



**STUDENT AND FAMILY  
HANDBOOK  
2020-2021**

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# SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

## 1.1 MISSION: LIVES OF LEARNING AND SERVICE

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We are a team with a task (to quote the school's founder), which is helping our students prepare for lives of learning and service (to quote our mission statement).

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Four Rivers Charter Public School is dedicated to educating young people for lives of learning and service. The school offers a rigorous college preparatory program aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and an emphasis on character development for moral and social responsibility. Three central themes -- nature, technology and community -- guide teaching and learning at the school, engaging students and teachers in a fundamental question of our times: how do we find the healthy, sustainable interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community? The school works closely with parents and seeks both to serve and to learn from the many resources of Franklin County.

In its charter application, the school identified the following purposes:

### ***Academic***

To provide a solid preparation in the core academic disciplines so that students are prepared for college, work or other post-secondary opportunities and that they perform successfully on MCAS and other assessments; to foster clear, enlivened thinking, in which questions are embraced with openness and wonder, answers are sought with rigor and respect for truth, and collaboration with others is encouraged; and to develop the skills and attitudes for lifelong learning.

### ***Character***

To help students recognize their own "genius," the particular strengths they bring; to develop abilities to work and play cooperatively with others; to awaken students to their moral compass by emphasizing the virtues of courage, respect, responsibility and compassion; and to train students in the process of making healthy choices.

### ***Themes***

To engage deeply and creatively in study and fieldwork involving the school's three themes of nature, technology and community, as they appear within our immediate community and more widely in our culture; and to develop projects or proposals demonstrating balanced and sustainable interworking of these themes.

### ***Service to the Franklin County community***

To provide an educational alternative to students of Franklin County and their families; as part of the school's program to seek opportunities for service to and participation in the community life, businesses and natural resources of the county; and with time to provide educational programs and models that may be of help to other schools and individuals in the area.

## 1.2 FOUR COMMITMENTS

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To fulfill our mission, the school is guided by four basic commitments we have articulated to students, parents and the community, and by our powerful affiliation with Expeditionary Learning Schools.

### ***Expect the best***

Four Rivers expects high levels of achievement in academic learning, effort, and teamwork. We challenge students to dig deeper and work harder than most have done before. With talented and enthusiastic teachers, our program seeks to prepare every student for college. The curriculum grows from the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, with an emphasis on excellence in reading, writing and math, ensuring readiness for the MCAS. Its real energy comes from teachers working with small classes to develop challenging projects, through which students learn essential knowledge, skills, and values. They teach with clear standards for top quality work, respect for individual differences, and the conviction that every student can and wants to strive for the best.

### ***Learn by doing***

At Four Rivers, learning is active, not passive. Meaningful, engaging projects are central to our curriculum. Several times a year classes go on “learning expeditions”: in-depth investigations of a theme or topic, guided by questions, and which may extend from four to six or more weeks. Students do original research and fieldwork, often involving experts in the community. Expeditions promote responsibility and collaboration; they speak to diverse learning styles, reveal new strengths, and deepen understanding. Typically, learning expeditions end with the students producing work—a report, a publication, a presentation—that has a real purpose and a real audience.

### ***Explore big questions***

The school’s themes of nature, technology and community engage teachers and students in basic questions that promote active learning and bring them in touch with our area and our times. What does the natural world have to teach us? What does technology, and the creative power of invention behind it, offer us? How do they work together for the good of all? There is endless learning to be explored -- and a cause to be served -- in our themes. Our answers can shape the future, here in Franklin County and in the world beyond.

### ***Build character and community***

At Four Rivers, the development of character and community are as important as academic achievement. Our school is small, with a place for everyone. Every student is known; each is valued as bringing a unique gift to the school. All of us are called on to think and act for the common good. Through our advisory program and our curriculum, we guide each student’s quest for the strength of character and insight to make healthy choices and set positive goals. We encourage student leadership and initiative in helping one another, strengthening our school, and serving the community beyond. We emphasize six character virtues, and we also have a clear code of conduct, with no tolerance for behavior that is unsafe or hurtful to an individual or the community.

## **1.3 A COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAM**

Four Rivers prepares students to go to and be successful in college. To us, being prepared for college means students can think and learn independently and that they understand essential knowledge of core disciplines to continue their learning.

We believe that every one of our students can succeed in college and we work hard to convey that message. The value of college in today’s world is clear. In the most respectful way, we look at our students and say to them, “There’s more in you than you know. Go for it!”

There is a whole range of colleges and other avenues of further learning ahead for our graduates, and there are exciting possibilities for every one of them. Our job is to help them find the right next steps.

A recent study based largely on interviews with college professors describes what students need in order to succeed in college. They are the kinds of skills and habits that Four Rivers works to build:

One of the most dominant themes raised by participants is the importance of the habits of mind students develop in high school and bring with them to university studies. These habits are considered by many faculty members to be more important than specific content knowledge. The habits of mind include critical thinking, analytic thinking and problem solving; an inquisitive nature and interest in taking advantage of what a research university has to offer; the willingness to accept critical feedback and to adjust based on such feedback; openness to possible failures from time to time; and the ability and desire to cope with frustrating and ambiguous learning tasks. Other critical skills include the ability to express one's self in writing and orally in a clear and convincing fashion; to discern the relative importance and credibility of various sources of information; to draw inferences and reach conclusions independently; and to use technology as a tool to assist the learning process rather than as a crutch.

(From the Introduction to "Understanding University Success: A report from Standards for Success", a project of the Association of American Universities and The Pew Charitable Trusts")

Colleges are interested in more than just test scores. Learning through the practices of Expeditionary Learning (EL) can open doors to skills that make a difference in college. EL schools offer opportunities to test ideas, to explore interests, to build relationships, and to learn independently in all the ways mentioned above. We provide ways for students to experiment before they have to enter the world outside of Four Rivers and our graduates have important assets to offer. Students have reported back to us about what they felt prepared for and what they didn't. They have not only learned with depth vs. breadth, but also felt prepared to engage.

The bottom line: Expeditionary Learning is college preparatory.

## 1.4 FACULTY & STAFF 2019-20

### DIVISION 1

7th English/Social Studies – Anneke Dunnington  
7th Math/Science -- Mandy Locke  
7th Spanish -- Elizabeth Rodriguez Salas  
8th English -- Zach Podhorzer  
8th Social Studies -- Jackie MacNeish  
8th Math/Science -- Jessica Farwell  
8th Spanish -- Elizabeth Rodriguez Salas  
Wellness -- Dovrah Plotkin  
Learning Specialist -- Perri Wexler  
Assistant Teacher -- Lee Collins-Lambert

### DIVISION 2

English -- Nicole Crosby  
Social Studies -- Carly Hall  
Math -- Julia Fay  
9th Science -- Eliza Beardslee  
10th Science -- Laura Stamas  
Spanish -- Becca Rice  
Wellness -- Deborah Chamberlain  
Learning Specialist -- Anna Heidenreich  
Assistant Teacher -- Amelia Sawyer  
Assistant Teacher -- Nichole Walk

### DIVISION 3

English -- Leah Plath  
Social Studies -- Alex Wilson  
Math -- Sara Katz  
Science -- Andy Patari  
11th Spanish -- Elizabeth Rodriguez Salas  
12th Spanish -- Eliza Beardslee  
Wellness -- Deborah Chamberlain  
Learning Specialist -- Jessica Roll  
Assistant Teacher -- Shanti Archer

### TRIBUTARIES

Nature -- Bob Etzweiler\*  
Art -- Sara Lyons\*  
Music -- Zack Jakub\*  
Technology -- Dan Lederer

### STAFF

Principal/Head of School -- Peter Garbus  
Director of Operations -- Amy Wales  
Instructional Guide -- Alison Rheingold  
Dean of Students -- Matt Leaf  
College/Guidance Counselor -- Andy Stenson  
Academic Support Director -- Kate Conant  
Registrar -- Leslie Taylor  
School Secretary -- Carolyn Wood  
School Psychologist -- Bill Fogel\*  
Director of Technology -- Dan Lederer  
Athletic Director -- Kyle Bissell  
School Nurse -- Jamie Moody\*  
Title I/College Skills -- Mike Bukowick

\* Indicates part-time faculty or staff

### EMAIL CONTACT

Faculty and Staff members each have an extension on the school number, 775-4577, and e-mail addresses with

*firstinitiallastname@fourriverscharter.org.*

For example, ltaylor@fourriverscharter.org will reach our Registrar, Leslie Taylor.

## 1.5 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR				
Name	Position on the Board	Committee affiliation(s)	Number of terms served	Length of each term ( terms start and end in September)
Regina Campbell	Secretary	Cmt. on Trustees & Personnel Policy	VP, Valley Med Group; 4R Alum Parent	Appointed 2009 Term ends 2021
Peter Garbus	Ex-officio	Committee on Accountability	Principal/Head of School; 4R Alum Par.	Appointed 2009 expires on termination
Mikayla Goodwin	Trustee	Facilities & Finance Committee	Sales Fin. Mgr, Commonwealth Dairy 2013 graduate	Appointed 2018 Term Ends 2021
John Guenther	Trustee	Committee on Accountability	Former Math Teacher, Gfld	Appointed 2016 Term ends 2019
Jay Lord	Treasurer	Committee of Accountability	Director of Program Development, Just Roots Farm, Gfld.	Appointed 2011 Term ends 2020
Joshua Parker	Chair	Committee on Trustees & Personnel Policy	VP, Operations Mgr., Gfld Savings Bank, 4R Parent	Appointed 2015 Term ends 2021
Leah Plath	Trustee	Development Committee	Four Rivers Faculty Trustee	Appointed 2018 Term Ends 2020
Libby Woodfin	Trustee	Facilities & Finance Committee	Director of Publications, EL Education	Appointed 2017 Term Ends 2020

Updated July 2019

## 1.6 FOUR RIVERS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Four Rivers Educational Foundation "FREF" is the affiliated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the purpose of supporting the mission of Four Rivers Charter Public School. It owns the buildings and grounds and leases them to the school. As a tax exempt organization, it is also the vehicle for receiving certain grants and donations to the school through our Annual Fund campaign.

Edward Blatchford, President  
Deborah M. Shriver, Clerk  
John Bos  
Marie Bartlett  
Ted Murray

## **1.7 GLOSSARY OF FOUR RIVERS TERMINOLOGY**

Character Virtues – Respect, Responsibility, Courage, Compassion, Perseverance and Integrity; Qualities we hope to help our students develop, understand and embody. Our faculty of course model this as well.

Conference Room – the room at the bottom of the stairs, at the front of the farmhouse, across from Amy Wales’ and Leslie Taylor’s offices

Community Meeting – A meeting of two or more grade levels that happens once a week using the community meeting format (see community meeting section)

Crew – A group of 12-14 students with a faculty advisor. (see Advisory section)

Currents – Our monthly school newsletter containing updates and pictures from classroom teachers, news and upcoming events

Division - A group of two grades. Division I = middle school grades 7 and 8, Division II = lower high school grades 9 and 10, Division III = upper high school grades 11 and 12.

Draft - a first version or first attempt at a project or process. Often used at Four Rivers to describe a not-so-great, still-needs-improvement, but darn-it-we-pulled-it-off-at-least-a-little-bit-right attempt at a new aspect of our school traditions, culture or event.

Local Education Council (formerly Family Council - The council is organized in coordination with the school administration. Activities include planning and overseeing non-academic school functions, from community potlucks to service projects on campus and organizing after-school activities. Check “Currents” and/ or the School Events calendar or meetings and Coffee with the Principal.

Farmhouse – the building that houses administrative offices, meeting room, Gardner room and project room; so called because the original house and property were the Myers Farm.

Fieldwork - We do not call them “field trips” here because when we go out into the world, it is not just to have a look around or a guided tour, it is to go out to get our questions answered or collect data, or move a project forward. (We do occasionally schedule fun field trips, but our main focus is on field work).

FLASH -- Weekly newsletter sent by email with important updates.

Gardner Room – the Library, named for John and Carol Gardner, mentors and friends to several of the school’s founders and benefactors to the school.

Homework Club – contrary to popular belief, this is not a euphemism for detention. Homework club is a place to get homework done. Some stay because their parents need to pick them up at a later time, some stay because it is a part of a school success plan worked out by parents and teachers, etc.. It is held Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (1:30-3:30), and Thursday from 3:15-5:15. There is an hourly fee.

HOWLs - Habits of Work and Learning - students receive HOWL grades for standards related to participation, preparation, and organization.

Individual Learning Opportunities (ILOs) -- Students in Division 3 can propose Independent Studies, Internships, and Alternative Tribes as part of their course of study.

Indoor Action- A big bubble in Bernardston that covers an indoor fieldhouse. Since we have no gymnasium, this has been the place where our kids are bussed for after school winter sports.

Morning Meeting – A meeting with the teachers and students of one grade level in the Middle School.

Opening – a 5-10 minute activity, song, reading, game or discussion brought to faculty meeting to open the conversation. The faculty rotates this responsibility and each person brings their own creativity, talents and flair to the task.

Passage Presentation – end-of-year student presentation of work and growth done every 2 years to pass from division to division.

Porch – Small glassed-in area adjacent to the farmhouse library and connected to it by 2 doors. The porch is currently used as a classroom for Title 1 services.

Portfolio – a neatly presented collection of drafted and revised student work and reflections that shows the best quality work that the student has achieved during a given year or division. A crucial part of assessment at Four Rivers.

Polaris Awards – Weekly awards presented at community meeting to students who demonstrate or embody one of the character virtues. The story of the award is told carefully and clearly in a Community Meeting, revealing all of the reasons for the award before revealing the name of the recipient.

Presentations of Learning – Events where students show off their best work.

Project Room – also called the art room, but called the project room because it has functioned as a shop, band room, rehearsal studio, and yes, even a lunch room!

Recess – a break from the academic day in the Middle School, supervised by faculty.

Reflection – activities designed to help participants think about the quality of a process or product and what makes it so. If you ask any student at Four Rivers, we make them do this way too much... that is what we like to hear!

