addresses five broad, interrelated areas of competence. " The CASEL 5 can be taught and applied at various developmental stages from childhood to adulthood and across diverse cultural contexts to articulate what students should know and be able to do for academic success, school and civic engagement , health and wellness and fulfilling careers." www.casel.org/what-is-SEL

CASEL SEL Competencies;

1. *Self Awareness :* Abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts and values and how they influence behavior across contexts

2. *Self Management:* Abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts & behaviors effectively in different situations

3. *Social Awareness:* Abilities to understand perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures

4. *Relationship Skills:* Abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals/groups

5. *Responsible Decision Making:* Abilities to make caring an constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations

Transition Planning (Grades 7-12+ only): The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms that will assist them in identifying future educational and career goals.

- **Employability Skills Data Collection**

Employability Skills are defined as fundamental, transferable skills needed by an individual to seek and maintain employment. Employability depends on your knowledge, skills and attitudes, how you use those assets, and how you present them to employers. High School students learn, practice and improve employability skills through their participation in the Work Based Learning Tracks and Employability Skills Classes. The focus areas for employability skills are time management, safety, communication, flexibility, teamwork, responsibility and stress management.

Employers have high regard for employability skills because they are much harder to teach than job-specific skills. Some employable qualities come naturally, while others can be acquired through education, work or daily practice. Here are 10 common employability skills that employers look for: Communication, Teamwork, Reliability, Problem-solving, Organization and planning, Initiative, Self-management, Leadership, Learning and Technology. The READS Academy Work Based Learning faculty have identified Employability Skills that are assessed and monitored in real time during WBL Tracks.

READS Academy Employability Skills Assessment Tool: Data is collected by staff several times a week, based on the student's observable demonstration of the specific employability skills. Students are expected to complete the self reflection form at least once per week, and are encouraged to complete the self reflection several times a week. The data is reviewed and analyzed ***quarterly*** and used to set Transition Planning goals and objectives for each student. The Employability Skills data identifies the student's strengths and areas in need of improvement, and is used to provide feedback and guide instruction . Employability Skills Data is also used to assess student readiness for On and Off Site Internships, as well as paid summer employment opportunities

Focus Areas for Employability Skills:

1. *Time Management*: The ability to use one's time effectively or productively.

2. *Safety:* The ability to follow the expectations/standards of health, safety, and welfare in the workplace.

3. *Communication:* The ability to communicate in a professional and respectful manner with managers and co-workers to foster effective working relationships

4. *Flexibility:* The ability to adapt to your work environment needs. Some examples include: adjusting to schedule changes, shifting priorities when needed, learning new skills needed for the job.

5. *Teamwork:* The ability to work harmoniously with a group of people to achieve a shared goal or outcome in an effective way.

6. *Responsibility:* The ability to demonstrate reliability by consistently completing tasks on time, delivering quality work and making minimal mistakes.

7. *Stress Management:* The ability to remain calm and focussed in response to stressors by demonstrating self-management and coping skills to alter, accept or adapt to the source of stress

- **Attendance**

Parents are expected to call the main office, their child's counselor, or notify their teacher the morning the student is absent and notify the student's bus company.

The student's assigned counselor will call home each day the student is absent if a parent or guardian has not notified staff of the absence.

The student will also need a written note from the parent/guardian upon return. After three consecutive days of absence, a medical note is required.

Each student is expected to maintain a minimum of 86% attendance. A student's consistent attendance is imperative to academic, social and behavioral progress. Students will be provided with make-up work and will be expected to complete it within two weeks from the date it is given to them. If a student is unable to complete the make-up work within two weeks, an individual contract will be developed by the classroom team, with input from parents and the IEP team. Students and parents/guardians will receive notification of warning of course failure when the student approaches 8 days of absence per marking term.

- **Excused Absences**

Acceptable excuses for absence include illness or appointments that cannot be made after school. Oversleeping, missing the bus, staying home without permission, family vacations during scheduled school days, or other reasons as determined by the student's team are not excused absences.

If a written note is not provided by the parent or guardian, they will be contacted by the student's counselor. Parents are encouraged to support their child by expecting consistent attendance. It is important that parents communicate extenuating circumstances to staff, or seek support if they are having difficulty getting their child to attend school.

READS Academy has aligned attendance and drop out prevention protocols with the requirements of Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012.

- **Drop-Out Prevention Team:**

A Drop-Out Prevention Team, consisting of the Program Directors, Clinical Directors, and School Adjustment Counselors, meets to review student attendance and progress as needed. The School Adjustment Counselor is responsible for making daily telephone calls home if a student is absent without notification of such absence from parent or guardian. Unexcused student absences are reported to the sending school district upon 3 consecutive days or 6 cumulative days per quarter. A team meeting will be scheduled to address attendance issues and develop an intervention plan to assist the student in meeting attendance requirements.

- **Notification Requirements for Unexcused Absences:**

If a written note is not provided by the parent or guardian, they will be contacted by the student's School Adjustment Counselor. Parents are encouraged to support their child by expecting consistent attendance. It is important that parents communicate extenuating circumstances to staff, or seek support if they are having difficulty getting their child to attend school.

In cases of excessive absences, a student will be given the opportunity to recover missed days. This plan will be developed in collaboration with the student's educational Team.

- **Notification Requirements for Extended Unexcused Absences:**

In accordance with Chapter 222:
No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered to have permanently left public school unless an administrator of the school which the student last attended has sent notice within a period of 5 days from the student's tenth consecutive absence to the student and/or parent or guardian of that student in both the primary language of the parent or guardian, to the extent possible, and English.

READS Academy Administrators will work together with the sending school district's Special Education Administrator or designee to provide written notification. The notice shall initially include at least two dates and times for an exit interview between the sending school district's Executive Director or designee, and the student and the parent or guardian of the student to occur prior to the student permanently leaving school and include contact information for scheduling the exit interview. The exit interview shall be for the purpose of discussing the reasons for the student permanently leaving school and to consider additional supports/interventions that can be put in place to assist the student with attendance at READS Academy, as well as options for alternative education or other placements.

- **Alternative Education Resources:**

Upon Team Determination that the student will no longer attend READS Academy, and all interventions/supports have been exhausted, READS Academy Administrators will work with the Special Education Administrator of the sending school district to provide information about alternative education resources. These resources could include, but are not limited to: Referral to another Collaborative or Private Day School Placement, Night School or GED Programs, Dual Enrollment Options at Community Colleges, OnLine Learning opportunities, and Training Programs that do not require High School Diplomas.

BATHROOM USE:

Classrooms have scheduled bathroom breaks built into their daily schedule in order to prevent continuous disruptions to learning. Students are encouraged to use the bathroom at the scheduled times.

If a student needs to use the bathroom at a time other than the scheduled one, they must ask permission. Students are not denied access to the bathroom. Bathrooms are inspected prior to and after student's use of the bathroom to monitor appropriate use of the facilities.

BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This law (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents.

The requirements of this law are detailed in the READS Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan includes the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including parents and guardians. **At the beginning of each school year, students and parents are provided a copy of the READS Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.**

The READS Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been updated to reflect M.G.L. c. 71, 37O as amended by Sections 72 – 74 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2013, which changed the definition of "perpetrator" to include "a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional." The amendment also made the plan applicable to school staff, including but not limited to, the individuals listed in the amended perpetrator definition.

Bullying of students by other students or school staff will not be tolerated.

Definitions

Aggressor is a student or school staff member who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to their property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

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

A Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place on or off school grounds,
- at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a school computer or over the Internet using a school computer),
- at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic devices, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

Reporting Bullying

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the Program Director/Principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously. Written reports can be faxed to READS Academy's main office at (508) 947-3634 ext.2200 or mailed to READS Academy - Main Office, 44 Bedford Street, Middleboro, MA 02346. For oral reports, please contact the READS Academy Main Office at (508) 947-3634 ext.2200 and ask to speak with an administrator responsible for taking reports of bullying behavior.

School staff members must report immediately to the Program Director/Principal or their designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, health aides, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals.

When the school Program Director/Principal or their designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school Program Director/Principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school Program Director/Principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

If the alleged aggressor is an educator, the Program Director/Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the Program Director/Principal or the assistant Program Director/Principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Executive Director or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. If the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor, the Board of Directors, or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

Professional Development for School and District Staff

READS Academy faculty participate in ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between

and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

All READS Academy faculty are provided annual training on Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategies. All faculty are required to review the READS Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan annually, and are required to sign as assurance that they will follow all procedures.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM

Students may bring their own breakfast or lunch. Breakfast and lunch are free for all students during the 2026-2027 school year. READS Academy is now part of the National School Lunch Program. All meals are prepared within the READS Academy Culinary Kitchen. Students are receiving a healthy and balanced breakfast and lunch each day.

Students also have the opportunity to purchase food items from the READS Academy School Store or purchase an alternative lunch through the READS Academy Culinary program.

CLASSROOM TEAM COLLABORATION

Each student is assigned to a classroom team, consisting of the classroom teacher, Clinical Director, school adjustment counselor, and educational support staff. This classroom team coordinates the implementation of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Members of the classroom team work together to coordinate meetings, monitor student progress, coordinate communication and service delivery around the student's academic schedule, learning style, provision of accommodations in the classroom, as well as interventions and support to develop social emotional learning skills and strategies to support counseling needs. Fostering ongoing, consistent communication with parents and community based service providers is imperative in forming partnerships to assist our students.

Each classroom case team meets weekly with the READS Academy Program Director or designee to discuss student progress and classroom issues. This forum serves to assure that student needs are being addressed proactively.

CLASSWORK

Students are expected to participate in assigned classes and to complete homework when assigned. Each student is expected to come to class with something to write with and any assigned materials such as homework, books, device, etc. Parents and students are provided with a list of needed and suggested supplies at the beginning of each school year, and intermittently throughout the year.

COLLABORATION / COMMUNICATION

READS Academy staff are responsible for identifying specific student needs and developing appropriate goals and objectives that can be achieved with support provided by the program, in collaboration with the TEAM. Ongoing communication is maintained with the liaison from the sending school district, as well as representatives from community-based agencies, private therapists, physicians, and any relevant people who are involved in the student's life or treatment plan.

3-year revaluations are coordinated by the sending school district, with appropriate information provided by the READS Academy staff. This generally includes a current teacher assessment and a counseling summary as well as provision of most recent academic and behavioral records.

COMPLAINTS

If a parent/guardian or a student has a complaint, that parent/guardian or student should not hesitate to contact the teacher, school adjustment counselor or the administrator. All concerns regarding academic progress should first be addressed through the student's teachers. If, after contacting the teachers, the problem is still unresolved, the program director will investigate the matter working with the proper parties until a conclusion can be reached, and the matter can be settled in a manner that is acceptable to all parties. Contact the student's school adjustment counselor for concerns regarding behavioral interventions or physical restraints. All unresolved concerns will be addressed by the Program Director or Executive Director.

COUNSELING

Students participate in small and large psycho-educational counseling groups. These Personal Development Electives are scheduled as classes in the student's schedule. High School students earn credit for completion of course requirements. They also meet with their school adjustment counselors for weekly individual counseling on a schedule that is determined through an agreement with their assigned counselor and their IEP TEAM.

Students attend both individual and group counseling, regardless of level or consequences, unless their behavior is deemed a current safety risk as determined by the classroom team.
Topic-centered counseling groups include, but are not limited to social skills, communication skills, conflict resolution, anger management, self-regulation, relaxation and stress reduction, self-esteem/confidence building, therapeutic games, and pre-vocational/vocational skills groups.

READS Academy uses the CharacterStrong SEL Curriculum, which is an evidence based social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum designed to build character, develop social and emotional skills, and strengthen relationships in schools. It's structured to be easy for educators to implement and engaging for students, with a focus on building skills like empathy, responsibility, and self-regulation. The curriculum is vertically aligned from kindergarten through 12th grade, ensuring consistent learning experiences across all levels.

CURRICULUM

The READS Academy Curriculum is aligned with the Common Core and Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks at all grade levels. Teachers participate in an ongoing process of training and development to assure that lessons align with the standards and requirements are met in accordance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Regulations.