River Sections - Each grade in Div I and II is divided into classes which travel together for a semester (these groups may or may not be rearranged at the discretion of the grade-level teams and within the confines of the schedule). Because of our school name, we have named these class groups according to the four rivers. So far, it has been that the first grade in any division used Green and Millers while the second grade in a division uses Connecticut and Deerfield.

Scaffolding - steps taken to guide and support students through challenging assignments. Breaking down challenging or complex tasks into smaller more doable steps.

Standards -- Course by course, we define the long-term learning targets we expect our students to reach. Standards define the skills and knowledge we want our students to acquire through their learning.

Stepping In -- At the end of our first few days of school, otherwise known as Orientation, we have a ceremony to symbolize everyone coming together to form our new our new community for the year ahead. Thus, we all “step in” to the school and its culture.

Stepping Up – NOT “graduation” (that is reserved for seniors) but our last-day-of-school celebration of accomplishments and tradition of recognizing that students are moving to the next grade. During the ceremony students are called to the front one-by-one to turn over their portfolios to their teachers for the next year, be recognized for earning honors or distinction and have a few, brief words said about them by their current advisor.

Tributary classes – In keeping with our river theme, our “specials” (Nature, Technology, Music and Art) are called Tributaries, with the idea that skills learned through these classes “feed into” the overall flow of a student’s academic experience.

# **SECTION 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

## **2.1 GRADUATION POLICIES**

Graduation from Four Rivers marks an end and a beginning. It is the moment when students complete their learning under our guidance; it's also when they head off into the world of college, work, and citizenship. These are the requirements and policies for graduation from Four Rivers.

### **PART 1: COMPLETE ALL CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

The [GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST](#) provides the Board approved specific requirements for graduation.

**Residency:** Eleventh graders must take at least four of their core academic courses each term at Four Rivers, allowing them to take 1 or 2 courses outside Four Rivers. Twelfth graders must take at least two of their courses each semester at Four Rivers. There is an exception for accredited academic programs away from Four Rivers.

Students in Division 3 may earn credits towards graduation in the following ways:

1. Four Rivers courses
2. Independent Studies -- Independent studies must follow the format and criteria described in the Independent Study Contract, to be approved by the Assistant Principal.
3. Accredited Classes and Programs (i.e. GCC or online courses or other established, formal programs through other institutions) – This is an option for those students who want to pursue college-level work, earn additional credit, or need to make up credit deficiencies to ensure timely graduation. Students may not replace a course that is already offered at Four Rivers. The Principal determines how much credit transfers to Four Rivers.
4. Internships: Learning through the world of work -- Students may earn elective credit for internships or other activities outside of school that are related to academic subject matter. For example, a student might volunteer as an assistant in a pre-school, have an internship in a machine shop, or work as a volunteer in the local fire department. Students who wish to earn credit must complete an Internship Contract, to be approved by the Assistant Principal.

**Alternative Tribs** -- Students involved in classes or activities out of school that focus on the arts, technology or nature may replace Four Rivers Trib classes. Students must complete an Alternative Tribs Contract, to be approved by the Assistant Principal.

**Approval Deadlines:** Students who want to apply for Independent Studies, Internships, or other classes during semester 1 of Junior or Senior year must have approval from Academic Support Director in place by August 15. For semester 2, the deadline is January 1.

**Making up credits:** students in Div II and III do not have to make up the exact standards they missed. They have to make up the credit in the subject area – a student may make up science credits with a different science course.

Junior Internships may be completed during the summer before Junior year with permission from the Assistant Principal by June 15.

Early Graduation: Students wishing to graduate early must submit an Early Graduation Plan to the Principal by June 15 of sophomore year. Specific milestones will need to be met along the way in order to progress toward an earlier graduation.

Transition plans developed as part of IEP plans will be used to guide academic planning and the inclusion of credit-worthy alternatives to coursework.

Special Permissions: Students may apply to the Principal for exceptions to these policies.

## PART 2: COMPLETE JUNIOR INTERNSHIP AND SENIOR EXPEDITION

The Junior Internship has three purposes: to help prepare students for the independent work required for Senior Expeditions; to provide students with an opportunity to design a project that springs from their passions or interests; and to support students as they begin the process of thinking about and preparing for the college application process. The Junior Project begins in the fall, when students identify one or more fields they are interested in exploring. Once students have identified potential internship sites, they go through the steps necessary to set up their internships: make introductory phone calls to potential mentors, set up interviews, and complete internship agreements. Internships take place at the end of the first semester. Students complete a brief, focused research project related to the field they have selected for internships. Students include an overview of the field and a visual display in their final Junior Project presentations at Expo Night in the spring.

Senior Expedition – described fully in the SENIOR EXPEDITION GUIDE – is the culmination of our program. It involves creating a high quality product and making a public presentation. It is designed by the student in conjunction with an advisor and other Four Rivers faculty, and is structured as a learning expedition, with essential questions, fieldwork, specific projects/work named, and the final product. The senior expedition is intended to meet the requirement that a learning expedition address a real-world problem, have an authentic audience and result in a product that is of use in the world beyond the school. The working model is that students plan their senior expedition in the beginning of the year: choose a topic, do the research and writing throughout the fall, identify and enlist experts to learn from, and set up of field work. Towards the middle of the year, students do their fieldwork and towards the end of the year, students create the final products, then design and deliver a presentation of what they have learned.

## PART 3: COMPLETE A GRADUATION PORTFOLIO

As with other passages at the end of Division I and Division II, completing Division III involves the most important passage of all – a demonstration of readiness to graduate.

To complete the Graduation Portfolio, students follow the same process and requirements as the regular portfolio process, plus two additional components:

1. The Post Four Rivers Plan
2. Documentation of Service: Students in 11th and 12th grade are required to complete and document 20 hours of independent service work both years.

## EARLY GRADUATION APPROVAL PROCESS

Some students work very hard in high school, take extra classes, pass all the classes they take, and decide they want to graduate early. In general, Four Rivers does not support early

graduation. Most students need four years to fulfill the full requirements. In addition, every student contributes value to the school by being part of the school community. Nevertheless, in extraordinary circumstances, a student may wish to be considered for early graduation. The following procedure has been adopted by the FRCPS Board of Trustees.

1. Any student considering early graduation must apply before the end of their 10th grade year. This is necessary to insure that it is a thoughtful and intentional process and to consider how the requirements will be accelerated and met by the end of the 11th grade. Applications for graduating in the middle of the senior year are not accepted and waivers of this are unlikely.
2. The student who is applying has to compose a narrative document describing thoughtfully and in detail how an early graduation will benefit them educationally. What exactly do they plan to do with the time that would have been spent at Four Rivers?
3. The narrative has to have the written signature endorsements of their Advisor, the College Counselor, their parents (whether or not they will have reached the age of 18) and the Principal.
4. The document must be sent to the Academic Leadership Team for review and consideration. The Team will review it and then invite the student to come before it to answer any questions it may have. The Academic Leadership Team will then vote to approve or disapprove the request.
5. ALL graduation requirements must be fully met including all coursework and academic credit requirements, Junior Internship, and Senior Expedition. These are all part of the academic design of the Four Rivers program and are evidence of having finished that program successfully.

#### HiSET/GED INFORMATION

A student is eligible to take the tests to receive a General Equivalency Diploma if they meet the following requirements:

1. Minimum Age For Testing: 18 with no qualifications; however, in order to register and be tested at 16 or 17, registrants must provide a letter from their last school of attendance attesting that they have officially withdrawn from school. (Letter of Withdrawal)
2. Residence: Applicant must be a resident of Massachusetts; last attended secondary school in Massachusetts; or proof of continued residence in Massachusetts while in the U. S. Armed Forces. (Military personnel assigned to Massachusetts or members of their families residing with them are also eligible through DAN TES). Out-of-State resident may test if there is space at a Test Center; however, transcript of their test scores will be sent to their home state for issuance of the equivalency diploma or certificate.
3. School Status: Individual may not be enrolled in any elementary or secondary school program or have received a diploma or certificate indicating they have received a high school credential.

## **2.2 PROMOTION POLICIES**

These policies describe what is required to move forward to the next grade. Every student's situation is somewhat different, so final decisions are made on a case by case basis with the Principal.

7th to 8th: Pass all standards in order to be promoted. Standards not passed must be made up in order to move on to the next grade. A student must pass at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all core class standards to be eligible for summer make-up and promotion.

8th to 9th: Pass all standards and Passage requirements in order to be promoted. Standards not passed must be made up in order to move on to the next grade. A student must pass at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all core class standards to be eligible for summer make-up and promotion.

9th to 10th: Pass most (all but 4) credits in required classes in order to be promoted. Credits not passed must be made up in order to move on to the next grade. Must be no more than 4 credits in the hole to start 10th grade.

1. Credit make-up through summer school.
2. Credit make-up through online courses.

10th to 11th: Pass most (all but 2) credits in required classes and Passage in order to be promoted. Credits not passed must be made up in order to move on to the next grade. Must be no more than 2 credits in the hole to start 11th grade.

1. Credit make-up through summer school .
2. Credit make-up through online courses.

11th to 12th: Pass most required credits. Credits not passed must be made up in order to graduate.

1. Credit make-up through summer school.
2. Credit make-up through online courses.
3. Credit make-up through Individual Learning Opportunities – possible, though discouraged.

Graduation: Pass all required credits and complete all graduation requirements. There is no wiggle room. All requirements must be met by 5:00 pm on the Thursday before graduation in order to walk.

1. Credit make-up through summer school.
2. Credit make-up through online courses.
3. Credit make-up through Individual Learning Opportunities – possible, though discouraged.

#### Notes

1. Summer deadline for completion of work or credits is August 15th. Records must be submitted to the Principal.
2. Appeals: If a student fails to meet all specific requirements, that student may be promoted through an appeal to the Principal, with the agreement of the student's academic team and a precise Student Success Plan.

## 2.3 GRADING POLICIES

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### STANDARDS-BASED GRADES

These are the grades that appear on Progress Reports and that are assigned for individual pieces of work.

Beginning (Bg)	The student's performance is rudimentary and just <i>beginning</i> to meet the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. Improvement is needed if the student expects to pass to the next grade.
Approaching (Ap)	The student's performance is <i>approaching</i> the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. It shows an improving level of quality but is not yet consistently satisfactory work.

Meeting (Mt)	The student's performance is <i>meeting</i> the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. It shows good quality and is fully satisfactory.
Exceeding (Ex)	The student's performance is <i>exceeding</i> the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. It shows effort and accomplishment well beyond what was required for meeting the standard.
Work Not Accomplished (WNA)	The student's performance has either not been turned in or is of such poor quality that it is not acceptable.
Incomplete (INC)	The student's performance is <i>incomplete</i> at the time of this progress report. It needs to be completed within a specified amount of time, or else the grade will become WNA.
Not Applicable (NA)	This indicates an area of the program that has not yet been introduced to the students.

Standards-based grades are used in many schools -- including ours -- because they are based on specific criteria and therefore give a better description of performance. However, we do translate our grades for outside audiences, namely the colleges to which our students apply.

### Grade Point Average Equivalents

WNA	Bg	Bg+	Ap-	Ap	Ap+	Mt-	Mt	Mt+	Ex-	Ex
0	0.5	1	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4	4.25	4.5

Not Passing Standards	Passing	Meeting	Exceeding standards – Honors level work
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Meeting or Meeting + is like an “A” and exceeding literally means that you did work that went beyond what was required for an “A”. In this system, the goal is for all students to reach Meeting level and beyond.

### PASSING

- To pass a course, a student must pass all standards for that course.
- Ap+ is passing.
- In Div 1, courses are graded standard by standard and reported each term. Grades close when the term ends.
- Students in Div 1 who do not pass all of their standards must make up those standards.
- Students in Div 2 and Div 3 must make up credits when they fail a course in order to be promoted – see PROMOTION POLICIES for details. Students may earn partial credit even if they do not pass all standards. Standards grades in each course are combined into one final grade that will go on transcripts.
- Ongoing standards mean they span both semesters. If a student fails a standard semester 1, they can pass that standard by passing it semester 2. In Div 2, students must earn a Mt- or better in order to pass the semester 1 standard.
- Students in Div 2 and 3 may make up credits through approved summer school or on-line courses, and through Independent Studies with administrative approval.

### COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to complete all assignments. Some are for practice. Some are first attempts that are expected to be revised. And some receive final grades that indicate how well students have met specific

learning targets. Completing all assignments helps determine HOWL grades. Certain daily assignments may also contribute directly to standards grades.

## **REVISION**

We encourage revision while still holding students accountable for putting effort into assignments and meeting deadlines. These policies support that dual goal:

1. Turn in work on time: An assignment not turned in on time can't be revised, unless the teacher grants an extension.
2. Good faith effort: Students need to demonstrate good faith effort on their first drafts and subsequent drafts in order to qualify for revision. Good faith effort means that the student made a serious attempt to complete all parts of the assignment, as determined by the teacher.
3. Teacher discretion: Teachers assign deadlines for work and they let students know up front which assignments are open for revision, what the expectations for revision are, and what the deadline for the revision period will be. Teachers may accept late work under reasonable circumstances.

Note: In Division 3, teachers shift to a practice they refer to as “college-style revision”, with students asking for feedback before a deadline and then meeting that deadline with polished, quality work.

## **PROVIDE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES**

Given that the purpose of our assessments is to help students learn important skills and knowledge, we try to offer them multiple opportunities to meet our standards. This might mean any of the following:

1. Teachers create multiple assessments through which students show they can meet a standard.
2. Students receive feedback through peer review or critique of ongoing assignments before the final draft is completed.
3. Students revise work from the teacher's assessment and feedback.
4. Teachers provide a second opportunity to take a test or assign students to somehow show they understand what they did wrong the first time.