Students carry a full schedule of academic classes, including vocational classes and physical education. Classes are presented through small group and individual instruction.

The READS Academy Program of Studies outlines all courses that are offered. Reciprocal academic credit is granted by the sending school districts. When a READS student meets attendance, discipline and academic requirements, they can expect to obtain transfer credit for the classes they take at the Academy. Grade assignment when returning to district and graduation requirements are decisions that are made by the sending school system, with data regarding the student's progress at READS Academy.

The curriculum of READS Academy encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness, status as a veteran and limited English-speaking ability.

DISCIPLINARY PHILOSOPHY: PREVENTION OF EXCLUSION AND SUSPENSION

- **Disciplinary Procedures**

READS Academy implements disciplinary action that is consistent with the philosophy of progressive discipline. Consequences are assigned in response to student behavior that is unresponsive to the positive behavioral supports, incentives and privileges that are provided to students who meet the behavioral expectations and code of conduct.

Given the unique and complex needs of our students, there may be times when students need to work in a separate space from the general classroom environment. Provisions are made through individualized support plans to afford students the opportunity to complete course requirements in a separate area, given support and direction from teachers, school adjustment counselors and assistant teachers. This therapeutic intervention is not considered exclusionary, but rather, an intervention to increase student learning and participation.

Removal or suspension of any kind is a last resort, and only implemented in response to student behavior that presents a significant disruption to a productive learning environment for all students, a significant compromise to the safety of others, and/or illegal activity.

- **Disciplinary Offenses Under 37 H or 37H 1/2:**

"Disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §§37 H or 37H ½ " means one or more of the following alleged or determined disciplinary infractions: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b)

possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the school staff; and d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, that is by a Program Director/Principal's determination that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H ½.

- **Disciplinary Procedures under Section 37H or 37H ½**

The Program Director/Principal may remove a student who has committed a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H ½ from school for more than ninety days in a school year.

Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §37 H or §37H ½ shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13.

READS Academy will work with the student's sending school district to provide education services, that may include but is not limited to curriculum and assignments, and if appropriate, tutoring services, during the time of suspension.

- **Disciplinary Procedures Under 37 H3/4:**

Disciplinary Action is taken in response to specific student behaviors that constitutes a disciplinary offense.

"Disciplinary offense" means any alleged or determined disciplinary infraction by a student, ***except for*:** a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the school staff; and d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, that is followed by a Program Director/Principal's determination that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H ½ . A disciplinary offense, as defined, is subject to the provisions of G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾ and these regulations.

- **Alternative Remedies**

The principal or designee will consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process and shall not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. Principals or designees will document the use and results of alternative remedies. Principals or designees do not have to utilize alternative remedies in the following situations: 1) if the alternatives are unsuitable or counterproductive, and 2) in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school.

- **Detention**

Parents/Guardians are asked to provide transportation for students if they are assigned detention. Detentions may be scheduled immediately, or scheduled with the parent for a future date. (It may be in the best interest of the student to arrange for detention as soon as possible, yet family circumstances are taken into consideration when scheduling a detention). Students are assigned either class work or community service to complete during detention.

Detentions are served in the classroom, supervised by the classroom staff. Detentions are assigned in half-hour blocks. Students must meet behavioral standards during detention, or they may be required to repeat the detention. In some instances, if a student's behavior is extremely uncooperative, an Administrative Detention may be assigned. An Administrative Detention requires the student to meet with an administrator, and are served in the office, supervised by an administrator.

If a student develops a chronic pattern of being non-compliant with expectations, a TEAM meeting will be held to discuss alternatives, consequences, and interventions.

- **Suspension Policy:**

Suspension is a last resort and is used only in response to the most serious behavioral incidents which present safety risks within the school environment (i.e. fighting, assaultive behavior, possession of drugs or alcohol, possession of a weapon, vandalizing or malicious damage of property). A detailed written incident report must be provided to the Program Director or Assistant Program Director, by the school personnel who directly observed the incident.

The length of the suspension, and whether it is an in or out of school suspension, will be determined by school administrators, following an investigation and hearing of the details of the incident.

- **In-School Suspension**

"In-school suspension" means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten (10) days, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension.

In-School Suspension under Section 37H ¾

(1) The Program Director/Principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.

(2) The Program Director/Principal may impose an in-school suspension for a disciplinary offense, provided that the Program Director/Principal follows the process set forth in 603 CMR 53.10(3) through 603 CMR 53.10(5) and the student has the opportunity to make academic progress as set forth in 603 CMR 53.13(1).

(3) The Program Director/Principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to respond. If the Program Director/Principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Program Director/Principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension.

(4) The Program Director/Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally as soon as possible of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. If the Program Director/Principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

(5) The Program Director/Principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension. The Program Director/Principal may send the written notice by email to an address provided by the parent for school communications.

(6) In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten (10) days, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension.

In-School Suspensions are served in a location determined by an administrator outside of the student's classroom. Students are provided access to the curriculum and assignments for all scheduled classes, and are provided academic support by Teachers and Educational Support Staff throughout the school day. In order to pass an ISS, the student must meet 50% of behavioral expectations as documented on their Behavioral Data Collection Tool, and complete at least 50% of their classwork at which time the student will return to their classroom schedule the following school day. If the student does not meet expectations for at least 50% of their ISS periods, they will need to repeat the *remaining* periods of ISS the following school day, before returning to their classroom schedule. Students are not assigned an additional day of ISS.

- **Out-of-School Suspension - Short Term Suspension**

Implementation of an Out-of-School Suspension mandates a re-entry meeting with the student, parent/guardian and Special Education Administrator, during which a plan is developed to address the issue for which the student was suspended.

"Short-term suspension" means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Removal solely from

participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

- **Out of School Suspension - Long Term Suspension**

"Long-term suspension" means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in subsections (a) or (b) of G.L. c. 71, §37 H, or in section 37H ½ of G.L. c. 71, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school.

- **Expulsion**

"Expulsion" means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ for: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; (b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the school staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, that is followed by a Program Director/Principal's determination that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H ½.

- **Emergency Removal under Section 37H ¾**

A student may be removed from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially disrupts the order of the school. The temporary removal shall not exceed five (5) school days, which shall include the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Program Director/Principal shall:

a) Make immediate and reasonable efforts will be made to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
b) Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Program Director/Principal that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(3), and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the five (5) school days, unless an extension of time is otherwise agreed to by the Program Director/Principal, student, and parent.

The student will not be removed from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.
The IEP TEAM must convene to review the student's status in meeting their IEP goals and objectives and determine if continued placement in the program is appropriately meeting the student's needs.

- **Emergency Termination of Enrollment:**

In accordance with state and federal regulations, pursuant to 603 CMR 28.09(12)(b)(3)(e), no student's enrollment shall be terminated, even in emergency circumstances, until the enrolling public school district is informed and assumes responsibility for the student. At the request of the public school district, the student's termination of enrollment can be delayed for up to two calendar weeks to allow the opportunity to convene an Emergency Team meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination from READS Academy. With the mutual agreement of the READS Academy Administration and the sending public school district administration, termination of enrollment may be delayed for longer than two calendar weeks. This may involve an agreement to provide additional staff, interventions, or services in order to assure the safety of all staff and students, and to meet the special needs/circumstances of the student. A Form 1 (Serious Incident Report) shall be filed with the DESE upon an emergency termination of enrollment.

- **Notification of Suspension under Section 37H 3/4:**

Except as provided in 603 CMR 53.07, a Program Director/Principal may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity to be heard and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing. The hearing will be held immediately, on the day of the incident or on the next scheduled school day. Parents will be provided the option of participating in the hearing through a telephone conference if that is more convenient.

(1) The Program Director/Principal shall provide oral and written notice in the form of an incident report, to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English. The notice shall include:

a) the disciplinary offense;
b) the basis for the charge;
c) the potential length of the student's suspension;
d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the Program Director/Principal concerning the proposed suspension, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
f) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
g) if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the Program Director/Principal:

i. the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b); and
ii. the right to appeal the Program Director/Principal's decision to the Executive Director .

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

(3) Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by any other method of delivery agreed to by the Program Director/Principal and parent.

Parents/Guardians and the Special Education Administrator of the student's sending school district is notified immediately by telephone and/or email on the day of the incident. Consequences will not be assigned until direct verbal contact with the parent/guardian is made.

- **Program Director/Principal's Hearing under Section 37H ¾**

The Program Director/Principal shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense. If the consequence may be long-term suspension from school, the Program Director/Principal shall afford the student, at a minimum, all the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08(3) in addition to those rights afforded to students who may face a short-term suspension from school.

- **Program Director/Principal Hearing – Short-term Suspension**

a) The purpose of the hearing with the Program Director/Principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the Program Director/Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Program Director/Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05.
b) Based on the available information, the Program Director/Principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
c) The Program Director/Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other

school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(1). The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

d) If the student is in grades K through 3, the Program Director/Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Executive Director and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

- **Program Director/Principal Hearing – Long-term Suspension**

a) The purpose of the hearing is the same as the purpose of a short-term suspension hearing.

b) At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights:
   i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Program Director/Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
   ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
   iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
   iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
   v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Program Director/Principal, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request.

c) Based on evidence submitted at the hearing, the Program Director/Principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The Program Director/Principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other arrangement agreed upon by the Program Director/Principal and the parent. If the Program Director/Principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:
   i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
   ii. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Program Director/Principal;
   iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
   iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(4)(a);
   v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the Program Director/Principal's decision to the Executive Director or designee. Notice of the right of

appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, and shall include the following information:

(a) the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Executive Director within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the Executive Director an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that,

(b) long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Executive Director decides to reverse the Program Director/Principal's determination on appeal.

(c) If the student is in grades K through 3, the Program Director/Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Executive Director and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect.

- **Executive Director's Hearing under Section 37H ¾**

(1) A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the Program Director/Principal shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Executive Director.
(2) The student or parent must file a notice of appeal with the Executive Director within the time period set forth 603 CMR 53.08 (3) c) v.(a). If the appeal is not timely filed, the Executive Director may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
(3) The Executive Director shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the Executive Director shall grant the extension.
(4) The Executive Director shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The Executive Director shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if the Executive Director has sent written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
(5) The Executive Director shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Executive Director shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request.
(6) The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Program Director/Principal's hearing for long-term suspension under 603 CMR 53.08(3)b).
(7) The Executive Director shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3) c) i through iv.
(8) The decision of the Executive Director shall be the final decision of the collaborative with regard to the suspension.

- **Exclusion from Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored Events**

The Program Director/Principal may remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the procedures in G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾ or 603 CMR 53.00.

- **Education Services and Academic Progress under Sections 37H, 37H½, and 37H ¾**

(1) Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or long-term suspension shall have the opportunity to make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The Program Director/Principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity when the suspension is imposed.

(2) Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services that will enable the student to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

(3) The Program Director/Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under G.L. c 69, §§ 1D and 1F.

(4) Notice of Education Services for Students in Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion; Enrollment Reporting.

(a) The Program Director/Principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

(b) For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department.

- **Student Discipline/Data Reports:**

READS Academy maintains a log of all student disciplinary reports and actions, including In School Suspension, Short and Long Term Out of School Suspension, Emergency Removal, Expulsion and Termination of Placement due to disciplinary action. These logs are maintained and submitted to DESE in accordance with all regulations.

- **Manifestation Determination:**

If it is anticipated that a student will be suspended in excess of 10 days of In School or Out of School Suspensions, **OR** if there is a constituted pattern of behavior that may result in 10 days of In School OR Out of School Suspension, the TEAM is reconvened to conduct a manifestation determination. If the behavior resulting in suspension is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the TEAM will determine specific modifications/accommodations that can be made within the school in an attempt to prevent termination of the student's placement at READS Academy. There is a review of the appropriateness of the student's placement in the program, according to IDEA-97 Regulation, regarding the Discipline of Students with Special Needs. The following Procedural Checklist is implemented:

- The TEAM Chairperson (Special Education Administrator) receives notice from the READS Academy Program Director that the student's behavior may result in a cumulative in school, short term out of school suspension or long term out of school suspension of more than 10 days from the beginning of the school year or the issuance of a new or amended IEP after the beginning of a school year
- TEAM Chairperson immediately schedules TEAM **prior** to the imposition of more than 10 cumulative days of suspension
- Notice of TEAM Meeting is sent to the parent/guardian and other TEAM participants, including the student's major service providers and the Special Education Administrator from the student's sending district

TEAM meets to consider whether:

- The misconduct is related to the student's disability
- The IEP is appropriately meeting the student's special needs
- The IEP is being fully implemented. (As part of this determination, special care must be taken by the TEAM to determine if any modified discipline code stated on the student's approved IEP has not been implemented as written)

- If the TEAM determines that ANY of the three above conditions exist, the student is not suspended at all and is returned to the last approved placement or a new placement described on an IEP and approved by the parent
- If the TEAM determines that NONE of the three above conditions exist, and the district continues to propose a suspension for any period above ten cumulative days, the TEAM writes a new or amended IEP (the alternative plan) which proposes to the parent (and student over 18 years of age) the manner in which the special education services will be delivered during the period of suspension in accordance with the READS Academy Education Service Plan.
- The proposed IEP includes ALL special education programs and related services described on the student's IEP in effect prior to the proposed suspension. (In consideration of the changed instructional setting in which the alternative plan is to be implemented, and duration and frequency of special education programs and services do not necessarily have to equal those described on the student's IEP in place prior to the proposed suspension. However, there must be a reasonable likelihood that all originally proposed goals and objectives can be implemented under the proposed alternative service delivery plan.)

- The period of suspension is stated on the IEP, is for a finite period of time, and is consistent with the applicable sanction described in the school's handbook.
- The school's most recent handbook has been provided to the parent and student in advance of the actual behavioral infraction. (*)
- Such Code of Conduct (Handbook) is on file in the Massachusetts Department of Education. (*)
- The district issues to the parent a proposed IEP which describes the TEAM's alternative plan, together with applicable parent notice of procedural safeguards and rights as required by IDEA-97 Regulations.
- Telephone notice of the proposed suspension is made to the Department of Education Liaison from Program Quality Assurance Services. If the implemented procedures appear to be complete, the Department issues a verbal approval to suspend the student pending the receipt of the required written documentation of procedures in the Department of Education.

- The district sends to the Department Liaison the required documentation as follows:
  - Mandated Form SPED 766-15: "Notification of Suspension and Request For Approval of Alternative Plan";
  - Copy of the student's IEP in effect at the time of suspension;
  - Copy of new or amended IEP describing the alternative plan for special education services;
  - Copy of written notice of procedural safeguards to parent

- In cases where the student's parents (or students over 18 years) do not speak English, all required meetings and notices are made accessible through the use of interpreters and translated notices.

- The collaborative implements the suspension with or without parent consent.

- In cases where the parent (or student over 18) requests a due process hearing before the Department's Bureau of Special Education Appeals on the subject of the district's proposal to suspend or exclude the student, the district places the student immediately back in the last approved special education program (or in an alternative placement approved by the parent) until the Hearing Officer has ruled on the matter. (Note the one exception to these requirements which is described in the following step.*)

- In applicable situations, where the student with a disability is found in possession of a firearm in school, the collaborative may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting, as determined by the evaluation TEAM, without parent consent for up to 45 days. The student remains in the alternative setting pending any special education hearing request initiated by the parent, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

- In all other cases, to override the effect ("Stay-Put") of parent's request for a hearing before the BSEA, the district seeks a court order to change the student's placement based on a showing that the student's continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury/harm to the student or others.

- *Provisions of the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, Section 14601 of the Improving America's Schools Act, effective October 1994, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Section 615 (e) (3) as amended.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS for READS ACADEMY/ STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

- **Dress Code**

We encourage students to dress in a neat, clean, and presentable manner that reflects pride in themselves and in our school community. As school is a place of learning—and also a workplace for students and staff—and it is important that clothing choices support a focused, respectful, and inclusive environment.

Students are expected to consider **cleanliness, appropriateness, and good judgment** when selecting what to wear to school.

If a student's clothing is found to be **disruptive to the learning environment** or **offensive to community standards**, they will be asked to make appropriate changes.

Examples of clothing considered disruptive include, but are not limited to:

- Any clothing that allows the midriff, cleavage, undergarments, or bare back to be exposed is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to the following: excessively baggy or tight pants/leggings, tank tops, spaghetti strap/halter/mesh tops, see through shirts, tube tops or crop tops.
- Under clothing may not be exposed.
- No mini skirts, mini dresses, shorts, pants etc. that hang below the waistline, sit on the hip or lower, or show underwear. Appropriate length is to the end of the fingertips when arms are directly by one's side.Apparel displaying vulgar language or symbols
- Clothing with sexual references
- References to alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances
- Images or language that are discriminatory in nature
- Clothing promoting violence or containing threats, including but not limited to symbols such as the Nazi swastika, imagery associated with the Ku Klux Klan, or other white nationalist groups

Additionally, the following items may not be worn inside the school building:

- Outer coats
- Hats or caps
- Bandanas
- Sunglasses

READS Academy Administrators reserve the right to monitor student's clothing. Students who wear such items will be required to turn the t-shirt inside out, wear a school provided t-shirt, or their parent/guardian will be asked to bring in appropriate clothing.

- **Field Trips**

Students are eligible to attend field trips when they are meeting attendance, academic and behavioral expectations, and do not have any outstanding consequences. Students must be exhibiting safe behavior on the day of the trip. Specific Permission Slips are sent to parents in advance of each field trip, and must be signed by the parent/guardian in order for the student to participate.

Students attending district based classes are eligible to attend host school field trips if they are meeting the criteria of the host school.

- **Grading Policy**

With support and accommodations, students in grades PreK-6 are graded using a standards-based grading approach, following the Common Core and Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Their comprehension of the curriculum is assessed using a vast variety of assessment tools; student progress is measured toward meeting individual academic goals. Students in Pre-K -6 do not receive a report card for their participation in the Extended School Year Program.

Students in grades 7-12, are also offered support and accommodations as needed, but attain a letter grade with a numerical grade equivalent for their report card.

Report cards are distributed at the end of every term (4 terms per school year). Grades earned in the summer are added as a 5th term on students' report cards at the conclusion of the ESY Program for those students in grades 7-12. Terms 1-4 are averaged into students' final grades equally as a full term and the 5th term is typically weighted as a half term. However, students who require credit recovery for specific courses, have the opportunity to focus on these content areas in the summer and their grades will be weighted according to the course requirement. Ultimately, high school students' course credit is awarded by their sending school district and is determined using the districts' credit requirements.

GRADE INTERPRETATION CHART

Letter Grade	Grade Point Average	Numerical Grade Equivalent
A+	4.3	97-100
A	4.0	93-96
A-	3.7	90-92
B+	3.3	87-89
B	3.0	83-86

B-	2.7	80-82
C+	2.3	77-79
C	2.0	73-76
C-	1.7	70-72
D+	1.3	67-69
D	1.0	63-66
D-	0.7	60-62
F	0.0	50-59

- **Graduation Requirements**

Diploma

Students enrolled at READS Academy are eligible to receive a diploma issued by their sending school district. Students must meet all attendance and course credit requirements as outlined in the Course of Studies from their sending school District. If a sending school district requires a course that is not offered at READS Academy, the IEP Team determines if a virtual learning option is appropriate for the student. The team will also collaborate with the sending school district's Guidance Department to determine if a comparable course offered at READS Academy will meet the requirement. Ultimately, the sending school district accepts all courses offered at READS Academy for reciprocal credit in accordance with DESE regulations.

Certificate of Attendance/Completion

Students enrolled at READS Academy are eligible to receive a Certificate of Attendance/or Certificate of Completion issued by their sending school district. Students must meet all attendance and course credit requirements. Reciprocal credit is awarded in the same way as a diploma. Certificates of Attendance or Certificates of Completion are awarded to students who have not met the requirements for a diploma or who transition from the Program at age 22.

- **Homework**

Homework is assigned on a daily basis ***at the discretion*** of the classroom teacher. Homework is meant to provide students with drills and/or activities that will reinforce concepts learned during class. Completion of homework is an expectation that also teaches students responsibility. It is an expectation within mainstream public school settings. Providing our students with homework will help them to prepare for their return to a less restrictive educational placement.

Teachers will provide modifications and accommodations in accordance with the student's IEP for homework assignments.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to support their child in meeting homework expectations. It is important to communicate with the student's teacher regarding any special circumstances that exist at home. Special circumstances may include family schedules or barriers that interfere with

homework completion, or any special incentives/privileges, or consequences that parents establish at home to reinforce homework completion.

If a student does not complete or return a completed homework assignment on the day it is due, the student will be given an extension at the discretion of the teacher. The student may also be given the opportunity to complete it during an alternate time. If homework completion becomes a chronic area of concern, an individual support plan will be developed to support the student in meeting this expectation.

- **Honor Roll**

Students of READS Academy are recognized for their academic achievement and consistent attendance.

High Honor Roll Criteria:
- All grades of at least 90%
- At least 95% attendance
- The student must not have earned ISS or OSS for the duration of the marking term

Honor Roll Criteria:
- All grades of at least 80%
- At least 90% attendance
- The student must not have earned ISS or OSS for the duration of the marking term

Honorable Mention Criteria:
- All grades of at least 80%, with one grade of at least 70%
- At least 85% attendance
- The student must not have earned ISS or OSS for the duration of the marking term

- **MCAS Participation**

All students at READS Academy fully participate in all MCAS Testing as designated by grade level. All students are provided with any accommodations designated in IEP's, and all testing is administered in strict compliance with the regulations promulgated by the Massachusetts DESE.

Those students participating in the alternate assessment process, as determined by their IEP Team, work collaboratively with faculty to develop an appropriate portfolio of assessments, documenting their progress. All parents have the right to discuss all possible accommodations and the viability of an alternate assessment for their child.

Should there be any reason to change the type of accommodations initially recommended by an IEP Team, such changes will be made only via the IEP Amendment process.

It is the philosophy of READS Academy to make the testing process as comfortable as possible for students. Therefore, faculty present clear instructions and provide a supportive environment in order to minimize stress associated with testing.

- **Personal Hygiene**

Students are expected to come to school having had enough sleep and with appropriate personal hygiene. This reflects positive self-care and self respect. If a student demonstrates that these needs are not being met, steps will be taken to encourage the meeting of these basic needs. This may include direct, candid communication with both the student and the parent/guardian regarding the importance of good personal hygiene. Health and Hygiene Support Plans can be developed under the guidance of the School Nurse and School Counselor.

- **Personal Property**

READS Academy is not responsible for personal property lost or damaged at school – devices, money, jewelry, clothing, portable video game players, cell phones, etc. We encourage students to leave valuable items at home. We make every reasonable attempt to supervise students and prevent theft or vandalism and we support restitution. However, students and their parents/guardians are ultimately responsible to arrange for restitution or any legal actions for stolen personal property.

Students are not allowed to trade, sell, lend, or gift their personal property to another student in school, during school hours, or on the bus.

- **Physical Education/Health Program**

READS Academy offers Physical Education to all students. Health Classes are scheduled for students in Grades 7, 8, 9 and 10. In addition, Fitness and Wellness Electives are also offered at the high school level.

Physical Education and Health Classes are grounded in the philosophy of teaching all students the healthy benefits of developing lifelong fitness/wellness habits that promote physical exercise, proper diet and nutrition.

The READS Academy Course of Studies provides course descriptions for all Physical Education and Health Classes.

Physical Activity and movement breaks, including recess for grades PreK-6, are provided and scheduled throughout the school day. Movement breaks are also incorporated as intervention strategies in Student Support Plans.

Goal:

- To provide students with exercise while learning about sports and recreational games in a safe environment.
- To provide students an opportunity to learn life skills of teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship and the value of healthy competition in a social environment.
- Each student is expected to attend all classes.
- If a student misses a class, they must complete an alternate assignment provided by the PE Teacher to make up the grade for that class.