## **CAPTURE BEST WORK**

Teachers determine a student's grade for an academic standard from more than one opportunity but not necessarily from all assignments. There are different approaches for looking at a student's best work; that is, evidence (demonstrated more than once) of the fullest extent of that student's learning. Capturing a student's best work might be done by any of the following approaches (there may be others):

1. More than one grade at Ap+ or better on a standard, therefore passing that standard as long as a minimum number of assignments have been completed.
2. Use weighted averaging to calculate performance on a standard.
3. At the end of the term, the teacher looks over the whole term how much they learned.
4. Count all assignments for completion, but grade only major assessments. Take only the best performances or drop the lowest grade and combine those grades within the standard.
5. Give feedback – but no grade yet – on assignments leading to an assessment, test or culminating assignment. Grade only the final assessments, tests or assignments.

## **ACADEMIC HONORS AND HIGH HONORS**

These designations are determined at the end of each term.

To achieve Honors for the term in a course, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Achieve Mt- or above in every academic standard for that course;
2. Achieve Mt+ or above in the majority (more than half) of the academic standards for the course;
3. Achieve Mt- or above in the HOWLS standard for the course.

To achieve High Honors for the term in a course, a student must meet each of the following criteria:

1. Achieve Mt+ or above in every academic standard for the course; and
2. Achieve Mt or above in the HOWLS standard for the course.

To achieve the HOWL of Fame for the term, a student must earn at least Mt in all their classes and Mt+ or above for the majority of their HOWLs grades across all courses.

## **INTENSIVES ELIGIBILITY**

Over the years, Intensives at Four Rivers have grown into an important and valued part of our high school program. Students have experienced the wilderness, New York City, theater, mural painting, sword fighting, Spanish, rock climbing, philosophy, and much more. Intensives are also a privilege. It takes a great deal of adult trust and student responsibility for this program to work.

Therefore, we have put in place the following checks to determine whether a student is eligible to participate:

1. **Academics:** Any student who has failed or is in danger of failing 3 or more standards or credits for the current semester must sign up for Academic Support Intensive.
2. **Behavior:** Students who have not been able to follow school rules or abide by adult authority sometimes are potentially not safe on trips that take them overnight or away from campus. Any student who has received 5 or more blue slips in the current semester or who receives 3 or more blue slips in the weeks leading up to intensives may not be eligible to attend overnight intensives or intensives involving activities that require being able to follow instructions. If a student has shown significant improvement, this requirement will be waived by the agreement of the Dean of Students, advisor, and parents.

Descriptions of the Intensives are sent out to families prior to the sign-up period. We trust families to work together to make decisions about what Intensives would be the best choices for their student. Please be sure to contact the Dean of Students as soon as possible if you have a concern or question about your student's ability to participate in an Intensive.

## **2.4 SPANISH PROGRAM POLICIES**

### **SPANISH GRADUATION REQUIREMENT**

1. The Board-approved graduation requirements include 2 years of Spanish (12 credits).
2. Many colleges require that students complete 3 years of a second language.
3. Students are required to take Spanish through 10th grade, with 3 exceptions described below.

### **DIVISION 1: SPANISH or TITLE 1**

1. Students in Division 1 have the opportunity to complete Spanish 1 over the course of 7th and 8th grade, allowing them to take Spanish 2 in 9th grade and Spanish 3 in 10th grade.
2. Students who are eligible for Title 1 services may be recommended for a Title 1 skills class in place of Spanish 1. These students would then begin Spanish in 9th grade. Because high school Spanish starts with Spanish 2, these students are strongly encouraged to take a Spanish 1 class over the summer, though some students have successfully jumped in.

### **EXCEPTIONS FROM THE SPANISH REQUIREMENT**

1. **By Plan:** Students who are eligible for Special Education, 504 plans, or English as a Second Language instruction may be exempted from the school's Spanish requirement by their IEP, 504, or ESL Plan. At the discretion of the Director of Academic support, students on SSP's may be granted an exemption under extenuating circumstances and with the acknowledgement of the family that their child will not be meeting the

admissions criteria for Massachusetts state colleges.

2. Entering in 10th grade: Students entering 10th grade may try to complete Spanish 1 or 2 through online or summer programs in order to take Spanish 3 upon entering. Entering students may also be exempted from the Spanish requirement for graduation if they complete 2 years of another language or choose Title 1 instead.
3. Entering in 11th grade: Students entering 11th grade are exempted from the school's Spanish requirement. They may meet the graduation requirement by successfully completing two years of any foreign language. Given most college's requirement that a student have 2-3 years of a world language, students will be encouraged to meet this requirement if they have not done so prior to coming to Four Rivers.

#### REMEDICATION or ACCELERATION

1. Students who have not completed Spanish 1 by the end of 9th grade or Spanish 2 by the end of 10th grade must take Spanish over the summer to get them on track for the next level. Four Rivers does not offer Spanish 1 to 10th graders or Spanish 2 to 11th graders. If this requirement is not met, students will have to complete the Spanish requirement at their own expense in order to be eligible for graduation.
2. Four Rivers Spanish Summer School (when offered): Students who fail 1-3 standards during a year may make up those standards through this program.
3. Online Spanish Courses: Students who fail more than 3 standards a year or who wish to accelerate may do so through an online program approved by the school. Contact the Academic Support Director for information about approved programs.

## **2.5 SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES**

The following are procedures for the evaluation and placement of students who need or are believed to need special education or related services pursuant to Section 504 and Title II.

1. Four Rivers Charter Public School (FRCPS) will conduct a thorough evaluation, by trained professionals of any student suspected of having a disability. The timely evaluation will be conducted before the student's initial placement and prior to a subsequent significant change in placement.
2. If a parent of a FRCPS student requests a Section 504/IEP evaluation, a team meeting will be held to determine what the suspected disability is and what evaluation shall be undertaken to determine whether the student is eligible under Section 504 and what, if any, special education and related aids and services the student may need.
3. FRCPS will collect all evaluative data concerning a student's suspected disability and will not delay an evaluation while waiting for relevant information from a parent or agency.
4. All assessments and evaluations will be administered by trained personnel and will be reliable and valid for the purposes for which they are used.
5. In making eligibility decisions, the team will determine whether a student has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
6. All placement decisions will be made by professionals who are knowledgeable about the student, the evaluation data and the placement options.

7. All placement decisions will be based on information from a variety of sources, with information from all sources being carefully considered and documented.
8. All students who are determined to be in need of a 504 Accommodation Plan or IEP will be evaluated every three years, prior to any change in placement or before being exited from a 504 or IEP.
  - a. FRCPS will adhere to all timeframes as outlined by 603 CMR 28.00 Special Education Regulations. We will use those time frames to guide our timely evaluation and team meetings of our students who may be or who are eligible for 504 Plans.
  - b. Parents will be provided with procedural safeguards at each decision point regarding identification, evaluation and placement of a student.

## **2.6 GCC/VIRTUAL HS POLICIES**

### **Taking GCC courses for Four Rivers credit:**

1. Students must first check with Mr. Stenson and have him sign off on the course.
2. If students register for a course Mr. Stenson has not approved, they might not receive Four Rivers credit for it.
3. The Family Council offers scholarships for students taking GCC courses. Application information can be picked up at the School Office.
4. Students must pass a GCC course with a grade of C+ or better in order to receive Four Rivers credit.

### **Going to and coming back from GCC classes:**

1. Students leaving for GCC may sign out 10 minutes before their class begins and sign back in no later than 15 minutes after the class has ended. Special circumstances need to be approved by the Principal.
2. Students must sign out before they leave school and sign in again when they return.
3. Students who repeatedly fail to sign in and out will not be granted permission to take GCC courses in subsequent terms.

### **Taking VHS courses:**

1. Four Rivers offers a limited number of slots in Virtual High School (VHS) courses every term. These allow students to take electives beyond the school's core program.
2. To have a VHS course replace a Four Rivers graduation requirement, students must first check with Mr. Stenson to verify that the course meets the requirement.
3. Students are eligible for up to 1 VHS slot per term.
4. Slots are awarded by lottery, with preference given to students who have not previously used a Four Rivers slot.
5. Parents must sign the VHS course agreement. Part of this agreement says that if a student does not pass the class, the family must reimburse the school for the cost of the course.
6. Students must pass a VHS course with a grade of C+ or better in order to receive Four Rivers credit.

## **2.7 INTENSIVES PRIVILEGE**

Over the years, Intensives at Four Rivers have grown into an important and valued part of our high school program. Students have experienced the wilderness, New York City, theater, mural

painting, sword fighting, Spanish, rock climbing, philosophy, and much more. Intensives are also a privilege. It takes a great deal of adult trust and student responsibility for this program to work.

Therefore, we have put in place the following checks to determine whether a student is eligible to participate:

1. **Academics:** Any student who has failed or is in danger of failing 3 or more standards or credits for the current semester must sign up for the Academic Support Intensive. Students who are deficient credits are encouraged to use Academic Support Intensive to make up those credits. Seniors who are deficient credits must make a plan for making up those credits and may be required to join the Academic Support Intensives offered during Intensives sessions as part of that plan.
2. **Behavior:** Students who have not been able to follow school rules or abide by adult authority sometimes are potentially not safe on trips that take them overnight or away from campus. Any student who has received 5 or more blue slips in the current semester or who receives 3 or more blue slips in the weeks leading up to Intensives may not be eligible to attend overnight intensives or intensives involving activities that require being able to follow instructions. If a student has shown significant improvement, this requirement will be waived by the agreement of the Dean of Students, advisor, and parents.

Descriptions of the Intensives are sent out to families prior to the sign-up period. We trust families to work together to make decisions about what Intensives would be the best choices for their student. Please be sure to contact the Dean of Students as soon as possible if you have a concern or question about your student's ability to participate in an Intensive.

# SECTION 3: BEHAVIOR POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

## 3.1 CHARACTER VIRTUES

School culture is shaped by the accumulation of thousands of day to day interactions. How students are with each other, how teachers are with students, how students are with teachers, and much more all contribute to creating culture. We work to create a strong school culture by our emphasis on Character Virtues, through Crew, and through Discipline.

There are several principles on which our school culture is based. They lie at the heart of our school culture. They define the foundations behind our CODE OF CONDUCT and our BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES.

We intentionally try to weave examples of and conversations about these character virtues into our lessons. There is a particular emphasis on doing this at the start of the year. Throughout the year we try to be sure to “catch students being good” each week and recognize those students with a Polaris Award (see glossary) at Community Meeting. Additionally, as advisors, we report on the character development of each of our advisees using Crew Standards.

**Responsibility:** Students take responsibility for their own behavior, they demonstrate responsibility for learning, and they act responsibly as members of the school community.

**Respect:** Students show respect for self, they act respectfully toward other students and adults, and they treat personal and school property with respect.

**Courage:** Students act with confidence and good judgment, they are willing to try new or challenging experiences, and they hold to their own best values despite pressure from others.

**Compassion:** Students demonstrate kindness, they show interest in others' views and experiences, and they encourage and help others.

**Perseverance:** Students show effort in pursuit of excellence, they persist in the face of difficulties, and they complete their tasks.

**Integrity:** Students act in honest and trustworthy manner, they show commitment to developing strong character values, and they set positive examples for the school community.

## 3.2 BEHAVIOR POLICIES

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **WE ARE CREW, NOT PASSENGERS:** All of us contribute to the strength of our community. No one is just along for the ride.
2. **LEAVE NO TRACE:** We take care of our environment, buildings, hallways, and classrooms by cleaning up after ourselves.
3. **THE ONE RULE:** *Behave in a way that allows you to express yourself without causing problems for others.* We recognize that some of our greatest heroes caused problems for others around them and they did so for good reason. However, this statement is useful to us in our classrooms, hallways, and generally around school as a reminder to

think about the effects of your actions.

With these guiding principles in mind, we present the following policies that reflect the consensus of the Four Rivers faculty and administration. They are meant to help guide all of us in our mission of all contributing to a positive, productive and safe community.

Each section begins with an explanation of the EXPECTATIONS that students, faculty, staff and administrators follow while in school and at school events. These are presented to help make clear some of the ways the guiding principles are put into action at Four Rivers. Expectations may be used to help someone understand how behavior not specifically named in these guidelines might go against the Guiding Principle we value in our community.

RULES are listed to make clear what is and is not allowed at Four Rivers. Rule infractions can result in immediate consequences as listed in each section. Please note that repeated violation of behavior listed in any of the Expectations sections can also result in other consequences.

CONSEQUENCES listed in this document are typically presented as a spectrum of possibilities. Actual consequences for behavior counter to Four Rivers' expectations or rules will be determined by considering all available facts and relevant information.

### **3.3 CODE OF CONDUCT**

Four Rivers is committed to providing a safe, orderly and respectful environment in which all students can grow in academic ability and strength of character. Students whose behavior does not meet the school's standards for reasonable and acceptable conduct will not be permitted to disrupt the education or work of others. This applies at the school, at all school-related activities off-campus, and at outside activities that affect the school. The objectives of disciplining any student must be to help the student to improve in self-discipline and appropriate behavior, as well as to protect the rights and well-being of others. Policies and procedures for handling discipline problems, from simple misconduct to serious offenses, are designed to achieve these broad purposes.

#### **PROCEDURES**

1. The school strives to maintain a climate of positive expectations for all students. Success in meeting these expectations is celebrated in many ways, too.
2. Episodes of misconduct occur nonetheless. In general, when there is misconduct, the teacher or adult in charge seeks to ensure that the student understands how the behavior is unacceptable, what improvement is needed, and if the student has an explanation.
3. The school defines three levels of misconduct:
  - a. Level 1: Simple misconduct.
  - b. Level 2: Repeated simple misconduct or more harmful misconduct.
  - c. Level 3: Serious offenses
4. For Level 1 or 2 misconduct, the teacher, advisor, Dean of Students or Principal may give a consequence appropriate to the misconduct after a reasonable investigation of the facts.
5. For Level 3 Serious Offenses, there will be a hearing as described below before consequences are decided. The School Psychologist is kept informed of Level 2 and 3 incidents and may play a supporting role.

While each incident will be treated individually, the following three levels of misconduct offer

examples and possible consequences. The school reserves the right, depending on the severity and/or frequency of the misconduct, to use any of the disciplinary procedures in this policy, up to and including long term suspension.