Dress Code for PE:
- Each student will wear sneakers in the gym. Safe comfortable clothing will be worn.
- No hats will be worn in the gym.
- No jewelry that hangs or dangles will be permitted.
- No electronic devices (cellphones, hand-held games, etc.) will be permitted in the gym.

Rules of the Gymnasium:
- Students are not permitted to leave the gym. Students must ask to leave the gym for bathroom use or water breaks
- Students must participate in all activities of warm-up, the game of the day, and any cool down activity.
- Students will use appropriate and respectful language.
- Students will use equipment in the proper manner.
- Students will use the gym with respect to the facility.
- Staff are the referee or umpires and students will respect their decisions.
- No eating or chewing gum allowed.
- Students will help collect equipment and put it away when class is finished.

- **Smoking/Vaping Policy**

The Massachusetts Smoke Free Workplace Law prohibits smoking in all enclosed workplaces including private and public schools. READS Academy enforces the law with a smoke/ tobacco free policy.

Research shows that punitive discipline as a deterrent to behavior DOES NOT work.
The American Heart Association indicates that we are in a vaping epidemic in this country, especially among teens. "*Since 2018 alone, the number of high school students who vape has nearly doubled.*"

READS has taken action and Vercada VAPE sensors and cameras were installed two years ago throughout the school. Verkada air quality sensors monitor high risk areas and identify when students are smoking tobacco products or marijuana. The sensors provide automated alerts in real time and allow us to respond to events as they happen.

We, at READS Academy, have opted to take an educational approach to these concerns.

1. When students have been identified at setting off the vape sensor, staff are immediately informed.
2. When students have been identified at setting off the vape sensor, staff are immediately informed.
3. The student is then searched for contraband. When contraband is found on any person it is disposed of immediately. Students will not receive any contraband back and parents are not allowed to pick it up (including lighters).
4. Students will be educated on the law of having it on school property and the dangers of use on the brain/ body.

5. We will encourage students to utilize a text message program “This is quitting” by texting: DITCHVAPE to 88709. It is a free service offered to the adolescent population. Students will receive instant support 24-7. For more information please visit: https://truthinitiative.org/vaping-know-truth-empowering-students.
6. Students in violation of the NO Vape school policy will be placed on daily searches. Students will be searched daily upon arrival and possibly moved to random searches pending administrative approval.
7. Parents/ caregivers will be contacted via phone by the students’ assigned counselor on the day the incident occurs. Students will be informed that their caregiver will be informed. Students will be informed that they will be on daily searches on the day of violation.

- ## Technology and Communication

    - ***Personal Electronics/Cell Phone***

    Electronic Device/ Cell Phone Policy
    The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has provided guidelines on the use policies of cell phones and electronic devices in schools. In line with the DESE and in an effort to keep all students actively engaged at school, safe and in a positive community atmosphere, READS Academy is updating their cell phone and electronic device policies and procedures.

    READS Academy Middle School and High School
    Student safety and personal growth is of the utmost importance. School landline phones are available for student access with adult permission should it become necessary to contact a parent/guardian/ or caregiver during the school day.

    Beginning August 2025, students will be required to follow school procedures for their personal electronic devices during the school day. This includes cameras, cell phones, airpods/earbuds, smart watches, game systems and any other devices that can access the internet and/or send text messages. These personal items will be safely locked and secured while in the possession of the student through the use of Yondr Pouches. Student Chromebooks as well as plug-in headphones will continue to be available through READS as they have been in the past.

    Before and after school, cell phones and other devices may be used once students are on transportation and off school grounds.

    If you choose to allow your student to bring their cell phone or electronic device to the school, a Yondr Pouch will be provided to them. If a students' device does not fit into the Yondr pouch, the device will be locked in a secure location for the duration of the school day and returned upon dismissal.

    YONDR Pouch Student Responsibilities and Expectations

- Students will be utilizing an assigned Yondr locked pouch when they choose to bring their personal device to school. Any personal device that does not fit in the Yondr pouch must be turned over to staff to be stored for the day.

- If a student destroys, damages,* tampers with or attempts to destroy or tamper with the Yondr pouch, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian and/or student to replace the pouch financially in accordance with our property damage procedures. All devices will be stored in a secure location until the issue is resolved.

- Students who do not comply with the school procedure regarding electronic devices or cell phones, will be provided with therapeutic support and interventions to assist with compliance before entering class.

- If support is unsuccessful, and a student continues to refuse to hand in electronics **or** uses a personal electronic device during the school day, the following interventions may be implemented:
    - Students may be required to remain in an alternate space until the device is secured in compliance with READS policy.
    - Parents/Guardians may be notified and provided with an opportunity to assist in intervening with the student.
    - Parent/Guardian and/or their designee may be required to pick up the device(s).
    - The technology restriction policy may be implemented for continued non-compliance. This may lead to an administrative technology restriction for a period of time.
    - Recommendation may be made to parent/guardian that the student would benefit from leaving their device(s) at their residence.
    - Any other intervention as deemed appropriate by the educational team.

Notes:

*Damage consists of any signs that the physical integrity of the pouch has been compromised, whether intentional or unintentional, as determined by the READS staff.

** Personal electronics are not the responsibility of the READS Academy.

***The Administration reserves the right to make changes to this procedure at any time.

- ***Technology Policy***

It is the philosophy of READS Academy to teach students the appropriate use of school issued technology devices.

- Chrome books and other school issued technology (such as Z-space computers, etc..) are the property of READS Academy. When students have permission to

use technology devices, they are to remain in the designated areas within the classroom and are to be kept at a ***reasonable volume*** (must be completely inaudible to others).

- Any violation of the technology policy will be reported to an administrator and consequences for the violation will be assigned accordingly, on a case by case basis.

Consequences will be determined according to frequency of the violation, the student's response to the limit set, and their willingness to cooperate.

- Consequences may include parent/guardian notification and/or a restriction of technology use during the school day for a period of time determined by the Program Director or designee.
- Chronic violation of the Technology Use Policy may result in an Individualized Technology Use Contract that will be developed to meet the needs of the student, with the goal of teaching them how to use technology in accordance with the expectations of the school environment, and to prevent it from interfering with the learning of others.

- ***Telephone Use (Landline)***

  Students may request to use the school telephone to make calls regarding personal business or concerns that require immediate attention. Student calls may be made on occasion or in an emergency by requesting permission from a staff person. All telephone calls are made under staff supervision. Consideration is given to the student's age, legal status and guardianship status.

- **Time-Out versus Therapeutic Separation Procedures**

"Time out" is defined by READS as removal from the learning environment without access to therapeutic intervention or academic learning. "Time out" by this definition is not an intervention that is frequently implemented at READS.

Students may be permitted or directed to "take space" or "calm" in designated calming spaces. READS calming spaces are specifically designated for the purpose of student calming and are designed to be physically safe, clean and closely monitored at all times by a staff member Calming spaces may differ in wall coverings, furniture, lighting and sensory materials based on student developmental age, need for injury prevention and sensory needs. There are no doors on READS calming spaces.

The first step of implementation of use of a calming space would be a brief (one to five minute) period of time. The calming period would offer the student a period of quiet reflection *and* emotional reorganization. Students are then engaged with a staff member to assist them with returning to the classroom learning environment.

If a student requires or requests significant separation due to escalating behavior and is not able to engage with staff for therapeutic intervention, the data is documented in the student's daily

Behavioral Skills Assessment Tool. Support and Interventions that are provided to the student during the therapeutic separation, as well as the duration of the therapeutic separation and the name of the staff monitoring the student, are documented in the Behavioral Skills Assessment Tool. In the event that should occur, the student would go to a designated room outside the classroom with a staff member. READS refers to these spaces as "calming spaces". If the student is removed from their classroom/learning environment for more than 20 minutes, the Program Director is notified. The Program Director is responsible for overseeing implementation of any separation from the classroom.

When a student is separated from their learning environment, the student's Behavioral Skills Assessment Data is reviewed by their School Adjustment Counselor, and referred to the Case Management Team to develop or revise a Behavioral Support Plan. These plans are developed with input from the student, classroom team and parent.

Behavioral Support Plans are developed and implemented for students whose behavioral data indicate that they require specialized interventions and supports.

"Taking Space" is one example of a therapeutic process that may be implemented as part of a student's Behavioral Support Plan. While taking space, a student has the opportunity to continue academic learning or receive social emotional support. This may include teaching student-specific skills and strategies to improve self-regulation. Students are provided an opportunity to process a stressful situation, identify precipitants or triggers, and review behavioral choices. The taking space process can be staff-directed, or student-requested, depending on the student's individual needs and always focuses on development of Social Emotional Learning Competencies. It is incorporated into a student's Behavioral Support Plans when used regularly.

- **<u>Transition Criteria/Support</u>**

  To a Less Restrictive Educational Placement:

It is the goal of READS Academy to provide students with the structure and support they need to learn the skills needed in order to transition successfully to a general education setting. If a student meets the following criteria, they will be considered for transition to a less restrictive educational placement:

1. Consistently demonstrates expected behaviors during classroom learning and school activities
2. Maintains an academic average of at least 75% or as determined by the student's educational Team on an individual basis.
3. Maintains a discipline record free of administrative consequences.
4. Demonstrates independence in resolving conflict and the ability to effectively utilize coping strategies.
5. Has a desire to return to an integrated/mainstream setting.
6. Team identifies a less restrictive educational placement that has capacity to put services/supports in place to meet the student's needs and implement IEP

It is recommended that these conditions be met for a minimum of 90 consecutive days, in order to assure that the student has internalized the skills needed to be successful in a less restrictive environment. When this criterion has been met, a TEAM meeting will be scheduled to discuss a potential transition.

There may be occasions when a student's IEP team determines that consideration for transition may be given if the student meets the criteria for a period of time less than 90 days. In these cases, the IEP Team will write a specific, individualized plan that will be monitored and reviewed through the TEAM meeting process.

College and Career Readiness:

Throughout a student's enrollment at READS Academy, curriculum supports and interventions are provided through instruction and related services to assist a student in preparing for their future goals. This process starts as early as grade 7 and continues through high school. For some students who require additional time to address the goals of their Transition Plan, there is an option for continued placement at READS Academy for student-specific transition services, as identified by their IEP Team. Through the IEP Team Process, special consideration is given to instruction through Personal Development Electives. Course Descriptions are available in the READS Academy Course of Studies.

Transition Plans are completed annually and revised through the Team Meeting Process in accordance with all DESE Regulations. Collaboration with Guidance Departments of sending school districts is an integral part of the process to assist students with PSAT's, SAT's, College and Post Secondary Training Program Applications, and FASFA Forms.

- **Transportation**

All transportation arrangements are coordinated by the sending school district. Requests for transportation changes and any other transportation problems should be directed toward your school district. Students are not permitted to drive themselves to school.

Students are not permitted to ride on buses other than those provided by their sending school district. Parents will need to coordinate dismissal of students in accordance with dismissal policy if they make plans for their child to go home with someone else after school.

- **Vandalism/ Destruction of School Property**

Students will be held responsible for repairing or replacing any school property that is damaged or vandalized as a result of their actions.

Students will receive disciplinary consequences in accordance with the READS Academy Discipline Policy.

Students/Guardians are expected to pay restitution or make arrangements to repair or restore the property that has been damaged or vandalized.

In addition, a criminal complaint for malicious destruction of public school property may be filed by a school administrator in the event of chronic incidents of destruction of school property, and/or when restitution is not made.

- **Weapons / Assault of Educational Personnel**

In accordance with the FEDERAL GUN FREE SCHOOL ACT OF 1994, READS Academy has developed the following policy to address issues related to a student's possession of weapons. This law requires each state to require school districts and other local educational agencies to expel from school for a period of not less than one year any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school. An exception is made to permit the chief administering officer (i.e.: the Executive Director) to modify the expulsion requirement on a case by case basis. The law does not preclude an expelled student from receiving educational services in an alternative setting.

A. The following are prohibited on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events
   - Guns of any kind
   - Knives of any kind; and
   - Any objects that could be used as a weapon (including, but not limited to, baseball bats, lighters, tire chains, or crowbars.)

B. The following conduct is prohibited:
   - Assault upon a member of the educational staff.
     "Assault" shall be defined as "an intentional, unlawful threat of force directed toward a member of the education staff which under the circumstances creates a well-founded fear of imminent peril accompanied with the means to carry out the threat in circumstances which create a reasonable fear of imminent danger."
   - Battery upon a member of the education staff.
     "Battery" shall be defined as the unlawful infliction of physical violence or constraint inflicted upon a member of the educational staff without their consent."

C. In the event that a member of the education staff has good reason to believe that a student has violated this policy, the following procedure shall be followed:
   - The student who is believed to have violated this policy, shall be accompanied by the classroom staff to the office of the Program Director. In the event that the student is found in possession of a weapon, the weapon will be confiscated and turned over to the Program Director. In the event that the weapon is in the student's locker, the locker will be secured with the weapon inside, until the appropriate authorities are contacted.
   - The Program Director shall notify the local police of the incident and shall keep the student in their office until the police arrive. The Program Director shall also contact the Department of Social Services, the Special Education Administrator of the student's sending district and the Executive Director of READS Collaborative.

- The student's parents will be contacted and be allowed to be present during any and all questioning of the student.
- The Program Director and any other staff involved in the incident shall prepare a detailed written account of the incident within twenty-four hours of the incident. A copy of the written account of the incident shall be provided to all persons involved upon request.
- If the Program Director is satisfied that this policy has been violated, the student shall be suspended for a period not to exceed five (5) days, following all procedures outlined in the READS Academy Discipline Procedures.
- The Program Director shall notify all involved parties and shall schedule an emergency TEAM meeting on a date which is as soon as practical, but in no event, more than five (5) days beyond the date of the student's initial suspension.
- Through the TEAM process, a decision will be made to determine the most appropriate plan of intervention that will meet the student's needs and assure that the continued presence of the student at READS Academy will not pose a threat to the safety, security, and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.

D. If the TEAM determines the student is to remain at READS Academy, it may be necessary to develop an amendment to the student's IEP that may include but is not limited to the following provisions:

- A safety contract will be developed with the student. This will include, but is not limited to, the student agreeing to keep all personal possessions locked up during the school day and to voluntarily participate in a locker check at the beginning of each school day.
- The TEAM will determine the necessity of implementing search procedures. Such procedures will require that the student report to the office each morning to give all personal possessions to staff to be locked up. The student will also be scanned with a hand-held metal detector before being admitted to the classroom. If the TEAM determines that this precaution is necessary, a modification will be made to the student's discipline code. Specific measurable objectives will be outlined by the TEAM to monitor this intervention and determine what expectations need to be met by the student to amend the plan. A release will need to be signed by the student's parent, guardian, or educational advocate indicating specific permission to utilize these interventions.
- Specific counseling objectives will be identified to be addressed during individual counseling sessions.
- If a student is at any time noncompliant with this plan, the TEAM will reconvene.
- If a student's non-compliance raises concern as to the safety and well-being of anyone in the program, the police may be called to assist in implementation of the policy or to determine if any legal action is necessary.

E. New Students Referred to READS

Any student referred to READS Academy who has probable cause of or is known to be in violation of a sending district's Weapons Policy, whose TEAM has determined that the student's needs could be met through involvement in a therapeutic program, will be considered for placement at READS Academy. All new students who are considered for admission who have been subject to the weapons policy must enter the program for an assessment period.

All standard intake procedures will be followed. In addition, the following steps will be taken to assure the safety of all students and faculty at READS Academy:

- A safety contract will be developed with the student. This will include, but is not limited to, the student agreeing to keep all personal possessions locked up during the school day, voluntarily participate in a locker check at the beginning of each school day, and search with a metal detector/wand.
- The TEAM will determine the necessity of implementing search procedures. Such procedures will require that the student report to the office each morning to give all personal possessions to staff to be locked up. The student will also be scanned with a hand-held, metal detector before being admitted to the classroom. If the TEAM determines that this precaution is necessary, a modification will be made to the student's support plan. Specific, measurable, objectives will be outlined by the TEAM to monitor this intervention and determine what expectations need to be met by the student to amend the plan. A release will need to be signed by the student's parent, guardian, or educational advocate indicating specific permission to utilize these interventions.
- Specific counseling objectives will be identified to be addressed during individual counseling sessions.

- **<u>Work Based Learning</u>**

Vocational Services at READS Academy consist of a Work Based Learning Model that utilizes the Five Strands of the Vocational Technical Educational Framework of the Massachusetts DESE Office for Career and Vocational Technical Education.

Strand One: Safety and Health Knowledge and Skills
Strand Two: Technical Knowledge and Skills (WBL Track Specific)
Strand Three: Embedded Academic Knowledge and Skills
Strand Four: Employability and Career Readiness Knowledge and Skills
Strand Five: Management and Entrepreneurship Knowledge and Skills (WBL Track Specific)

Participation in the Work Based Learning Tracks assists students in identifying their interests and aptitude, developing vocational skills through a competency-based curriculum, and provides opportunities to practice employability skills through on -site and off-site internships as a step toward developing job skills to prepare for eventual job placement.

All High School Students ape placed in a Work Based Learning Track, which include:

- Industrial Technologies (CAD using 3D and Laser Printing, Welding, or other STEM related fields)
- Woodshop
- Health Services
- Culinary/Food Service
- Digital Media
- Early Childhood Development

Transition Planning for post secondary education/employment/careers is an integral part of the student's participation in Work Based Learning

1. Assessment, which includes interest and aptitude assessment
2. Personal Development Electives: Vocational counseling and career planning
3. WBL Tracks: Competency-based prevocational and vocational instruction
4. On and Off-Site Internships to provide practical application and development or newly acquired skills.
5. Employability Skills Assessments, including Student Self-Assessments
6. Transitional Skills Assessment for School to Work/Career Readiness

The READS Academy Work Based Learning Manual provides additional information about this aspect of the program.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

READS Academy maintains a policy of assuring a prompt and efficient response to any type of potential emergency situation, involving either the physical facility and/or staff and students.

The READS Academy Emergency Response Team (ERT) consists of Program Director, Assistant Program Director, Clinical Directors, School Adjustment Counselors, School Nurse and Administrative Support Personnel, and meets quarterly to address ongoing needs and concerns.

It is the policy of READS Academy to comply with all required building and safety codes, and to maintain current certificates of compliance from appropriate agencies. It is further the policy to provide staff with necessary emergency and safety training in order to promote a safe school environment. The following procedures are employed to implement this policy:

1. Evacuation Drills are conducted on a quarterly basis in collaboration with the local Fire Department.
2. Written Evacuation Plans and Diagrams are posted in all major activity areas, and are reviewed quarterly with staff and students.
3. First Aid Kits and Fire Extinguishers are located in all required areas. Written instructions are included in each kit.
4. Staff are trained annually in First Aid and C.P.R.
5. A Mobile Telecommunication system is maintained at all times to assure consistent contact with public safety personnel in the event of an emergency.
6. A list of Emergency Telephone Numbers covering Health and Safety issues is located in each major activity area.
7. An AED is located on all campuses.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STUDENTS

Program Modifications & Support Services for Limited English Proficient Students

As a matter of policy READS Academy will identify one member of the administrative or educational staff to be appointed as the LEP officer on a yearly basis. This faculty member will oversee the implementation of the LEP policies and procedures and attend conferences/trainings provided through the DOE or MATSOL identifying research-based best practice methods, sheltered content instruction and language acquisition. The LEP chair will also be responsible for presenting best practice methods and other initiatives in faculty and curriculum meetings.

Because READS Academy is a therapeutic day school program, students from a large geographic area comprising a number of sending school districts are in attendance. If a particular district (in conjunction with a student's IEP Team) determines that READS Academy is an appropriate therapeutic placement the responsibility to provide support services to LEP students will fall to both the sending school district and the Academy.

The first step in assessing a student's needs would be through the use of the Home Language Survey (HLS). If the HLS had not been otherwise administered by the sending district, READS Academy will provide the survey (see attached) to be completed by the families (or a representative) of our students prior to the intake/team meeting to occur at READS Academy. The purpose of this survey is to determine a student's level of English proficiency.

During the team meeting process, the types and level of support necessary to ensure that the student can effectively access the curriculum will be determined. Staff members in collaboration with the sending school district will then develop an IEP in which the necessary modifications are detailed. Academy and district staff will work together to ensure that the student's SPED and ELL services can be implemented successfully within the context of the program. The Academy and the school district will work to identify appropriate ELL trained staff members and make necessary contacts with outside agencies in instances where a student's needs cannot be met internally. It is the position of READS Academy that with the appropriate modifications and supports ELL students with substantial social emotional issues can be serviced effectively within the context of our therapeutic program.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR: SUMMER PROGRAM

READS Academy offers an extended year program. All ESY programs are located at 44 Bedford St., Middleboro Campus. The summer program is a five week session that meets three days per week: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and starts after the July 4th holiday through the first week in August.

Extended School Year Schedule:

Student Hours (Grade K-6): 8:45am – 2:15pm	Staff Hours: 8:15am – 2:45pm
Student Hours (Grade 7 -12+) 8:30am – 2:00pm	Staff hours are 8:00am – 2:30pm

INCIDENT REPORTS

Incident Reports are written to document student behavior that requires Administrative Intervention or rise to the level of requiring Disciplinary Action. Incident reports are written when a student does not meet behavioral expectations, and is unwilling to resolve a conflict

through routine methods of problem-solving within the classroom, does not respond to counselor interventions, and/or is unable to follow their established support plans.

INTERNS / VOLUNTEERS

READS Academy offers a variety of opportunities for internships and Student Teaching experiences for Undergraduate and Graduate Level Students. All interns and student teachers are assigned to an appropriately certified staff person for supervision and mentoring. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to inform the student intern/volunteer of all READS Academy policies and procedures. All interns are subject to the same screening procedures, including a CORI (Criminal Offense Record Inventory), Fingerprinting, and orientation procedures required by staff. All interns are provided with an opportunity to attend Professional Development programs offered by READS Collaborative.

LEGAL STATUS

Parents/Guardians are responsible for informing READS Academy Program Director or Assistant Program Director and Referral Admissions Coordinator of the results of all judicial proceedings. This includes custody agreements, status of any restraining orders, CHINS Petitions, Care and Protection Petitions and any criminal investigation or charges that may be pending.

The Program Director or Assistant Program Director and Referral Admissions Coordinator will inform all pertinent READS Academy staff as to the information acquired. Appropriate plans or interventions will be developed in response to the legal information provided.

LEGAL SYSTEM INTERVENTIONS

Under the following circumstances, students may be involved with the legal system of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Police may also become involved when a student presents a safety risk to self or others. Police intervention is only requested when READS Academy staff have exhausted all resources and intervention strategies, which may include physical restraint. If the police are called, each situation will be assessed to determine if the student requires a referral/transport to the Crisis Team. The police may also determine when they need to take further action, in accordance with their policies and procedures.

Police will be called if a student has left school grounds. Please refer to Student Runaway Policy/Procedure.

A CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) petition may also be filed in Juvenile Court when a student is chronically absent, truant, or whose behavior meets the criteria of a habitual school offender. CRA Petitions are filed in collaboration with the sending school district.

If neglect of abuse is suspected or apparent, counselors or the Program Director are obligated under Massachusetts law to file a 51A. READS Academy staff are provided with annual training regarding their responsibilities as mandated reporters.

Students who cause damage to the building or to school property are given time to repair or replace the damage. Restitution will be sought from parents/guardians for significant damage.

A student who puts their hands on, hits, punches, shoves or otherwise threatens and invades the personal space of another member of the community, may be subject to a charge of assault and battery.

Schools are protected under the law from any person carrying drugs or alcohol and READS Academy involves legal authorities in enforcing this limit. Staff do not need to directly observe a suspected drug in order to make a report. There only needs to be: strong suspicion stemming from a student's behavior, a report from other students or staff, or unusual behavior that is consistent with that of an individual under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Offenses will include, but are not limited to: any suspicious conversations about drugs/alcohol, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of alcohol or drugs (even non-alcoholic near-beer, etc.) suspicion of related illegal activity, distributing illegal substances, or being under the influence.