### **LEVEL 1: SIMPLE MISCONDUCT**

*Examples:*

- interrupting or talking out of turn when asked to be silent
- distracting other students from learning and/or teachers from teaching
- running inside buildings or horseplay
- eating during class, in halls, or on fieldwork when not supposed to
- mishandling or throwing food at lunch or snack
- leaving the classroom without permission
- not following classroom rules
- dishonesty
- any other misconduct of a similar nature or severity

*The typical sequence of CONSEQUENCES for Level 1 misconduct is not limited to but may include:*

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>1st offense:</i> | <i>Warning or redirection by the teacher or adult in authority</i> |
| <i>2nd offense:</i> | <i>Brief time out within the classroom or nearby</i>               |
| <i>3rd offense:</i> | <i>Blue Slip completed with expectation of making amends.</i>      |

*Whenever possible, teachers will work with students to develop amends or consequences for level 1 misconduct in class, at recess, during lunch and transitions or after school. Amends and consequences may include, but are not limited to, time spent cleaning, helping the teacher prepare for future classes/activities, and repairing classroom items. These incidents will be recorded in the Referrals section of FOCUS for record-keeping purposes and may be considered when determining future consequences and interventions.*

*If a student has two blue slips within one week (defined as five school days), he or she may meet with the Dean of Students to discuss the incidents and the parent/guardian may be notified. If a student has four blue slips within one month (defined as four weeks), he/she may serve a payback time. Payback is typically an hour of work on a specified day after school to restore something to the community that was weakened by the student's actions. When completing a Blue Slip, the student reflects on the instance of misconduct, how it affected others, and what might be done to make amends.*

### **BEHAVIOR PLANS**

*Behavior Plans are created to address any behavior patterns that may be present and support student growth in the areas of decision making and character development. The contents of a Behavior Plan are designed with the student's specific behavioral needs in mind. Any student who demonstrates a pattern of behavioral concerns and/or earns 10 or more discipline referrals/blue slips during the year may be put on a Behavior Plan.*

### **LEVEL 2: REPEATED MISCONDUCT OR MORE HARMFUL MISCONDUCT**

*Examples:*

- severe or repeated Level 1 misconduct
- disobeying a teacher, staff member, or other adult in authority
- willfully disrupting school or classroom activity
- disrespectful talk, gestures or actions toward another student or an adult
- skipping class
- disregard for proper care and treatment of school or individual property
- taking anything from another student's locker without permission

- interfering with the learning of a class or individual
- failure to observe school rules or expectations despite warnings
- rude or negative body language
- teasing, name-calling, hurtful gossiping – other than sexual harassment
- excessive public displays of affection, such as kissing, prolonged hugging, etc.
- any other misconduct of a similar nature or severity

*The typical sequence of CONSEQUENCES for Level 2 misconduct is not limited to but may include:*

- 1st offense: Blue Slip completed; call home; possible payback time.*
- 2nd offense: Blue Slip completed; student is given in-school suspension; Advisor and Dean (and possibly the Principal) meet with the parent and student.*
- 3rd offense: Blue Slip completed; student is suspended until parent(s) meets with advisor and Dean (and possibly the Principal) and a plan for improvement is agreed to.*

*Note: As above, the student reflects on the instance of misconduct, how it affected others, and what should be done to make amends. In some instances, the severity of the misconduct may cause a student to be sent home on the first offense. In other instances, the time between offenses may mean that the consequence for 1st offense is repeated to improve the concerning behavior.*

### **LEVEL 3: SERIOUS OFFENSES**

*Examples:*

- severe or repeated Level 2 misconduct
- bullying
- possessing, selling, or distributing illegal substances
- being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages
- using or possessing over-the-counter medication inappropriately
- smoking on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities
- harming or attempting to harm another person with a weapon or dangerous object
- hurting another person (or threatening to hurt another person or group)
- bringing to school a weapon or dangerous object, including a knife
- using a mock gun or other mock weapon in a threatening manner
- damaging or stealing school or private property (or threatening to do so)
- sexually harassing another person
- possessing, sharing or distributing pornographic material
- using racial or ethnic slurs, profanity, or obscene language
- cheating and/or plagiarism
- hazing or violence, or the threat of hazing or violence, toward another student or school personnel
- tampering with school records
- leaving the school without permission
- any other misconduct of a similar nature or severity

PROCEDURES: *The school uses the following procedures, as specified by state regulations:*

1. **ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION:** In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, a Principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense; consider ways to re-engage the student in learning; and avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs

such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

2. NOTICE OF SUSPENSION AND HEARING: A Principal may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing.
  - a. The principal shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language:
    - i. the disciplinary offense;
    - ii. the basis for the charge;
    - iii. the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
    - iv. the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
    - v. the date, time, and location of the hearing;
    - vi. the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
    - vii. if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal: the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b); and the right to appeal the principal's decision.
  - b. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.
  - c. Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and parent.
  
3. EMERGENCY REMOVAL: Nothing in these regulations shall prevent a principal from removing a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal shall immediately notify the board chair in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:
  - a. Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal and the reason for the need for emergency removal;
  - b. Provide written notice to the student and parent;
  - c. Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal, as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent.

- d. Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

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

4. **PRINCIPAL HEARING -- Short-term Suspension:**

- a. The purpose of the hearing with the 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 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 principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate. The principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
  - i. Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
  - ii. The principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

5. **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 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;
  - iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
  - v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- c. The principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

- d. Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:
    - 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 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 principal's decision to the board of trustees or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
      1. the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the board chair 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 board chair an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that
      2. the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the board chair decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.
6. APPEAL HEARING: A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the board chair.
- a. The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the board chair within the time period set forth 603 CMR 53.08 (3) (c) 5.a). If the appeal is not timely filed, the board chair may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
  - b. The board chair 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 board chair shall grant the extension.
  - c. The board chair shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The board chair shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and board chair to participate. The board chair shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
  - d. The board chair 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 board chair shall arrange for an audio

recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The board chair shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

- e. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension.
- f. The board chair shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. If the board chair determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the board chair may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.
- g. The decision of the board chair shall be the final decision of the charter school with regard to the suspension.

#### 7. IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

- a. The principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.
- b. The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.
- c. On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the 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.
- d. The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

7. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS: The principal may remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct.

8. EDUCATION SERVICE PLAN AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS: Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress during the period of removal. Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make

up assignments, test, 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 Principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

- a. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.
  - b. The school notifies the parents of students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days by email, phone, or letter to initiate education services.
  - c. The 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, or other means of communication where appropriate. 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.
  - d. The school makes a document with assignments and links to resources which cover the period of exclusion from school. The school arranges a tutor to work with that student as needed, up to 2 hours a day during the period of exclusion. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students.
  - e. 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.
9. **DATA REVIEW AND PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS:** The principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status. In reviewing the data, the principal shall assess the extent of in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, and emergency removals and the impact of such disciplinary action on selected student populations. The principal shall further determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify disciplinary practices due to over-reliance on expulsion, in-school or out-of school suspension, or emergency removals, or the impact of such suspensions, removals, and expulsions on selected student populations compared with other students.

### **PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR SUSPECTED DISABILITIES**

These expectations, rules, and procedures apply to *all* students. There are specific procedures, however, for disciplining students with disabilities (IEP or 504) or suspected disabilities. Each student's IEP/504 should indicate if he or she is not expected to meet the regular discipline code, explain why, and indicate what modification is required.

Records must be kept of the number and duration of suspensions of special needs students. Procedures should be established for notifying the Special Education Director whenever a student with special needs is given a suspension of more than ten cumulative days. Written notice of a proposed suspension exceeding ten days, and a request for approval of the alternative plan must be filed with the Department of Education, Division of Special Education. If

a suspension of more than ten cumulative days is challenged, the charter school shall not suspend a student pending the Bureau of Special Education Appeals hearing or judicial process, unless the school obtains a court order.

Procedures for suspension of students with disabilities or suspected disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days; responsibilities of the Team; responsibilities of the school:

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement.
2. Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, school personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team, as determined by the parent and the school, convene to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP – "a manifestation determination."
3. A parent of a child with a disability or suspected disability, who disagrees with any decision regarding the child's disciplinary placement, or the manifestation determination, may appeal the decision by requesting a hearing at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA). Reasons for appeal may include but are not limited to disagreement with the student's removal to an interim alternative educational setting (IEAS), disagreement regarding the manifestation determination, disagreement regarding the determination of whether the removal is a change of placement, disagreement regarding the educational services the student receives during the period of removal and disagreement regarding the functional behavioral assessment and/or implementation of a behavioral intervention plan.
4. If school personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the school may suspend or expel the student consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the school must still offer:
  - a. services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals; and
  - b. as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur.
5. Interim alternative educational setting. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the school may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 school days
  - a. on its own authority if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function or, considered case by case, unique circumstances; or
  - b. on the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after the school provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others.

In either case, the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum and to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.

6. If school personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews it and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with part 4, the student returns to the original placement unless the parents and school agree otherwise.
7. If conduct was direct result of failure to implement the IEP/504, the district must take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies and review. The district will conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavioral implementation plan, or review and modify an existing plan as needed. The student will return to placement unless (1) parent and district agree to a different placement, (2) a hearing officer orders new placement, or (3) removal is for "special circumstances" under 34 CFR 300.530(g).
8. Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the school notifies the parents of that decision and provides them with the written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent chooses to appeal or the school requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and the school agree otherwise.

### **3.4 BEHAVIOR PLANS**

Students with chronic or frequent discipline issues may be put on a Behavior Plan. Behavior Plans are created to address any behavior patterns that may be present and support student growth in the areas of decision making and character development. The contents of a Behavior Plan are designed with the student's specific behavioral needs and the school community in mind.

Behavior Plans may result in loss of or restriction on certain privileges including, but not limited to Fieldwork, Intensives and participation in extracurricular activities.

Behavior Plans may be updated and amended to serve the needs of students and the school community.

### **3.5 TAKE A BREAK PROCEDURES**

We care about our students and their learning. Sometimes emotional and behavioral issues get in the way of academics. Our intent with the procedures below is to support students' needs while helping them -- and us -- stay focused on their learning. A clear protocol should allow teachers to stay focused on their teaching while students get the support they need.

For Students: When you're upset and may need a break from class

We recognize there are times when personal issues get in the way of your learning and you may need a break from class. Here's what you can do: Request a 5-10 minute break: Your teacher may let you get a short breather. They are responsible for you so you can only go where they allow. Request a longer break: If the short break is not enough, teachers can give you permission to go over to the Farmhouse and the School Secretary will find an administrator

who will check in to see whether you need to go home or whether you'll be able to go back into your classes.

Request a call home to leave for the day: If you can't return to class, you may have to call it a day and head home.

For Teachers:

#### A. Short Breaks

There are times day to day when students are distracted from their learning by personal issues. These should be handled by the classroom teacher employing the compassionate and humane regular practices of our school.

1. Students might talk to their advisor first about issues that are concerning them.
2. With permission from a teacher, students may take a brief break from class with location determined by the teacher.
3. Students must return to the class within 5-10 minutes.
4. The student's teacher is responsible for knowing where that student is and their timing.

#### B. Longer Breaks-- but not an emergency

Students may have bigger issues going on, and they may need a slightly longer break and the promise of adult intervention (though not immediate).

1. Teachers determine if a longer break might be required and send the student to the Farmhouse.
2. Teachers call the School Secretary who contacts a member of the Admin team to meet with the student.
3. If a student is not able to return to class within one hour a call will be made to have them picked up and taken home for the remainder of the day.
4. Follow-up with the Wellness Advocate may be requested and scheduled.
5. Follow-up with the School Psychologist may be requested by students on an existing plan that includes seeing the School Psychologist.
6. If requested, there will be follow-up contact within a day or two.
7. There may be exceptions to these procedures for existing plans that call for longer breaks or breaks in the Farmhouse, but only when there is a specific plan written with an adult responsible for receiving and supervising that student.

#### C. Emergencies

Sometimes there are circumstances that require immediate response and referral to the appropriate resource, typically the School Psychologist, the School Nurse, or an administrator. Contact the School Secretary.

#### D. For students with ongoing emotional or behavioral issues,

When there are concerns about ongoing patterns of emotional or behavioral issues:

1. Concerns, accompanied by descriptions of specific behavior, are shared in weekly division meetings. Teams determine what the next steps will be
  - a. call home from advisor
  - b. assessment regarding need for outside services -- 1 to 2 sessions with Wellness Advocate or the School Psychologist.
  - c. a counseling plan may be developed for 1 to 2 sessions (tier 1) or 6 to 8 sessions (tier 2) with the Wellness Advocate or the School Psychologist.
2. If further consultation is needed, a recommendation may be made to the family to seek outside services.

3. In the cases of special education students, a placement determination may be called for when it appears that a student may require a different setting better suited to their educational needs.

### **3.6 SCHOOL SAFETY**

**EXPECTATIONS:** It is the responsibility of every member of the community to work to ensure our school is and feels safe. Physical safety and emotional safety are of equal importance at Four Rivers.

Four Rivers is committed to creating and maintaining a learning environment that feels and is safe for all members of the community. To this end, and often in accordance with Massachusetts state law, several items are prohibited from school

**RULES:**

1. No guns, knives, weapons or dangerous objects may be brought to school.
2. No lighters or matches may be brought to school.
3. Acts of physical aggression – fighting, pushing or shoving with anger, etc – are prohibited.
4. Threatening the safety or well-being (verbally or with physical gestures) of any member of the school community is forbidden.
5. Bullying and teasing are not tolerated.
6. Harassment of any kind based on gender, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, mental illness, sexual orientation, or disability is not tolerated.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Violating rules around safety or playing a role that makes Four Rivers unsafe is a serious infraction and can result in suspension or expulsion. Possession of a dangerous item will result in an immediate suspension of up to 10 days and a hearing to consider long-term suspension or expulsion.

**RULES:**

1. Wrestling, rough-housing, play-fighting are all prohibited.
2. No images of weapons or dangerous objects may be displayed on clothing, computers, notebooks, lockers or elsewhere at school, unless specifically meeting the criteria of an assignment.

**CONSEQUENCES:** These range from payback to parent conference to suspension depending on severity and frequency.

#### **NOTE ON SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

School officials maintain the right to seize items in a student's possession and to search school property (lockers, desks, vehicles in parking lot, etc.) assigned to a student or the student's personal belongings under the following guidelines:

1. There is reasonable suspicion to believe the items in possession are illegal or in violation of school rules, or constitute a hazard to the health and safety of the students and others.
2. In case of an emergency, or when the student is unavailable, the principal or her/his designee has the authority to enter and/or search school property or personal possessions, and seize items covered by the policy. The student should be informed as soon as possible.
3. Four Rivers reserves the right to use other means to search school property, including, but not limited to, use of a hand held metal detector if there is reasonable suspicion that

a student may be concealing a weapon and/or drug sniffing dogs to deter illicit possession of drugs within the classrooms, common areas and lockers.

4. Examples of items subject to this policy include, but are not limited to, drugs, weapons (real or facsimile), pornography, counterfeit or stolen goods, fireworks, explosives, and/or alcohol.
5. School lockers are the property of the school, the school retains control over the lockers, and periodic general inspections of lockers may be conducted by school authorities at any time for any reason, with or without notice and without a warrant.

The school reserves the right to utilize trained dogs within the limits of proper legal authority to assist with searches.

### **3.7 BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- a. The Massachusetts legislature passed a law calling on all schools to try to prevent bullying, as reflected in the definitions, the policy, and the prevention plan below.
- b. It is the policy of Four Rivers Public Charter School to provide a learning and working environment for students, employees and visitors free from bullying.
- c. We all - students, teachers, administrators, and parents - share the responsibility of maintaining a safe school community. We all deserve to work in an environment in which we can feel safe and free from distraction in the pursuit of learning and teaching. This means treating each other with respect and compassion and sometimes making amends when we make mistakes. It also means that we sometimes need to have the courage to speak up when others are doing things that affect our community negatively.
- d. In a community, every individual matters and needs to feel he or she has a place and can thrive. The one guiding rule – You are free to act as you wish, as long as your behavior does not cause any problems for someone else – was created to recognize that while we all bring unique traits, abilities and talents to Four Rivers, we all share the responsibility for making our school a safe and productive place.

#### **2. DEFINITIONS**

- a. “Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or employees of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:
  - i. causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property;
  - ii. places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
  - iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
  - iv. infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
  - v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process, orderly operation of a school or the working environment at a school.
- b. “Cyber-bully” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet

communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include:

- i. the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; or
  - ii. the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying;
  - iii. the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.
- c. Cyber-bullying scenarios
- i. Student uses school owned computer
  - ii. Discipline can be imposed in accordance with published handbook policy.
  - iii. A student has reduced expectations of privacy when using school property.
  - iv. Student uses his/her own electronic device (i.e. cell phone or laptop) but sends message while on school property or at a school sponsored event:
  - v. Discipline can be imposed in accordance with published handbook policy.
- d. M.G.L. c. 71 § 370(b) prohibits bullying “on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds.”
- e. Student uses his/her own device while not at school or a school sponsored event
- f. Discipline can be imposed if the action “creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operations of a school.” c. 71 § 370(b)
- g. Hostile environment: 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.
- h. Perpetrator: A student or staff member (including, but not limited to educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to extracurricular activities or paraprofessional) who engages in bullying or retaliation.
- i. Target: A student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.
- j. 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.

### 3. POLICY

- a. Bullying is hereby prohibited by Four Rivers Public Charter School:
- i. on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned leased or used by the school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school; and,
  - ii. at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned leased or used by the school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or

materially and substantially disrupts the education process, the orderly operation of the school or the working environment.

- b. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is hereby prohibited.
- c. False accusations of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- d. This policy does not require Four Rivers Public Charter School to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

#### 4. BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN

##### a. REPORTING BULLYING OR RETALIATION

- i. Any staff including but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra-curricular activity or paraprofessional shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Dean of Students.
- ii. Any student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report any bullying or suspected bullying to the Dean of Students as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written. Reports may also be submitted to an advisor or a teacher, the school nurse, or the Principal.
- iii. If an instance of bullying is reported to a staff member other than the Principal or Dean of Students, the staff member shall immediately inform the Dean of Students.
- iv. The Dean of Students, who is in charge of receiving complaints, should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
- v. The Dean of Students should document the following:
  - 1. the name of the complainant;
  - 2. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
  - 3. the name of the alleged bully;
  - 4. the date the complaint was received;
  - 5. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
  - 6. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
  - 7. the names of witnesses.
- vi. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- vii. Please note that any individual who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action

##### b. RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF BULLYING OR RETALIATION.

- i. Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Dean of Students will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The Dean of Students will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

- ii. The Dean of Students will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.
- c. OBLIGATION TO NOTIFY OTHERS
- i. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Dean of Students contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
  - ii. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Dean of Students first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
  - iii. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Dean of Students has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Dean of Students shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.
  - iv. In making this determination, the Dean of Students will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.
- d. INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS OF BULLYING OR RETALIATION
- i. The Dean of Students should conduct an investigation within 5 days of the complaint, if possible.
  - ii. The Dean of Students should ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
    - 1. who, what, when, where, how;
    - 2. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
    - 3. effect of bullying or retaliation - what will restore the complainant's sense of safety; and
    - 4. assess the complainant's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.
  - iii. The Dean of Students shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged bully and the victim. The Dean of Students should caution all witnesses and the alleged bully that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.

- iv. The Dean of Students should interview the alleged bully and fairly warn him/her that the conduct will, if appropriate, be reported to local law enforcement.
- v. The Dean of Students should interview witnesses.
- vi. The Dean of Students should establish the following:
  - 1. if the alleged bullying or retaliation occurred;
  - 2. when the alleged bullying or retaliation occurred;
  - 3. how frequently the alleged bullying or retaliation occurred;
  - 4. specific facts about the type and severity of the alleged bullying or retaliation;
  - 5. if the bullying or retaliation has affected the complainant;
  - 6. what action will restore the complainant's sense of safety;
  - 7. is the complainant in need of protection and if so what type;
  - 8. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require; and,
  - 9. is notification to local law enforcement required.

e. DECISION

- i. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Dean of Students shall make a decision that is appropriate for all parties concerning whether bullying occurred and if so what is the appropriate remedy including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the complainant.
- ii. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that bullying or retaliation has occurred the Dean of Students may discipline the offending party by ordering:
  - 1. Counseling;
  - 2. schedule or class change;
  - 3. stay away order;
  - 4. an educational component;
  - 5. a verbal warning;
  - 6. a written warning;
  - 7. Suspension;
  - 8. Expulsion;
  - 9. or any other consequence deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students.
- iii. The Dean of Students shall notify local law enforcement if he/she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator.
- iv. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- v. If the incident involves students from more than one school, the school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or schools. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21, the school shall inform local law enforcement when appropriate and consistent with this policy.
- vi. Parents/guardians will be notified of action taken to prevent further acts of bullying/retaliation. The Dean of Students should confer with the complainant and his/her parents to explain the action being taken including what if any actions are being taken to create a sense of safety

- for the complainant, and implementation of any protection plans and to make counseling referrals if appropriate.
- vii. The Dean of Students shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Dean of Students shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
  - viii. The Principal and/or Dean of Students may hold meetings with parents and guardians to engage parental support and reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building at home.
  - ix. The Dean of Students should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

f. BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN – EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- i. This bullying prevention plan shall be developed and updated biennially in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. There shall be notice of the consultation and a public comment period.
- ii. SPECIFIC BULLYING PREVENTION APPROACHES: Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
  - 1. using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
  - 2. empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
  - 3. helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
  - 4. emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
  - 5. enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
  - 6. engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.
- iii. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:
  - 1. setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
  - 2. creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
  - 3. using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
  - 4. using positive behavioral supports;
  - 5. encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
  - 6. modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;

7. using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
  8. using the Internet safely; and
  9. supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.
- iv. There are several additional ways that the school works with students to prevent bullying:
1. CREW: Crews devote time each year to discussing the importance of the school-wide character virtues -- Respect, Responsibility, Courage, Compassion, Perseverance and Integrity -- in both personal development and in keeping our community safe and productive.
  2. WELLNESS CLASS: Additionally, the Wellness curriculum contains units on Conflict Resolution in 7th grade, Bullying in 8th grade and covers bullying in its Decision-Making units in 9th and 10th grades. Through parent workshops sponsored by the Family Council, there is further discussion of the dynamics of bullying, online safety and cyber-bullying, and how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home; and
  3. COMMUNITY BUILDING: The school also conducts school-wide events each year – Social Justice Day in November and a Film Festival highlighting one of our character virtues in February -- that allow students to work in both their Crews and cross-grade groups to address different aspects of maintaining a safe community.
  4. TEACHING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR THROUGH SKILLS-BUILDING: Skill-building may include:
    - a. offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's anti-bullying curricula;
    - b. providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with the School Psychologist or Wellness Advocate;
    - c. implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
    - d. meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
    - e. adopting behavior plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
    - f. making a referral for evaluation.
- v. There will be ongoing professional development to build skills of all staff members, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. Professional development shall include:
1. developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
  2. developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;

3. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying;
  4. 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;
  5. information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
  6. internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.
- vi. There shall be age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade incorporated into the curriculum. This curriculum shall be evidence based.
  - vii. Parents and guardians shall be informed about the bullying prevention curriculum of the school, specifically:
    1. how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school and school plan;
    2. dynamics of bullying; and,
    3. online safety and cyber-bullying.
  - viii. The school shall provide to students and parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms and in the languages which are most prevalent among the students, parents, or guardians, annual written notice of the student related sections of the plan.
  - ix. Parent education and resources: The school will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Local Education Council.
  - x. The school shall provide annual written notice of the plan to all staff.
  - xi. All staff shall be trained and provision for faculty and staff duties shall be included in the school employee handbook.
  - xii. The Plan shall be posted on the website for the school.
  - xiii. The Dean of Students shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan.

### **3.8 HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION PREVENTION POLICY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- a. Incidents of harassment – as distinguished from incidents of bullying – require similar actions, as defined below.
- b. Four Rivers strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive and succeed in its schools. Four Rivers prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation and ensures that all students have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.

#### **2. DEFINITIONS**

Harassment in any form will not be tolerated. Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- a. repeated or persistent offensive remarks
- b. intimidation for favors
- c. overt threats or demands
- d. unwanted physical contact

- e. display or circulation of written materials or pictures of a derogatory nature.

### 3. POLICY

- a. **HARASSMENT:** Four Rivers Charter School is committed to maintaining a school and work environment free of harassment of any kind, including harassment based on gender, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, mental illness, sexual orientation, or disability. The Four Rivers Charter School expects all employees and members of the school community (Board of Trustees, parents, staff, students and volunteers) to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner with concern for their fellow employees and students.
- b. **DISCRIMINATION:** The Four Rivers Charter School does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, national origin, or gender identity in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1974 (Age Discrimination Act), or on the basis of sexual orientation or religion in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 5.

### 4. HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION PREVENTION PLAN

#### a. REPORTING

- i. Any staff, student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report any harassment or discrimination to the Dean of Students as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written. Reports may also be submitted to an advisor or a teacher, the school nurse, or the Principal.
- ii. If an instance of harassment or discrimination is reported to a staff member other than the Dean of Students, the staff member shall immediately inform the Dean of Students.
- iii. The Dean of Students, who is in charge of receiving complaints, should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
- iv. The Dean of Students should document the following:
  - 1. the name of the complainant;
  - 2. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
  - 3. the name of the alleged perpetrator;
  - 4. the date the complaint was received;
  - 5. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
  - 6. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
  - 7. the names of witnesses.
- v. Reports of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student or staff member solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- vi. Please note that any individual who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.
- vii. Kate Conant, Director of Academic Support (413-775-4577) and Peter Garbus, Principal (413-775-4577) are designated to coordinate compliance under Title IX and Section 504.

b. INVESTIGATION

- i. The Dean of Students should conduct an investigation within 24 to 48 hours of the complaint, if possible.
- ii. The Dean of Students should ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
  1. who, what, when, where, how;
  2. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
  3. effect - what will restore the complainant's sense of safety; and
  4. assess the complainant's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.
- iii. The Dean of Students shall notify the alleged perpetrator or the parents or guardians of the alleged perpetrator and the victim.
- iv. The Dean of Students should caution all witnesses and the alleged perpetrator that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
- v. The Dean of Students should interview witnesses.
- vi. The Dean of Students should establish the following:
  1. if the alleged harassment or discrimination occurred;
  2. when the alleged harassment or discrimination occurred;
  3. how frequently the alleged harassment or discrimination occurred; and specific facts about the type and severity of the alleged harassment or discrimination;
  4. if the harassment or discrimination has affected the complainant;
  5. what action will restore the complainant's sense of safety;
  6. is the complainant in need of protection and if so what type;
  7. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require.
- vii. The type or degree of a consequence can be influenced by the level of student cooperation in investigations. If a student admits to a violation there will be a consequence. If a student denies involvement and it is later determined that he or she was involved, the consequence may be more severe.

c. DECISION

- i. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Dean of Students for incidents involving students or the Principal for incidents involving staff shall make a decision that is appropriate for all parties concerning whether harassment or discrimination occurred and if so what is the appropriate remedy including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the complainant.
- ii. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that harassment or discrimination has occurred the Dean of Students or the Principal may discipline the offending party by ordering:
  1. Counseling;
  2. schedule or class change;
  3. stay away order;
  4. an educational component;
  5. a verbal warning;
  6. a written warning;
  7. Suspension;
  8. expulsion, or;
  9. any other consequence deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students or the Principal.