If staff have reason to suspect that a student either has in their possession, or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will make an immediate report to the Program Director or school nurse. The student will be evaluated by the school nurse. Parents/Guardians and the school district will be immediately contacted. The police will be immediately contacted if the student has illegal substances in their possession in school.

Prior to the student's return to school, documentation that the student/family has sought therapeutic/medical assessment and support services will be required. A student will be suspended from school for this offense, in accordance with DESE Regulations and Massachusetts State Law.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A, 51G, any public or private school teacher, educational administrator, guidance or family counselor, nurse, or social worker, as well as certain other professionals who in their professional capacity have reasonable cause to believe that a child under eighteen years is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse by a caretaker, including sexual abuse, malnutrition or neglect must report such conditions to the Department of Social Services.

READS Academy staff will be vigilant for signs and symptoms of suspected abuse/neglect and carefully document objective data that is directly witnessed that may indicate a reportable situation. With due respect given to maintaining confidentiality, the school nurse will then conference with the READS Academy Program Director/Principal and/or the Assistant Program Director, and the school counselor regarding the above. Together a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of filing a 51A with DSS.

For additional information refer to the MDPH Comprehensive School Health Manual, Chapter 13, p 13.31-13.32

The Collaborative recognizes that, because of their sustained contact with school age children, Collaborative employees are in an excellent position to identify possible treatment and protection.

"Abuse" is the infliction, by other than accidental means, of physical or emotional harm upon the body of a child.

"Neglect" is the failure to provide necessary food, care, clothing, shelter, medical attention, or appropriate supervision for a child.

"Child" is any person up to the age of eighteen.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that school employees report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Records concerning reports of suspected abuse or neglect are confidential. Teachers and others who report suspected abuse or neglect are presumed to be acting in good faith and are immune from any civil or criminal liability. However, information provided to the Department of Children and Families may be subpoenaed in a subsequent count hearing. If an investigation does finally result from a report of any teacher or other Collaborative employee, the parents are not given the name or names of those in the Collaborative who reported their suspicions.

It is the policy of the Collaborative that any staff member who has reason to suspect that a child has suffered or is suffering physical or emotional injury as a result of being abused and/or neglected shall immediately report this suspicion to the Program Director, the host building Program Director/Principal where the child is enrolled, the Special Education Director of the sending school district, and the Executive Director of READS Collaborative.

It is not the responsibility of educators to prove that the child has been abused and /or neglected or to determine whether the child is in need of protection. Collaborative employees should not contact the child's family or any other persons to determine the cause of suspected abuse or neglect. All interviews and discussions with and physical inspections of the child should be conducted with sensitivity and compassion by appropriate persons.

Any person required to make such an oral and written report who fails to do so may be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

The following procedure reflects the commitment of the Collaborative to comply with the mandatory Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Statute as well as to serve as a practical means of implementing an effective report system in the Collaborative. READS Collaborative recognizes that because of their sustained contact with school age children, Collaborative employees are in an excellent position to identify abused or neglected children and to refer them for treatment and protection.

To comply with the Massachusetts Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Statute, Chapter 119, Section 51A, it is the policy of the Collaborative that any teacher or other Collaborative employee who suspects that a child's physical or mental health or welfare may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, shall report to the Program Director, the Program Director/Principal of the host school building where the child is enrolled, the Special Education Director of the sending school district, and the Executive Director of READS. The Program Director or designee will file a report which should include the following information: name, address, age of student, name and address of parent or caretaker, nature and extent of injuries of description or neglect, and any other information that might help establish the cause of the injuries or condition. In the Program Director's absence, the report will be filed by the Assistant Program Director, Clinical Director, or designated counselor.

A Form 2 is submitted to DESE if a 51A is filed against any member of READS Academy with the Department of Child and Families (DCF).

MEDICATION POLICY

READS Academy complies with all Massachusetts Department of Public Health Standards regarding administration of medication to students. This assures for the safe and proper administration of prescription and non-prescription medications. The school nurse, in consultation with the school physician, develops policies and procedures governing the administration of medication within the school. These procedures are consistent with 105 C.M.R. 210.00 through 210.100, and are clearly outlined in the READS Academy Health Manual.

The school nurse is responsible for the development and management of the medication administration program. Only a registered professional nurse administers medication within the school. Delegation of medication administration can only occur at the recommendation of the school nurse and with written approval from the Department of Public Health. Review and revision of these policies and procedures will occur as needed, but at least every two years. READS Academy submits these policies and procedures to the Department of Public Health upon request. The Department of Public Health may inspect any individual student's medication record or record related to the administration or storage of prescription medications without prior notice to assure compliance with 105 C.M.R. 210.000. Parents/Guardians and students are informed of medication policies upon admission, and annually at the commencement of each school year.

The school nurse maintains current pharmaceutical reference materials in the school health office.

PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENTS/ INVOLVEMENT

Parent/Guardian Consents:

For students in a classroom located within a host school district: Upon entry into a READS Collaborative Program the consent of parents/guardians in host school districts is obtained using the host school handbook and forms. READS Programs track the return of all consents.

For the READS Academy Public Day Program all consents are obtained and maintained by the Program.

Consents for parents/guardians in all programs are obtained by the school nurse as follows:

- emergency medical care will be obtained annually
- medications will be obtained annually

When applicable the Program Director will obtain consent for participation in research, experimentation, fundraising, publicity, and observation

Parental Notification of curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues will be made annually pursuant to the Parental Notification Law M.G.L. c. 71, section 32A

Parent Guardian Involvement:

Parents are invited to attend an annual Open House, Family Events and Parent Conferences, which are scheduled, in part or whole, in the evening.

Communication plans are developed for each student by the school adjustment counselors. This could include a daily communication log, scheduled emails, and/or telephone calls. Communication plans are developed to meet the diverse needs or unique circumstances of students' parents or guardians.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to communicate proactively with the student's staff, regarding information that could have an impact on the student's school day. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in medication, medical issues, pending court involvement, upcoming anniversaries/times of year that have historically impacted the student, or any changes at home.

READS Academy is open to having parents volunteer in a variety of ways. This includes, but is not limited to: sharing their unique talents and abilities with students, assisting with supervision of extra-curricular activities, chaperoning field trips, and assisting with clerical tasks in the classrooms. Parents who wish to volunteer must contact the Program Director.

All parents who volunteer in the classrooms or chaperone field trips must complete a CORI (Criminal Offense Record Inventory), prior to participating or having direct contact with students.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OVERVIEW

If a student exhibits escalating behavior despite the provision of therapeutic interventions, staff will provide additional options to assist the student to regain self-regulation such as taking space in a calming area, using a sensory strategy, or engaging in an emergency counseling session. If a student exhibits behavior that is aggressive or assaultive and staff assess the student to be a danger to self or others, physical restraint may be initiated only after all other options have been exhausted. Physical restraints are to be used only as a last resort when the student or others are in "imminent danger" of harm and will not be used as a form of discipline or punishment for non-compliance with staff requests or school rules.

Staff will demonstrate the Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention model of physical restraint upon request from a parent or guardian. Parents are informed of restraint practices during the Admission Process, prior to the student's enrollment. Parents/Guardians are asked to review the restraint policy and procedures within this handbook, and sign an acknowledgement of the restraint policy.

A written restraint report is completed for each restraint that is implemented, in accordance with DESE regulations. Parents are immediately notified by telephone or email, and a copy of the restraint report is provided within 3 school days. Incident reports are maintained in the student's record in the main office and reported to DESE.

Physical Restraints that last more than twenty minutes, or during which there is an injury to a student or staff, are reported to the Executive Director and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education using a Form 2 in accordance with regulations governing physical restraint in public school settings.

When any student requires physical restraint twice within 5 school days, the classroom team collaborates to review the restraint reports and the student's behavioral skills data and develops/reviews/revises the student's behavioral support plan to identify additional supports and interventions to prevent physical restraint.

The READS Academy Program Directors meet monthly to review all restraint report data and determine if any additional steps need to be taken to reduce/prevent the use of physical restraint.

Staff Training:
All staff members are certified in the Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Physical Crisis Intervention Training (CPI). Re-certification is required annually, within 30 working days prior to the beginning of each school year. Staff will periodically review the restraint procedures and preventative intervention strategies of the Crisis Prevention Institute during weekly Classroom Team Collaboration, /Supervision Meetings and Faculty Meetings.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT PROTOCOL

READS Academy staff follow the ***Crisis Prevention Institute Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Model***, the focus of which is to intervene proactively in response to lower level behavioral indicators of distress to prevent or de-escalate more serious risk behaviors.

CPI Crisis Development Model

Behavior Level: Anxiety
Anxiety behavior is defined as a noticeable increase or change in behavior, which is unique to each person, and is an indicator that something internally or external is adversely impacting the person.

Staff Response: Supportive Attitude and Approach
An empathic, non judgemental approach communicates support and can encourage an individual in distress to convey concerns and work toward resolution in a rational manner. A supportive response reinforces a level of trust and rapport, which is key to reducing risk behaviors.

Behavioral Level: Defensive
Defensive behavior is defined as the beginning stages of loss of rationality. At this point, the person begins to give cues, verbally and nonverbally, indicating that they are beginning to lose control. The defensive level is a highly volatile state and usually includes verbal belligerence and hostility. The individual may challenge staff, the institution and authority. The defensive person begins to respond or cue on different modes of communication. Often, at the peak of his defensiveness, they no longer respond to the rational context of staff words. Instead, they may be more in tune with other types of communication such as tone of voice, proximity or body posture. This is an extremely critical time during the crisis development. At this stage, the staff attitude and behavior is critical to facilitating a positive intervention.

Staff Response: Directive Attitude and Response
This involves setting behavioral limits for the individual. The individual needs and at times, is actually seeking structural limits to regain rational control. It is important that staff ensure that the limits are clear, using simple language that the individual understands, and it is essential that the limit is objective and reasonable, and delivered in a considerate manner. The goal is to make the person realize that the consequences of his behavior is up to them. The limit should be constructive and delivered with a focus on the positive behavioral outcome rather than an ultimatum. It should include the desired alternate behavior and positive outcome when the person engages in the desired behavior.

Risk Behavior Level
This level is defined as total loss of control which results in a violent action. The person is no longer able to maintain self control, so the verbal behavior turns to a physical risk behavior. Sometimes a person in distress continues to escalate despite best efforts at less restrictive interventions, and the person places themselves and/or others in a position of immediate or imminent harm.

Staff Response: Safety Interventions
In this situation staff may have no other alternative other than using restrictive interventions in order to maximize safety and minimize harm. Physical Intervention is used only as a last resort

to manage risk behavior when all other reasonable non-physical approaches have been exhausted. Physical intervention should never be used to enforce rules or as a punishment.

Tension Reduction Behavior Level
The tension reduction behavior level is the final level in the crisis development model. It is the point at which the person begins to regain self control and rationality. A person going through the tension reduction level following a physical intervention has been through a potentially frightened or traumatic experience, and may not be able to remember all of it. As such the person may be emotionally vulnerable, emotionally drained or even remorseful. The purpose of physical intervention is to reduce the risk of harm, and staff should quickly look at ways in which they can de-escalate the situation, let go, and return control to the person.

Staff Response: Therapeutic Rapport Attitude and Approach
All attempts should be made to re-establish a positive relationship. Staff should begin to offer the person a range of safe choices as the person regains control, and staff should recognize that the person may be seeking emotional support and reassurance.

Extreme Situations
In extreme situations the student can become out of control and reach a point where physical intervention cannot be done safely. In this type of situation, staff members exercise movement, deflection, and evasive tactics, until they can approach the student safely. Extreme situations require the staff member to notify an administrator immediately. If the situation continues to escalate, staff may need to call "911" for added assistance from first responders.

Role(s) of Other Staff Member(s)
In any situation that requires physical intervention, staff members not directly involved with the situation must assume responsibility for maintaining a safe environment, removing bystanders or onlookers from the area, and reassuring other students.