- viii. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- ix. The Dean of Students should confer with the complainant and his/her parents to explain the action being taken including what if any actions are being taken to create a sense of safety for the complainant, and implementation of any protection plans and to make counseling referrals if appropriate.
- x. For incidents involving students, the Dean of Students shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Dean of Students shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
- xi. Any employee or member of the school community found to have engaged in harassment shall be subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, a warning, suspension, or expulsion for students, and a warning, suspension, or termination of employment for staff.
- xii. Under certain circumstances, harassment (particularly sexual harassment) may constitute child abuse under Massachusetts law G.L. c. 119, 51A. Four Rivers Charter Public School shall comply with Massachusetts laws in reporting suspected cases of child abuse.
- xiii. The Dean of Students or the Principal should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

## 5. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND PREVENTION PLAN

### a. INTRODUCTION

It is the goal of Four Rivers to promote a workplace that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of employees or students occurring in the school or in other related settings is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. To achieve our goal of providing a workplace and school free from sexual harassment, the conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated and we have provided a procedure by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with, if encountered by employees.

Because Four Rivers takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace or school conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

### b. DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- i. In Massachusetts, the legal definition for sexual harassment is this:  
"sexual harassment" means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
    - 1. submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; or,
    - 2. such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work or school environment.
  - ii. Under these definitions, direct or implied requests by a supervisor or staff member for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.
  - iii. The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a workplace environment or learning environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment.
  - iv. While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:
    - 1. Unwelcome sexual advances -- whether they involve physical touching or not;
    - 2. Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
    - 3. Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
    - 4. Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
    - 5. Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
    - 6. Discussion of one's sexual activities.
  - v. All employees and students should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization.
- c. REPORTING COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
Same as above, except that students may report incidents to the Wellness Advocate as well. Contact Dean of Students or Wellness Advocate, Four Rivers Charter Public School, 248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, MA, 01301, 413-775-4577.
- d. INVESTIGATION – Same as above.
- e. DISCIPLINARY ACTION – Same as above.
- f. STATE AND FEDERAL REMEDIES

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC - 300 days; MCAD - 300 days).

- i. [The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \("EEOC"\)](#):  
1 CONGRESS STREET, 10TH FLOOR, BOSTON, MA, 02114,  
617-565-3200
- ii. [The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination \("MCAD"\)](#);  
Boston office, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 601, Boston, MA, 02108.  
617-727-3990. Springfield office 424 Dwight Street, Room 220,  
Springfield, MA, 01103. 413-739-2145.

g. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

- h. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

### **3.9 SUBSTANCE USE AND WEAPON PREVENTION POLICY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- a. The possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances or possession of a weapon in school creates significant problems for members of our school community – students, teachers, administrators and parents – and can create larger problems for the school. Four Rivers is committed to creating a substance-free, weapons-free, safe environment for all who attend school and work here. Drugs and alcohol pose significant health threats to all people, even more so for teenagers. The average brain does not stop developing until the early to mid twenties. Use and abuse of drugs and alcohol can alter the development of the brain and permanently impact cognitive and emotional growth. Four Rivers' very mission is to help students develop their minds in healthy ways to prepare them for adult life.
  - i. Addiction is a serious concern for some students and being in an environment where illegal substances are present can pose a threat to their well being.
  - ii. The presence of drugs and alcohol at school distracts students and teachers from their primary purpose at school, which is learning and teaching.
  - iii. Students may be forced to leave the school as a result of problems with controlled substances. Some may leave for disciplinary reasons and others may leave or be pulled out by parents due to safety concerns.

- iv. The presence of a weapon in school undermines the safety of all community members.
- v. The presence of illegal substances or weapons in our community affects the reputation of our school.
- b. To this end, all members of the community pledge not to come to school under the influence, not bring controlled substances to school, not use any controlled substances while at school, and not to bring weapons to school.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### a. ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

- i. Tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, vaping devices containing nicotine, or smokeless tobacco
- ii. Alcohol
- iii. Marijuana and/or THC infused products
- iv. Other illegal drugs (hallucinogens, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, etc) and also substances that may be used illegally (e.g. prescription drugs, steroids, inhalants).
- b. WEAPON: Any instrument or object possessed or used to inflict harm on another person, or to intimidate any person. Examples include but are not limited to firearms of any kind (operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded); all types of knives, chains, pipes, razor blades or similar instruments with sharp cutting edges; ice picks, dirks, other pointed instruments; brass knuckles; Chinese stars; billy clubs; tear gas guns; electrical weapons or devices (stun guns); BB or pellet guns; and explosives or propellants.

## 3. POLICY

- a. The use, possession, or distribution of any tobacco products or vaping devices within the school buildings, the school facilities, on the school grounds, on school buses, or at school-sponsored or school-related events by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.
- b. The use, possession, or distribution of any illegal drugs or alcohol within the school buildings, the school facilities, on the school grounds, on school buses, or at school-sponsored or school-related events by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.
- c. The use or possession of weapons within the school buildings, the school facilities, on the school grounds, on school buses, or at school-sponsored or school-related events by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.
- d. As provided in MGL Ch 71, Section 37H, any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school by the principal.
- e. School lockers are the property of the school, the school retains control over the lockers, and periodic general inspections of lockers may be conducted by school authorities at any time for any reason, with or without notice and without a warrant. The school reserves the right to conduct random or periodic searches by local law enforcement with dogs.

## 4. SUBSTANCE USE AND WEAPON PREVENTION PLAN

a. REPORTING

- i. Any 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 shall immediately report any instance of the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Dean of Students.
- ii. Any student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons to the Dean of Students as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written. Reports may also be submitted to an advisor or a teacher, the school nurse, or the Principal.
- iii. If an instance of the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons is reported to a staff member other than the Principal or Dean of Students, the staff member shall immediately inform the Dean of Students.
- iv. The Dean of Students, who is in charge of receiving complaints, should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
- v. The Dean of Students should document the following:
  1. the name of the complainant;
  2. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
  3. the name of the alleged perpetrator;
  4. the date the complaint was received;
  5. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
  6. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
  7. the names of witnesses.
- vi. Reports of the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- vii. Please note that any individual who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.

b. INVESTIGATION

- i. School officials are obligated to follow up on any reasonable suspicion or reports that a community member is under the influence of illegal substances or in possession of illegal substance or weapons. Follow up may include, but is not limited to:
  1. Having students checked by the school nurse for symptoms of impairment or evidence of injury,
  2. Direct questioning about what a student may have taken, may have in their possession or what they might have witnessed.
  3. Reasonable search of the student's locker, backpack, or person.
- ii. The Dean of Students should conduct an investigation as soon as possible and at least within 5 school days of the complaint, if possible.
- iii. The Dean of Students should ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
  1. who, what, when, where, how;
  2. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
  3. assess the complainant's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.

- iv. The Dean of Students shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged perpetrator.
- v. Whenever possible the Dean of Students does not share the name of students or families making reports.
- vi. The Dean of Students should caution all witnesses and the alleged perpetrator that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
- vii. The Dean of Students should interview the alleged perpetrator and fairly warn him/her that the conduct will, if appropriate, be reported to local law enforcement.
- viii. The Dean of Students may interview any possible witnesses; parents of witnesses may be notified when it is appropriate and warranted. Any of these interviews may take place without a parent or guardian present. Most will take place with a second adult present when possible.
- ix. The Dean of Students should establish the following:
  - 1. whether the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred;
  - 2. when the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred;
  - 3. how frequently the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred; and
  - 4. specific facts about the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons;
  - 5. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require; and,
  - 6. is notification to local law enforcement required.
- x. The type or degree of a consequence can be influenced by the level of student cooperation in investigations. If a student admits to a violation there will be a consequence. If a student denies involvement and it is later determined that he or she was involved, the consequence will be more severe.
- xi. If students or families are uncooperative in interviews and investigations, Four Rivers reserves the right to turn the investigation over the police or other community authorities.

c. DECISION

- i. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Dean of Students shall make a decision whether use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred and if so what is the appropriate consequence, including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the complainant. If the consequence might be long-term suspension beyond 10 days or expulsion, the Principal is the Hearing Officer and shall determine the consequence.
- ii. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons has occurred the Dean of Students may discipline the offending party by ordering:
  - 1. Counseling;
  - 2. an educational component;
  - 3. a verbal warning;
  - 4. a written warning;
  - 5. Suspension;
  - 6. Expulsion;

7. or any other consequence deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students.
- iii. The Dean of Students may notify local law enforcement if he/she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator.
- iv. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- v. The Dean of Students shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Dean of Students shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
- vi. The Dean of Students should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

d. SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

The school's discipline policies make it clear that possession or use of illegal substances at school, on school grounds, or at school sponsored activities are strictly prohibited and could lead to long term suspension or expulsion from the school. Our primary concern is prevention, though there are consequences for violating these rules.

- i. CONVERSATIONS IN CREW, WITH ADVISORS, OR IN JOURNALS: It is important that substance use outside of school can be discussed with responsible adults. These conversations can remain confidential unless it raises significant concerns involving the student's health and safety. If concerns are raised, the advisor contacts the Dean of Students. The advisor may protect the source of information, but they must report the student of concern. It is important that advisors maintain appropriate boundaries – we are careful about how we discuss these topics. We might talk about our own experiences growing up but we keep certain information private. We don't encourage tell-all journals without students knowing what we must report and what we feel responsible to report.
- ii. CONFIDENTIALITY IN SAFE ZONES: While advisors can't promise full confidentiality, conversations with the School Psychologist, the Wellness Advocate, or the School Nurse -- can be kept confidential. These are safe zones for conversations about substance use. They can listen and provide resources for students and families to get further help.
- iii. WELLNESS: The Wellness program develops knowledge and skills that help young people avoid substance abuse. Young people need to "feel the strength of their bodies", which Wellness works on. Feeling strong and healthy yields positive results and good decision making. Wellness also involves adventure -- young people can seek and find adventure through healthy alternatives. Wellness also helps students develop a toolbox of decision making skills.
- iv. WELLNESS ADVOCATE: Students for whom we have wellness-related concerns (substance abuse, eating disorders, or other issues) will be brought up at the weekly student review. The Wellness Advocate may have up to 2 meetings with that student to try to determine the nature and seriousness of the issue and make a plan for next steps.
- v. OTHER INTERVENTIONS:

1. Substance Abuse Prevention Crew: A group of peers willing to talk with classmates about substance abuse issues.
  2. Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) Sometimes we will need to follow this official path to get a student the help they need.
  3. School Resource Officer: Our school may have a police officer designated to work with us and our students. Contact the Dean of Students if you think this may be needed.
- vi. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF A SAFETY PLEDGE: Our school urges those students who drive and gather off campus to make an annual safety pledge. The reasons for this pledge are as follows:
1. The crash rate for drivers aged 16-19 years is 4 times that of older drivers.
  2. 16-19 year old drivers are responsible for one-third of all auto-involved fatalities.
  3. Most students will, at some point, be in a car with a driver who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
  4. Every year, the unthinkable happens. We ask student drivers and their parents to read and agree to the following statements:
    - a. I will not allow parties or gatherings in my home without proper adult supervision.
    - b. I will not serve, nor will I allow anyone under the age of 21 to consume, alcohol in my home or on my property.
    - c. I will not allow the use of illegal drugs in my home or on my property.
    - d. I will call the parent host of a party that my child is attending in order to assure that the party will be safe, free of alcohol and/or drugs, and properly supervised by an adult.
    - e. I have discussed this pledge with my child/children.
    - f. I will guarantee my child a ride home if he/she is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

### **3.10 ANTI-HAZING POLICY**

(Based on MGL Ch. 269, sections 17-19)

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined below, 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” means 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. Consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Failure to report hazing: Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing 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.

Notification to students and student groups, teams and organizations: The school shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization a copy of this policy. Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this policy to its members. Each of its members must acknowledge that they understand and agree to comply with its provisions.

### **3.11 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

**EXPECTATIONS:** Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in every aspect of their life at Four Rivers. This includes meeting the expectations of their assignments with good quality work of their own, and ensuring that the work they present to their teacher or a class is not borrowed or taken without acknowledgement from another person or source. Plagiarism of any kind is a serious offense, as described in the Plagiarism Policy.

**DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM:** "To steal and pass off as one's own the ideas, words, artistic productions of another; to use without due credit the ideas, expressions, or productions of another" (Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language)

**PLAGIARISM IS CHEATING.** It is academically dishonest and an ethical offense; it is inconsistent with the Four Rivers goals for character and academic rigor and is therefore unacceptable.

If a student is concerned or has questions about how to cite material for a particular assignment, the student is responsible for consulting his or her teacher.

#### **TYPES OF PLAGIARISM INCLUDE:**

1. Passing off the entire text of another person's work as one's own original work  
Example: a student might download an essay off the internet or find the work of another student and turn this work in as if it were his/her essay.
2. Passing off large sections of another person's work as one's own original work  
Example: a student might cut and paste whole paragraphs from another person's work, or use a translation site to create whole paragraphs that are not the work of the student.
3. Copying another student's work  
Example: copying another student's homework; "sharing" homework.
4. Not properly citing data, statistics and ideas presented through paraphrasing  
Example: a student might use statistics to support a claim and not cite the source of the statistics.
5. Not properly citing data, statistics and ideas presented verbatim (word for word)  
Example: a student might write an essay about a scientific theory and copy the theory directly from a book or off the internet without citing the source from which s/he learned the theory.
6. Having someone other than the student make major revisions in the thoughts included in any work, especially if these revisions show a capability beyond that of the author.  
Example: a student might ask a friend or parent to completely revise and make additions to his/her essay such that the student's original thoughts and capabilities are altered.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Specific consequences for an act of plagiarism will be determined, following the policy, at a meeting to include some or all of the following: the student, teacher involved, advisor, Principal, and parents.