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

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

Action After Physical Intervention
After ending the physical intervention, and ensuring the safety of everyone concerned, the student must have ample time to process/understand the incident. Staff members involved in the physical intervention must provide this processing time immediately. Some students require longer cool down periods than others, so that processing time occurs in accordance with the Crisis Prevention Institute's C.O.P.I.N.G. /Postvention Model.

SECLUSION

Seclusion: is defined as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area, with or without adult supervision, from which the student is not permitted to leave. Seclusion is

prohibited in public education programs except in an emergency situation as a last resort on an individual student basis, **and only if the conditions listed in 603 CMR 46.07(2), including Parent/Student consent, are documented in advance. At READS Collaborative, a student is always supervised if seclusion were needed.**

At all times during an emergency seclusion, staff will continuously observe and actively monitor the student. Any space used for emergency seclusion shall be clean, safe, and sanitary; appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated/cooled; in compliance with local fire and building codes; and appropriate for the purpose of calming the student. Emergency seclusion shall cease as soon as the student no longer poses a threat of assault or immediate physical harm OR if the student is observed to be in severe distress. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined below.

Any incident of seclusion is reported to the parent/guardian, sending district, and DESE consistent with reporting regulations for a physical restraint. The incident is also included in the student's school record.

RE-ENTRY AFTER HOSPITALIZATION PROTOCOL

To ensure the health and safety of every student re-entering READS Academy program following a psychiatrically or medically related hospitalization, READS Academy has adopted the following protocol:

Any student requiring an inpatient hospitalization for psychiatric or medical conditions will be readmitted to READS Academy after receipt of the discharge paperwork and/or contact from the parent/guardian. This document is required to ensure that the school nurse has current information, in writing, from the attending physician regarding changes in medication, medication procedures, or adjustment in the dosage for any ongoing medical/psychiatric treatments.

Parent/Guardian must notify READS Academy of hospitalization, discharge, and when the student is expected to return to school.

If the student was receiving medication at school prior to the hospitalization, the medication will not be administered without confirmation that the medication has not been discontinued or dosage has been changed from the provider.

RUN-AWAY STUDENT PROTOCOL

- If a student leaves the building but is not in imminent danger, the primary staff member working with the student will follow the student outdoors and attempt to persuade the student to reenter the school building.

  If a student has a history of running away, or threatens or attempts to run away from the school building and staff determine that the student, or others, would be in imminent danger if they left the building, staff may initiate physical restraint protocol to protect the student or others from imminent danger.

- If the student proceeds to leave school grounds, staff will continue to follow the student if they are able to safely do so.after notifying an administrator.
- The student's mental status will be assessed to determine the need for a Crisis Team Evaluation.
- The administrator will determine when there is a need to request assistance from the Middleboro Police if the student is in immediate danger or does not quickly return to campus. If the administrator is not available the student's counselor or other staff member may contact the police using the non-emergency line.

  The following information is provided to the police:

  1) Student's name
  2) Age and Date of Birth
  3) Name of Parent or Guardian or Caregiver
  4) DCF caseworker or other responsible party if applicable
  5) Student's approximate height and weight
  6) Clothing the student is wearing
  7) Direction in which the student headed
  8) Any information about where the student may be going
- The student's parent/guardian is notified by the teacher or counselor.
- A meeting may be scheduled with the parent/guardian to process the incident and develop intervention strategies.
- An incident report must be submitted to an administrator detailing the events that transpired by the end of the school day.
- Staff will debrief on the incident, and consider steps to prevent future attempts to run away.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE/EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SCHEDULE

All READS Academy Programs follow a regular school year schedule of 180 days.

School Calendars indicate all scheduled Early Release Days and No School Days. School calendars include 5 additional days at the end of the year in the event of school cancellation, per DESE requirement.

Regular School Year

Grades PreK-6:

Student Hours: 8:30am - 3:00pm Staff Hours: 8:00am - 3:30pm
Early Release Days: 8:30 am - 12:45pm

Grades 7-12+

Student Hours (Grades 7-12+): 7:45am - 2:05pm Staff Hours: 7:30am - 3:00pm
Early Release Days: 7:45am - 12:30pm

The READS Academy class located in West Bridgewater School District will follow the school calendar year and schedule of West Bridgewater Middle-Senior High School.
Student Hours: 7:15am - 2pm Early Release Days: 7:15am - 11:00am.

ESY (5Weeks, 3 Days per week; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday)

Grades PreK-6:

Student Hours: 8:45am - 2:15pm Staff Hours: 8:15am - 2:45pm

Grades 7-12+

Student Hours (Grades 7-12+): 8:30am - 2:00pm Staff Hours: 8:00am - 2:30pm

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment Policy
Effective August 14, 2020
Reference 34 C.F.R 106.30

Copies of this policy shall be given to each employee of the READS Board of Directors and to each student annually as part of the handbook. In addition, the policy is available at the READS Administrative Office located at 105 East Grove St., Middleborough, MA 02346 and on the website, www.readscollab.org.

Position

READS Board of Directors takes the position that all employees and students in the READS Collaborative have the right to work and learn in an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal law. READS Title IX Coordinator and READS Sexual Harassment Investigator shall respond promptly in a meaningful way upon actual knowledge of an allegation of sexual harassment / sexual assault occurring under READS' substantial authority. READS shall offer supportive measures and shall not be deliberately indifferent to any complaint. It is the goal of the Board to follow a process that puts an end to any incident of harassment and provides for an environment that is safe and welcoming for those who work and learn at READS Collaborative.

Protection from sexual harassment applies to individuals who are employees or who are accessing educational programming at READS Collaborative.

The Board of Directors will take seriously all complaints of sexual harassment and will investigate, through its designated Sexual Harassment contact persons, identified in the Procedures Section of this policy, each and every complaint thoroughly and as quickly as possible.

Anyone may report sex discrimination, inclusive of sexual harassment / sexual assault, to a READS staff member or supervisor in any manner. That staff member or supervisor will immediately inform the Title IX Coordinator. See procedures section for additional information. READS staff will receive training on sexual discrimination policy and procedures at least annually

Discrimination on the basis of sex shall include, but not be limited to, sexual harassment. 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a) defines "**sexual harassment**" as "conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies

one or more of the following:" (1) A school employee conditioning a school aid, benefit or service on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct ["quid pro quo" harassment]; (2) Unwelcome conduct reasonably determined to be so "severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive" that it "effectively denies" a person equal access to a school education program or activity; (3) "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. 12991(a)(30).
Sexual harassment may encompass an accumulation of incidents.

Scope of Policy

This policy extends to individuals who are accessing educational programming at READS Collaborative. This policy applies only where READS has substantial authority over the location or the individual identified as the perpetrator. This policy applies equally among genders.

READS is not required to respond to alleged conduct occurring off school grounds and outside of a school program or activity if the conduct is not otherwise under the school's "substantial authority". READS is not required to respond to alleged conduct occurring outside of the U.S. (e.g., a trip abroad).

The Board of Directors, through its sexual harassment investigator, shall comply with all statutory obligations in the reporting of suspected child abuse cases and sexual assault on minors.

The Board of Directors has adopted a preponderance of evidence standard for findings of sexual harassment and discrimination in all contexts.

It is unlawful to retaliate against an employee (or student) for filing a complaint of sexual harassment or for cooperating in an investigation of a complaint for sexual harassment.

This policy will be posted on the READS website as part of the READS Policy Manual, and included in both the student and staff handbooks. A hard copy of the policy is available upon request.

Definitions

- "**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. A complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in an education program or activity of the school at the time that the formal complaint is filed.
- "**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**" is a document or electronic submission signed (physically or electronically) by a complainant (a parent/guardian may sign/file on a student's behalf), OR by the Title IX Coordinator, alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting a school investigation. This complaint may be filed in person, by mail, by electronic mail, or by an online portal provided for this purpose, using Title IX Coordinator contact information.
- "**Preponderance of Evidence**" - Under the **preponderance** standard, the burden of proof is met when there is a greater than 50% chance that the claim is true.
- "**Respondent**" means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
- The term "**Sexual Harassment**" shall mean sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when
    - submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly conditioned on benefit or as a basis for employment decisions;
    - such advances, requests or unwelcome conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work/school performance or access to events by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment;
    - it involves:
        - "Sexual assault"
        - "dating violence"
        - "domestic violence"
        - "stalking"

- and may include, but is not limited to:
  - verbal harassment or abuse
  - subtle pressure for sexual activity
  - inappropriate patting or pinching
  - intentional brushing against an employee's (co-worker's/student's) body
  - demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status
  - demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment/educational status
  - any sexually motivated unwelcome touching
  - Sexual innuendos, jokes, comments, pictures, displays of sexually suggestive materials, or questions are included in the prohibited conduct.

- "**Supportive 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. These measures are 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.

Procedures

If any employee or individual who is accessing educational programming at READS Collaborative believes that they have been sexually harassed, that they have witnessed such harassment or they are aware of sexual harassment, they shall report it immediately to their supervisor, to their teacher, to their Program Director, to the Title IX Coordinator or to the Executive Director. **It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor, teacher, Program Director, or Executive Director who receives a report of sexual harassment to report the incident(s) to the Title IX Coordinator who shall coordinate and handle the complaint.**

Title IX Coordinator: Alisa Poh, READS Collaborative Human Resources Coordinator, 105 East Grove Street, Middleboro (508) 947-3634 ex.1123 or through Mass Relay at (800)720-3479 apoh@readscollab.org

The Title IX Coordinator will:

- receive all complaints and require that the complainant submit a formal complaint **in writing**, which requests an investigation and includes a signature.
- immediately notify the Sexual Harassment Investigator and the Executive Director of an allegation even if a formal complaint has not yet been submitted.

Sexual Harassment Investigator: Alisa Poh, READS Collaborative Human Resources Coordinator 105 East Grove St., Middleboro (508)947-3634 1123, through Mass Relay at (800)720-3479 apoh@readscollab.org

The Sexual Harassment Investigator will:

- Notify the Program Director or administrator where the alleged harassment has occurred to begin a prompt response of **supportive measures** while the investigation is being launched.
- Give complainants and respondents written notice of allegations and grievance process, stating that respondent is presumed innocent, and informing parties of an equal opportunity to choose an advisor (advisor may be, but is not required to be, an attorney);
- *Determine if an interpreter will be needed to interview a staff or student from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program. READS Interpreters do not interpret for such interviews unless there is an emergency need to get information for the immediate safety of staff or students. A third party confidential ASL Interpreter service (such as Partners or MCDHH) must be engaged prior to interviews.*
- Describe available supportive measures (available to respondents as well as to complainants);
- Be responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive 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.*
- Notify the 'respondent' that a written complaint of sexual harassment has been made against them and an investigation will be conducted, a reminder that retaliation will not be tolerated and a projected date when the investigation may be concluded.
- Promptly initiate the investigation and conduct interviews.
- Assemble a report of the findings, within 10 days of receipt of written complaint, as possible.
- Provide an investigative report summarizing relevant evidence to each party, at least ten (10) days prior to a determination of responsibility, for the parties' review and written response;
- Be responsible for overseeing implementation of remedies related to findings of the investigation
- Distribute the report to both the complainant and the respondent at the same time. Distribute the report to the Title IX Coordinator and the Executive Director

Executive Director/Title IX Decision Maker: - Dina Medeiros, 105 East Grove St., Middleboro (508)947-3634 x1103, or through Mass Relay at (800)720-3479.

The Executive Director shall be the ultimate decision maker in matters of dispute, including the implementation of remedies and disciplinary measures.

Informal Procedures

Offering to facilitate an informal resolution process is prohibited unless a formal complaint has been filed, is only permissible with both parties' written, informed, voluntary consent, and is not permissible relative to alleged employee to student conduct. The Collaborative's default procedure for a sexual harassment complaint must include an investigation.

Formal Procedures
READS will promptly respond with supportive measures upon actual knowledge of sexual harassment / sexual assault occurring in circumstances under READS' substantial authority.

Actual knowledge is defined as notice to any employee of a K-12 school, regardless of whether a formal complaint has been made. Anyone, not just an alleged victim, may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, to a school in any manner. See 34 C.F.R. § 106.8(a). A K-12 school is deemed to have "actual knowledge," and is thereby obligated to respond in a meaningful way, upon notice of an allegation of sexual harassment to any employee.

Regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed, a school is required to "respond 'promptly' in a manner that is not 'deliberately indifferent'" and offer "supportive measures" when:
(1) the school has "actual" knowledge of sexual harassment; (2) that occurred within the school's education program or activity; (3) against a person in the United States.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment from the Title IX Coordinator, the Sexual Harassment Investigator shall immediately begin an investigation.

Investigation Procedure When the Complainant is a Student

An employee who has concern for the safety or well-being of any student for **any reason** shall report their concern immediately to a supervisor, the Title IX Coordinator or the Executive Director.

In all cases involving sexual harassment, all parties involved will be given the utmost protection of privacy.

An employee who has actual knowledge of sexual harassment of an employee of READS will notify the Title IX Coordinator within the same day by email, text or phone.

If a student confides in an employee that they, or another student, has been sexually harassed by either another student or an employee* of the Board of Directors, the employee shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Title IX Coordinator or Executive Director by email, text or phone..

Referral to Law Enforcement and/or Other Agencies

Some alleged conduct may constitute both a violation of Collaborative policies and criminal activity. The Program Director, Executive Director, or designee will refer matters to law enforcement and other agencies as appropriate under the law or Collaborative policy and inform the complainant/ alleged victim of the right to file a criminal complaint.

The Sexual Harassment Investigator shall immediately begin the investigation and shall:

1. interview* the employee who notified the investigator of the claim of sexual harassment

2. notify the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) that the student's claim of sexual harassment has been referred to the Sexual Harassment Investigator for an investigation.
3. interview* the complainant and document their statement with signature when possible.
4. notify the proper authorities, if the situation warrants such obligation
5. notify the respondent of the charge against him/her. The respondent shall be informed of the complainant's identity and shall also be informed that reprisals and retaliation against the complainant or any witnesses will not be tolerated. A respondent must be presumed innocent unless and until the investigation is complete.
6. interview* the respondent privately or with legal representation present, if requested. Document their statement and include a signature when possible.
7. interview* witnesses (if any) to the incident of harassment individually or privately, without either the complainant or the respondent present. The investigator shall document the statements of the witnesses with signatures, as possible.
8. issue a written summary of the report to the complainant and the respondent and provide at least 10 days to submit questions
9. review and respond to submitted questions
10. submit a report to the Executive Director
11. notify the complainant and the respondent that a determination of responsibility will be made by the Executive Director using a standard of a preponderance of evidence

*The sexual harassment investigator shall document the statements of the complainant, the respondent, and the witnesses on a READS Investigation Form as to (a) the date(s) of the alleged incident(s), a description of all accounts, location of incidents, the names of others who were present, specific words or actions; (b) the dates of the interviews and questions asked; and (c) the name of the interviewer and other persons who were present at the interviews. Complainants, respondents, and witnesses shall review their statements and confirm that the Sexual Harassment Investigator has documented their statements and interviews accurately. The parties shall then sign their statements if possible.

Determination

The Executive Director shall issue a written determination to the parties simultaneously, explaining procedures, conclusions, rationale and bases. If the charge is substantiated, due process and IEP processes will be followed prior to imposition of any discipline. The Executive Director will make the decision on the actions that will be taken based on the preponderance of evidence. The action of the Executive Director shall be taken as soon as possible following the submission of the investigator's report.
Sexual harassment may lead to immediate removal of a student under emergency measures.

Action shall consist of, but not be limited to:

1. warning
2. suspension
3. emergency removal

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

All Sexual Harassment reports and investigations shall be documented and maintained for a period of 7 years in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(10).

Investigation Procedure When the Complainant is an Employee

If an employee believes that they have been sexually harassed they shall report the incident immediately to the sexual harassment investigator or a person with whom the complainant feels the most comfortable reporting such a matter (e.g, union representative, supervisor, etc.). The employee who has actual knowledge of sexual harassment will notify the Title IX Coordinator within the same day by email, text or phone.

The Sexual Harassment Investigator shall immediately begin the investigation and shall:

1. interview* the employee who notified the investigator of the claim of sexual harassment
2. *if the complaint was filed by someone other than the target of harassment, notify the target (complainant) that a claim of sexual harassment has been referred to the Sexual Harassment Investigator for an investigation.*
3. interview* the complainant privately, unless the presence of a union representative, or other legal representative is requested and document their statement with signature.
4. notify the proper authorities, if the situation warrants such obligation
5. notify the respondent of the charge against him/her. The respondent shall be informed of the complainant's identity and shall also be informed that reprisals and retaliation against the complainant or any witnesses will not be tolerated. A respondent must be presumed innocent unless and until the investigation is complete.
6. interview* respondent privately, unless the presence of a union representative, or other legal representative is requested. Document their statement and include a signature.
7. interview* witnesses (if any) to the incident of harassment individually or privately, unless the presence of a union representative or other legal representative is requested, without either the complainant or the respondent present. The investigator shall document the statements of the witnesses with signatures, as possible. Confidentiality will be maintained to the best ability of the sexual harassment investigator.
8. issue a written summary of the report to the complainant and the respondent and provide at least 10 days to submit questions
9. review and respond to submitted questions
10. submit a report to the Executive Director
11. notify the complainant and the respondent that a determination of responsibility will be made by the Executive Director using a standard of a preponderance of evidence

*The sexual harassment investigator shall document the statements of the complainant, the respondent, and the witnesses as to (a) the date(s) of the alleged incident(s), a description of all accounts, location of incidents, the names of others who were present, specific words or actions; (b) the dates of the interviews and questions asked; and (c) the name of the interviewer and other persons who were present at the interviews. Complainants, respondents, and witnesses shall review their statements and confirm that the Sexual Harassment Investigator has documented

their statements and interviews accurately. The parties shall then sign their statements if possible.

Referral to Law Enforcement and/or Other Agencies

Some alleged conduct may constitute both a violation of Collaborative policies and criminal activity. The Program Director, Executive Director, or designee will refer matters to law enforcement and other agencies as appropriate under the law or Collaborative policy and inform the complainant/ alleged victim of the right to file a criminal complaint.

Determination

The Executive Director shall issue a written determination to the parties simultaneously, explaining procedures, conclusions, rationale and bases. If the charge is substantiated, due process will be followed prior to imposition of any discipline. The Executive Director will make the decision on the actions that will be taken based on the preponderance of evidence. The action of the Executive Director shall be taken as soon as possible following the submission of the investigator's report. Sexual harassment may lead to immediate removal of a staff member under emergency measures.

If the investigation substantiates the charge of sexual harassment:

1. The report will be placed in the respondent's personnel file.
2. If action is taken, following all due process procedures, said action shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file. Action shall consist of, but not be limited to:
    1. warning
    2. suspension
    3. dismissal

If action is taken, the Executive director shall notify the Board of Directors in the same manner as they would in other serious matters.

Suspensions and dismissal shall be handled in a similar fashion to all suspensions and dismissals.

As indicated above, these procedures do not limit the Collaborative from removing an 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.

If the charge is **not substantiated** the report is not placed in the respondent's personnel file.

All Sexual Harassment reports and investigations shall be documented and maintained for a period of 7 years in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(10).

Appeals

If either the complainant or the respondent is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation of the harassment charge, they may discuss their dissatisfaction directly with the Executive Director.

If still dissatisfied, they may appeal the decision as described below.

Both parties have the opportunity to appeal the decision in writing to the Executive Director within 5 days of receipt of the findings of the investigation or a dismissal based on:

- (A) Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- (B) 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
- (C) 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 current President of the READS Board of Directors 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 current, 2026-2027, President of the READS Board of Directors:

Current READS Board of Directors Board President
2026-2027 - Mr. William Runey, Superintendent
D-R Regional School District
2700 Regional Road
North Dighton, MA 02764
Phone 508-252-5000 bruney@drregional.org

In addition, students and employees should be aware that they may have further recourse under the law governing sexual harassment.

State and Federal Agencies

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. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:

- Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109-3921. email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov. (617) 289-0111; TDD: 877-521-2172
- Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, 1 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 617-994-6196; TTY: 617-994-6196
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203. 1-800-669-4000; TTY 1-800-669-6820.

- The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination One Ashburton Place Sixth Floor, Room 601 Boston, MA 02108 Phone 617-994-6000, TIY: 617-994-6196
- The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission John F. Kennedy Federal Building 475 Government Center Boston, MA 02203 Phone: 1-800-669-4000

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.

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.

READS 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.

READS Collaborative will ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

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.

These training materials will be posted on the school district's website.

Contacts

Title IX Coordinator
READS Human Resources Coordinator, Alisa Poh
105 East Grove St.
Middleboro, MA 02346
Telephone: 508-947-3634 x1103; apoh@readscollab.org

Sexual Harassment Investigator
READS Human Resources Coordinator, Alisa Poh
105 East Grove St.
Middleboro, MA 02346
Telephone: 508-947-3634 x1123; apoh@readscollab.org

Decision Maker
READS Executive Director, Dina Medeiros
105 East Grove St.
Middleboro, MA 02346
Telephone: 508-947-3634 x1103;dmedeiros@readscollab.org

Appeals
Current READS Board of Directors Board President
2026-2027 - Mr. William Runey, Superintendent
D-R Regional School District
2700 Regional Road
North Dighton, MA 02764
Phone 508-252-5000 bruney@drregional.org

SNOW DAYS

READS Academy will send out notification alerts via phone calls, text messages, and email notifications to parents/guardians should there be a school cancellation due to inclement weather.

There will be no school for students at the West Bridgewater classroom when West Bridgewater school is cancelled and /or when school is canceled for the town in which the student resides.

STUDENT RECORDS

Students and/or parents/guardians are entitled to look at their records upon request to the Program Director. Incident reports are filed periodically and students have the right to discuss these reports with the staff person who completes them. They can also discuss their concerns with a teacher, counselor or Program Director.

Confidentiality is respected. Students and/or parents/guardians have the right to see what information is provided to sending school districts. Files are kept in a locked cabinet in the Main office of READS Academy's main campus. Anyone outside of the student's classroom team or READS administration who views the student's file must have written consent, sign the Log of Access and be accompanied by a staff member when they view the file.

TEAM MEETINGS

TEAM meetings are held annually to review student progress and revise the individual educational plan. Parents/guardians and students are invited to these meetings by written notice from the sending school district.

Other professionals in attendance at these meetings may include READS Academy staff, representatives from the student's school district, representatives from agencies working with the student, therapists working with the student or family, or any person invited by the parent or guardian.

VISITORS

All visitors must ask and receive prior approval from the Program Director. Scheduled visits are preferred to assure that an administrator is available to accompany the visitor, the staff can be available to meet and answer any questions or concerns, and to assure that there is space allocated to hold a meeting.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE

READS Academy Handbook Signature Page

I, (Print First and Last Name) _____, approve of and support the program goals described throughout this handbook.

I have read the handbook thoroughly and agree to adhere to its policies and expectations.

I acknowledge that:

- ☐ I have been informed that I have the right to receive, and have received, an electronic copy of the READS Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.
- ☐ I have been informed that I have the right to receive, and have received, an electronic copy of the READS Collaborative Policies and Procedure Manual.
- ☐ I have been informed that I have the right to receive, and have received, an electronic copy of the Behavior Support Policies and Procedures, as outlined in the READS Academy Handbook.
- ☐ I will return consents from the school nurse as follows:
  - ☐ emergency medical care, annually
  - ☐ medications, annually
- ☐ I will return consents from the Academy main office for:
  - ☐ Internet use policy, annually
  - ☐ Consent to photograph
  - ☐ Updated regulations on Seclusion and Physical Restraint
  - ☐ Review of Student Handbook
- ☐ When applicable, the Program Director will send consent for participation in research, experimentation, fundraising, publicity, and observation
- ☐ When applicable, I will receive Parental Notification of curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues pursuant to the Parental Notification Law M.G.L. c. 71, section 32A and may choose for my child to opt out.

_____

Student Name (Please Print) Student Signature Date

_____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print) Parent/Guardian Signature Date