<p>A CATEGORY I OFFENSE involves the student using a few phrases or a few lines of text, images or graphics without proper citation. This also includes paraphrasing without proper documentation. Most of the student's work is still his or her own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent notification</li> <li>● Possible opportunity to resubmit the assignment with proper citations and documentation</li> <li>● Teacher may adjust grade accordingly</li> <li>● Notation on disciplinary record</li> </ul>
<p>A CATEGORY II OFFENSE is more serious, involving the student's use of multiple sentences from someone else's work, and/or the use of someone else's images, graphics or ideas without the proper attribution, and/or repeated paraphrasing without proper attribution, and/or use of translation sites without proper attribution. While some of the work is the student's own, it is clear that a substantial amount of the work presented is not the student's own. This level can also include a student presenting work that is plagiarized to the extent that the work is essentially not his or her own. Examples of this include, but are not limited to essays downloaded from the Internet, the work of another student presented as the student's own, and work done using translation sites for the entirety of an assignment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent notification and/or conference</li> <li>● Student may not earn credit for the assignment</li> <li>● Possible opportunity to resubmit the assignment or complete a new assignment with proper citations and documentation in order to remain eligible for passing the relevant standards.</li> <li>● Up to one day suspension</li> <li>● Notation on disciplinary record</li> </ul> <p>Repeated Category II offenses may result in the student failing the assignment and/or the class.</p>

### **3.12 CANDY, GUM AND SNACKS**

**EXPECTATIONS:** Four Rivers is committed to maintaining a clean campus and having a day free of distractions from learning. Snacks can be enjoyed at appropriate times during the day provided they are disposed of properly. Candy, snacks and gum will not pose any distraction from what is going on in the classroom and will not create any kind of mess for others to clean up. Periodic checks (approximately every 2 weeks) for gum and other trash will be performed by crews to assess if candy, gum and snack privileges need to be changed. **LEAVE NO TRACE.**

**RULES:**

1. No candy or snacks are allowed in the classroom unless specifically permitted by a teacher for special occasions.
2. Students may bring drinks to classes as long as they are in a container with a cap or lid and are approved by the division team. Please avoid overly caffeinated and/or sugary drinks.
3. Drinks must be stored away from laptops.
4. Candy, gum or snacks are not to be shared during class time.
5. All trash must be disposed of properly.
6. Candy, gum or snacks are not permitted during formal gatherings (i.e. Community Meeting, assemblies, and presentations).

CONSEQUENCES: Consequences for violating candy, gum and snacks rules can range from cleaning up messes, larger acts of service or loss of Candy, Gum, and Snack privileges for the extended community.

### **3.13 BIKES AND SKATEBOARDS**

EXPECTATIONS: Four Rivers is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment.

Members of the Four Rivers community do not ride skateboards or other wheeled devices on campus or while at school events. Bikes may be ridden to school and stored outside school buildings during the day. Bikes are not ridden on sidewalks or lawns.

RULES:

1. Use of skateboards, rollerblades, “heelies” or other wheeled devices is not allowed at any time on school grounds.

CONSEQUENCES: Misuse of bikes may result in loss of bike privileges. Skateboards, rollerblades, “heelies” or other wheeled devices may be confiscated.

### **3.14 USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The issues addressed by this policy bring up two of the school’s three central themes -- Technology and Community. Our school community -- trustees, teachers, probably parents, and students (though less so) -- has been divided about the use of cellphones and other electronic devices in school. Some feel they have no place during the school day, while others feel they have become a regular part of daily life and might even be useful for learning.

FOR DIVISION 1

EXPECTATIONS: Time during the school day should be focused on work and community. The use of electronic devices will not present any distraction from that responsibility. Students are fully responsible for their personal property and therefore are discouraged from bringing any electronic devices to school. Some members of the school community may have to make use of electronic devices during the day in order to do their jobs. Headphones may only be used and worn in classrooms where permission has been given. They are not to be worn in hallways or common spaces.

RULES: Cell phones, electronic games, and personal music devices must remain off and out of sight during regular school hours -- (7:50 am until dismissal in the afternoon, in some cases excluding time during the day on a van or a bus).\_Teachers may permit use of personal electronic devices when doing so supports student learning.

CONSEQUENCES: Electronic devices that are used inappropriately may be confiscated and left with the Dean of Students for the duration of the day to be picked up by parents.

FOR DIVISION 2 AND 3

EXPECTATIONS: We are a school that embraces the potential power of technologies in our lives while valuing the benefits of human interaction and community. Given that our school day is focused on learning, the use of electronic devices should not distract from that primary responsibility. At the same time, electronic devices can be useful for learning or as a means of

connecting with communities beyond our walls. The key for students is learning appropriate use of technology -- and learning when to devices away. Our policy therefore permits a wider use of electronic devices than in the past, while asking students to follow given expectations with integrity.

**RULES:**

1. Students are permitted to bring their cell phone to school, to be used as a learning tool in the classroom or for personal communication not during class time.
2. Teachers may permit use of personal electronic devices in class when doing so supports student learning. Cell phones and personal music devices must remain off and out of sight during class unless the classroom teacher gives specific permission. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the use of cell phones when appropriate into their lessons, recognizing that not all students have devices.
3. Students in the high school may use their cell phones for personal use during transition periods or at lunch, with a reminder that all students are expected to be in their classrooms on time ready to learn.
4. Headphones may only be used and worn in classrooms where permission has been given. They are not to be worn in hallways or common spaces.
5. Students are trained at the beginning of the year as to what proper cell phone etiquette is within the confines of the school.
6. Students should not use cell phones during an emergency, such as evacuations or fire drills. The school will send out official information in such situations.
7. Students may not use cell phones to take unauthorized photos or video.
8. Students may not use electronic games on computers or on mobile devices during school hours -- 7:50 am until dismissal in the afternoon -- including attendance at Homework Club.

**CONSEQUENCES:** Electronic devices that are used inappropriately may be confiscated and stored in the Dean of Students office for the duration of the day to be picked up by parents or returned to the student with parent OK over the phone.

**NOTES:** Students are fully responsible for their personal property and therefore are discouraged from bringing any electronic devices to school or leaving them unattended. Some members of the school community may have to make use of electronic devices during the day in order to do their jobs.

## **SECTION 4: OTHER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

### **4.1 COLLEGE & CAREER COUNSELING**

The College Counseling Team includes Andy Stenson who works closely with Division II and III students in making and following through on their post-Four Rivers plans, including assembling and tracking their applications to college or other post-secondary institutions. Parents or students in younger grades may also address questions of college counseling to him. Leslie Taylor, Registrar, handles transcripts, testing and other student records. They both are located in the Farmhouse and can be reached through the school main number as well as via email at: [astenson@fourriverscharter.org](mailto:astenson@fourriverscharter.org) and [ltaylor@fourriverscharter.org](mailto:ltaylor@fourriverscharter.org).

News on informational presentations such as *Applying to College* or *Applying for Financial Aid*, SAT and ACT deadlines, and area College Fairs, can be found on the School website, and in the monthly newsletter Currents.

## 4.2 SPORTS PROGRAM

An elective after school Sports Program is offered at Four Rivers for the Fall, Winter, and Spring seasons. Four Rivers offers two types of athletic activities to students:

1. Intramural sports: intramural means “within walls,” and is used to describe activities that are organized between members of the Four Rivers community only.
2. Interscholastic sports: interscholastic means athletics played in competition with other schools or organizations. Interscholastic sports generally involve a higher level of commitment and competitiveness.

Sports Offered at Four Rivers:

Fall	Winter	Spring
Soccer Cross Country	Basketball Intramural Ultimate Frisbee	Ultimate Frisbee

Other sports may be offered depending on schedules and staff availability.

### INFORMATION AND FEES

1. Further details of sports programs will be provided to students and parents by Athletic Director Kyle Bissell, and will be communicated via FLASH updates and the school website.
2. A fee is charged to help cover the cost of equipment and staffing. Reduced fees may be available to students/families eligible for free or reduced lunch.

### ELIGIBILITY

1. Students participating in games must be in good academic standing.
2. A student who has been absent from school is not allowed to participate in sports or other after school activities that day. (A student is considered absent if she/he attended school for less than 1/2 the day). The only exceptions to this are for medical appointments (with doctor's note), or religious reasons.
3. Students must provide documentation of physical health for participation:
  - a. Interscholastic sports: students are required to submit documentation of a current physical exam (with sports clearance), signed by a physician/nurse practitioner/physician assistant and completed within 13 months of any sports participation.
  - b. Intramural sports: students are required to submit documentation of a current physical exam (with sports clearance), signed by a physician/nurse practitioner/physician assistant and completed within 24 months of any sports participation.
  - c. For 2020-2021: Intramural Sports with Virtual Interscholastic Challenges: students are required to submit documentation of a current physical exam (with sports clearance), signed by a physician/nurse practitioner/physician assistant and completed within 24 months of any sports participation.
  - d. Physicals must be on file in the school health office before the student may participate in any tryouts, practices, or games. Contact the school health office (413-775-4577 ext. 103) to check on the status of your student's physical.
4. Parents/guardians must submit a waiver acknowledging responsibility for their student's fitness to play.
5. Eligibility criteria for athletic participation will be modified in accordance with any student's IEP or 504 accommodations.

### **4.3 LOCAL EDUCATION COUNCIL (FORMERLY FAMILY COUNCIL)**

The school invites all interested parents and guardians to join the Family Council, which meets monthly and offers ways for parents to be informed about and support the purposes, program and community of Four Rivers. Family Council activities include planning and overseeing non-academic school functions, from community pot-lucks to service projects on campus and organizing after-school activities, as well as offering assistance to the faculty for fieldwork, class projects, and other volunteer needs. The Family Council also sponsors programs to foster parent education and address ways to strengthen parent/child communication and understanding. At the monthly meetings the school Principal or other staff members report on the school's program and growth, and discuss questions of interest to the group. Meetings are held monthly -- check **Currents**, the monthly school newsletter, for the schedule. The email address for the Family Council is [FamilyCouncil@fourriverscharter.org](mailto:FamilyCouncil@fourriverscharter.org)

### **4.4 PARENT VOLUNTEERS AND CORI CHECKS**

Parent or guardian volunteers who may be with students in an unsupervised setting (such as driving students on fieldwork or working with a small group in a separate space at school) are now required to have passed a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check before such activities can be permitted. Please see Amy Wales (Director of Operations) for guidance in requesting a CORI check.

### **4.5 SCHOOL NURSE**

The School Nurse is present every day for four hours, from 10:30-2:30 pm, in the Health Office in the Farmhouse. She oversees school health records and medical recommendations, and cares for students who come to her during her hours. During other times, students who are not feeling well should report to the School Registrar, who will contact the student's parents if the condition merits their attention. Any student who has medication (including over-the-counter medications like Tylenol) must keep the medication in the Health Office along with the required permission forms signed by parents and/or medication order forms signed by their doctor. All medications are to be administered in the Health Office under the supervision of the School Nurse.

### **4.6 SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST**

The School Psychologist, Dr. William Fogel, is an important resource to support the social and emotional growth of our students. He is at the school Monday through Thursday, and he is available to any student or parent who requests time with him. To make an appointment, simply speak with him, call his voice mail (ext 115) or email him [wfogel@frcps.org](mailto:wfogel@frcps.org)

### **4.7 SPECIAL ED PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Special Education Parents Advisory Council (PAC) will meet at least three times each year to support parents and discuss issues of children with special education needs. The meetings are announced in the school newsletter, **Currents**, and are open to all.

### **4.8 BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

Four Rivers is fortunate in its school buildings and grounds, and we want to care for them with respect and gratitude. The school has a long-term, renewable lease with Four Rivers Educational Foundation, for the Farmhouse, the 7th and 8th grade classroom building called the Barn, and the High School building and the Blue Barn. The seven acre campus includes a full-sized soccer field west of the High School.

The Farmhouse, the front part of which was built around 1777, houses the Business Office, the Gardner Room (serving as a school library and meeting room), and a conference room

downstairs. Students are not permitted upstairs in the Farmhouse unless accompanied by an adult. The Farmhouse Ell provides the main entrance to the school, with the School Office and the Principal's Office on either side of the entrance. At the north end of the Ell is our Project Room.

Students are not allowed to leave the school's grounds during school hours unless accompanied by an adult or with specific parent permission.

We ask that parents and visitors follow the posted directions for pick-up and parking, and we urge extra caution and patience during the busy pickup time in the afternoon.

## **SECTION 5: OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **5.1 ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Good attendance is one component of becoming an effective learner. It also has effects on the classroom community and frequent group work in our classes. The revised policy below is intended to increase good attendance at Four Rivers. The biggest change is enforcement of loss of credit in a class when a student misses more than 9 days (10%) of that class in a semester.

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

There are reasons why a student might miss school (listed below). We do count and track these absences and students are expected to make up the missed work. However, there are no further consequences unless a student has more than 9 absences in a semester, as described below. Unexcused absences include personal illness, without a doctor's note and family vacations during school days.

1. Medical appointments, with note from that office, which cannot be made outside of school hours. (Please do make every effort to prevent these from conflicting with school; and a note from the doctor's office is required);
2. College or school visits with advance notice;
3. Severe weather conditions or impassable roads;
4. Road test appointments (very hard to reschedule);
5. Court obligations;
6. Religious holidays as prescribed by the State Department of Education;
7. School suspensions mandated by the administration;
8. Death in the family
9. Extended or frequent absences that are the result of a medical or mental health condition, in which case the school develops a 504 Plan and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP) and does not penalize the student for the absences related to that condition. Such a plan will include academic adjustments and/or related aids and services to ensure the provision of a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE).
10. If your child has a medical or mental health condition that is interfering with regular school attendance, please submit documentation from a health care provider so that we can best support your child's needs. If you have questions or need assistance with obtaining documentation, please contact Kate Conant, Director of Academic Support. Please refer to the [Special Education Evaluation and Placement Procedures](#) if you suspect your child may have a disability and you would like to consider a school based evaluation.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

**LOSS OF CREDIT:** Students in grades 9-12 who miss more than 10% of a class (9 days for core classes) in a semester will not receive full credit for that course. In the high school,

- a. Students who miss 10-19 days of a class will lose 1 credit.
- b. Students who miss 20-29 days of a class will lose 2 credits.
- c. Students who miss 30 or more days of a class will lose all 3 credits.

**LOSS OF PRIVILEGES:** Students who miss more than 10% of a class--

- a. Not eligible to earn honors or HOWL of Fame.
- b. Not eligible for Senior Privilege; lost for the remainder of that semester.
- c. Not eligible to sign up for regular intensives. Instead will be assigned to a HOWLS Intensive that will focus on effective habits of learning and work and also be combined with service.

## ATTENDANCE WAIVER PROCEDURE

For high school students who are absent more than 10% of a class in a semester, the student may submit an attendance policy waiver as soon as the loss of credit has been reached. The student must complete an [Attendance Policy Waiver Form](#). The student must provide documentation substantiating the absences, and evidence that all work missed due to absences had been made up. Completed waivers and documentation should be turned into the Principal. The Principal makes a determination and notifies the student and the Registrar the outcome of the waiver request.

**CONSEQUENCES:** If a student is absent for more than 10% of a class each semester, credit may not be awarded for that class. Tardiness to class also means a student is missing important time and a record will be kept of minutes missed in each class due to tardiness. Please note that Crew is a class that meets at the start of each day. Credit for Crew can be earned back through service work done during Saturday Payback time. Credit for academic classes may be made up through a variety of ways described in **ACADEMIC POLICIES**.

## TARDINESS

Students are expected to arrive on time for school and for their classes.

1. A student is considered tardy to school when he or she arrives late to morning Crew, which begins at 8:00 am – Arrival at 8:00 is late; 7:59 is on time.
2. Please note that Crew is a class that meets at the start of each day. Late arrivals to school are recorded and the total number of minutes late is tallied. If a pattern of tardiness emerges during the school year, students and families will be asked to participate in a conference with the Dean of Students and the student's Crew leader to address the issue. If the problem persists, minutes may have to be made up through payback.
3. Students who are late due to inclement weather, unforeseen road conditions or medical appointments that are documented by a doctor's office will be counted as tardy but the minutes will not be.
4. Tardiness to class also means a student is missing important time and a record will be kept of minutes missed in each class due to tardiness, which have to be made up through payback and/or credit recovery work.

## EARLY DISMISSAL

Parents should make every attempt to schedule appointments outside the school day.

1. Parents must sign students out and back in at the office. **Please do not call or text**

**your students on their cell phones to let them know you are here as this is a violation of our cell phone policy.**

2. Students leaving early for appointments are dismissed from class to meet you in the office once you arrive.

#### ABSENCE NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS

1. If a student is not in his or her classroom and the school has not been notified, parents will receive a call at home or work by 9:00 each day.
2. We send occasional reminders to all families to check Alma for your student's attendance and tardy information.
3. We send notice for students who have accumulated tardies warranting payback.
4. We send notice for students whose absences are approaching 9 in a semester or whose academic performance is in danger from absences.

#### ATTENDANCE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

In an Expeditionary Learning school, there are times when students need to be present outside of regular school hours. Public presentations, fieldwork, and other important learning experiences sometimes happen in the evening or on weekends. The school's policy is that attendance at such events is mandatory, as long as there is enough notice and as long as it happens only a few times a year. Many students are active in athletics, clubs and organizations, etc. and conflicts do arise with athletic events, performances, family obligations and so on. However, these are NOT acceptable reasons to be absent from mandatory evening or weekend programs. Only serious or extreme circumstances may release a student from this obligation.

#### MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS PERTAINING TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

##### ***School Attendance***

Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, each school may have its own attendance policy with which parents and guardians should be familiar.

##### ***What is a CRA?***

A "CRA" (Child iRequiring Assistance) petition may be filed in court by a school if a child between the ages of six and sixteen persistently and willfully fails to attend school or persistently violates lawful and reasonable regulations of her or his school. The Court's authority pursuant to a CRA petition includes the power to place the child in the custody of the state agency known as the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

##### ***What is a 51A?***

A "51A" is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the state Department of Social Services. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

##### ***Parental Responsibility***

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions within any six month period, the school may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent or guardian. It is a crime to induce or attempt to induce a minor to miss school, or harbor a minor who should be in school.

~from 05-06 Project Alliance, Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc.

## 5.2 COMMUNICATIONS

We want everyone -- parents, students, and staff -- to know what's going on at Four Rivers. Here are the different ways we communicate with you.

### COMMUNICATING ABOUT ACADEMICS

Students and parents should also receive information about academic difficulties before a situation becomes urgent or too late to revise in order to pass a standard. How can students and parents know how things are going?

1. In Class: Teachers give frequent, direct and clear feedback to students about where there's trouble and what to try to work on.
2. In Planners: Students write down their assignments. Parents can check planners as they wish. When tighter accountability is warranted, parents might sign each assignment in the planner, and teachers might highlight assignments not completed.
3. By email or Phone Calls: Teachers or advisors try to provide friendly correspondence when there is an inkling of an issue. When students of concern are brought up at weekly Monday meetings, advisors make contact.
4. In the Handbook: You can find information about how we grade, grading policies, policies related to promotion, and options for earning credits in high school. If any of the information there does not make sense, all academic issues can be directed to the Principal for clarification.

### BROADCASTS (EMAIL/PHONE CALLS}

When we need to get in touch with all of you or smaller subgroups, we'll send you an email message. Please let us know if you don't have a computer or internet access and would prefer to receive all communication from us by phone and mail.

- THE FLASH: This is our quick update with information and reminders to keep you up to date on school events, opportunities, and initiatives under way at school.
- CURRENTS: This is our monthly newsletter with a column by the principal and more in-depth feature stories about what's happening.

### CALENDAR ON THE WEBSITE

We want you to be able to find out what's going on when you want. There is one calendar on the homepage of our website that lists all school events and sports schedules.

### OTHER LINKS ON THE WEBSITE

- [CLASS WEB PAGES](#): Teachers list day by day or weekly assignments on a web page.
- [Alma](#): This is our student information system. With your login, you can see assignments and grades that have been posted, as well as attendance and discipline information. Teachers do their best to update on the 1st and 15th of every month.
- CLASSROOM OBSERVATION NOTES: The Principal takes notes when he visits classrooms on what students are working on. The notes are published as a blog accessible from the homepage on the website.

### WHEN YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR STUDENT

We understand that sometimes emergencies happen--flat tires, cars won't start, health issues, a student needs to take the bus home--and in those cases we will make every effort to get the essential information to your child. Contact the School Secretary in these situations.

However, in non-emergency situations we rely on students and families to be responsible for plans and belongings.

- In general we do not provide message or delivery service of forgotten belongings to students during the school day. This includes lunches, car keys, planners, homework, water bottles, and clothing and footwear for after school programs.
- Please remind your child in the morning that they should check the bench in the lobby entrance of the Farmhouse if they forget something, including a lunch--especially if they have contacted you to deliver the items.
- If you have changed your carpool arrangements, please make sure the adult responsible for pick-up knows it is their responsibility to connect with your child.
- Our school's policy on cell phone use during the school day--just for students in the high school! -- allows you and your child to communicate directly. Please don't expect an immediate response--they're focused on learning and the classroom.

## QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

When you have concerns about your child's well being or when you are looking for information or advice, we want to help you in any way that we can. We want to get you to the right person who can help with the issues at hand.

1. Contact your student's Advisor directly if you already have that relationship established.
2. If you want to reach an administrator or if you don't know who you're looking for, contact the School Secretary. The School Secretary needs to know enough about your issue to connect you to the right person. Emergency calls will be returned within the hour; non-urgent matters will be addressed within a day or two.
3. Here are some examples:
  - a. If you're looking for a referral or evaluation related to special education, contact the Academic Support Director, Kate Conant.
  - b. If you are concerned about the safety of your child or another student, contact the Dean of Students, Matt Leaf.
  - c. If you have a concern about your student's emotional well-being or behavior, contact the Dean of Students, Matt Leaf.
  - d. If you have a concern about your student's academic progress, contact your student's advisor.
  - e. If you are interested in finding outside counseling or other services, contact the School Psychologist, Bill Fogel

## WHAT ARE REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS REGARDING COMMUNICATION?

If you call or write us, we aim to reply within 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays). That doesn't mean that we will have all the answers at that point, but we try to acknowledge we've received your message.

## 5.3 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

### A. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE REGARDING GENERAL CONCERNS

(Excluding harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, substance use, or violations of state or federal laws – complaint procedures for these are included in those policies or the section below.)

#### Step 1: Problem solving at the source

We encourage individuals who have complaints to respectfully talk and problem solve with the individual(s) involved. At the classroom level, for example, most complaints should initially be addressed to the teacher or staff member involved.

#### Step 2: Problem solving with the Principal/Head of School

The complaining party may choose to problem solve with the Principal/Head of School for the following reasons:

1. the nature of the complaint makes it difficult to go directly to the source
2. problem solving at the source, as described in Step 1, did not produce resolution
3. the Principal/Head of School is the subject of the complaint

The complaining party must first put in writing: 1) a clear and concise description of the specific concerns and 2) possible remedies or solutions for each concern. This written statement should be given to the Principal, who will investigate to whatever extent necessary. The Principal/Head of School and complaining party then make reasonable efforts to work together towards resolution. This mutually respectful dialogue is typically the most effective way for complaining parties to help their student or to promote change in school actions.

### Step 3: Board Involvement

The Board Chair will only consider a complaint after the Principal/Head of School and complaining party have made demonstrable and reasonable efforts to work together. The Board Chair's involvement with teachers or staff is limited to supervision of the Principal/Head of School's guidance, supervision and leadership of teachers and staff.

Should problem-solving with the Principal/Head of School fail to bring a satisfactory resolution within two weeks of presenting the written concern to the Principal/Head of School, a written statement by the complaining party may be submitted to the Chair of the Four Rivers Board of Trustees. Delivery must be in paper format, addressed to the Chair in care of Four Rivers Charter Public School.

This written complaint should state specific concerns clearly and concisely. The Board Chair will review the issues with the Principal/Head of School, and investigate to whatever extent necessary. The Board Chair may choose to convene an advisory group of other trustees for considering the complaint. The Board Chair will respond to complaints about school policies, procedures and programs to the complaining party no later than 30 days from the receipt of the complaint. The results of any investigation specific to an individual will not be disclosed to the complaining party, due to laws protecting privacy.

Note 1: Supervision of teachers and staff, as well as the hiring and firing of teachers and staff is the responsibility of the Principal/Head of School. The Board Chair's involvement with teachers and staff is limited to supervision of the Principal's guidance, supervision and leadership of teachers and staff.

Note 2: Public Comment occurs typically at the end of each Board Meeting each month. Following the statements made by an individual, the Board will not engage in discussion or otherwise respond to comments made. Members of the public may make statements to the Board during Public Comment provided they make no complaints, charges or personal comments against any particular individuals. Protecting the privacy of individuals is required by law.

## B. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE REGARDING STATE/FEDERAL LAWS

- A parent, guardian or other individuals or groups who believe that the school has violated or is violating any provision of M.G.L. c 71, sec. 89 or 603 CMR 1.00 may file a complaint with the Four Rivers Charter School Board of Trustees.
- The Board of Trustees shall respond no later than 30 days from the receipt of the complaint in writing to the complaining party.
- The Board shall, pursuant to a complaint received under 603 CMR 1.10, or on its own initiative, conduct reviews to ensure compliance; and the school and the specific individuals involved shall cooperate to the fullest extent with such review.

- Any complaining party who believes the complaint has not been adequately addressed by the Board of Trustees may submit the complaint in writing to the Commissioner of Education, who shall investigate such complaint and make a written response.
- In the event the school is found in non-compliance with M.G.L. c. 71 sec. 89 or CMR 1.00, as a result of a complaint or upon investigation, the Commissioner or Board of Education may take such action as it deems appropriate, including but not limited to suspension or revocation of the school's charter under 603 CMR 1.12, or referral of the matter to the District Attorney or the Office of the Attorney General for appropriate legal action.
- A parent, guardian or other individuals or groups who believe that the school has violated or is violating any state or federal law or regulation regarding special education may file a complaint directly with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

If you have any questions, complaints or need any information regarding any of the above named Titles, please contact Kate Conant, Director of Academic Support concerning ADA or 504, and the Principal for all other matters.

Peter Garbus, Principal  
248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, MA 01301  
413-775-4577

Kate Conant, Director of Academic Support  
248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, MA 01301  
413-775-4577

#### **5.4 NO (FEW) SURPRISES PLEDGE**

Communication is never perfect, but we try to improve what we can. Therefore, our staff makes the following pledge to you, our families:

STAFF PLEDGE: IF WE KNOW SOMETHING IMPORTANT ABOUT YOUR STUDENT OR SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT IN OUR SCHOOL, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO GIVE YOU TIMELY, CLEAR INFORMATION.

Because communication is a two-way street, we ask you to make a similar pledge:

PARENT/STUDENT PLEDGE: WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO READ COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SCHOOL -- IN THE FLASH, THE CURRENTS, OR THE HANDBOOK -- SO WE KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON AND HOW THINGS WORK AT THE SCHOOL.

#### **5.5 TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE**

We strive to educate graduates ready for the world, which means in part that we want them to become independent, responsible young adults. While they are getting there, they make mistakes. At each grade level, we take the following steps to help students be accountable for their work:

1. In 7th grade: Students write assignments in their planners. Assignments not completed get recorded in a log, and the student calls a parent to let them know something wasn't done. Notes on missing work get shared at a weekly student review. HOWLS (Habits of Work and Learning) are taught and assessed.
2. In 8th grade: Students write assignments in their planners. Assignments not completed get recorded on the board. Notes on missing work get shared at a weekly student review. HOWLS are taught and assessed.
3. In 9th/10th grade: Students write assignments in their planners. Notes on missing work get shared at a weekly student review. There is weekly discussion on students of concern -- advisors call home. HOWLS are taught and assessed.
4. In 11th/12th grade: Students write assignments in their planners. Notes on missing work get shared at a weekly student review. There is weekly discussion on students of

concern -- advisors talk directly to the student the first week and then call home the next week if things haven't turned around.. HOWLS are taught and assessed – the Div 3 HOWL counts as an academic standard that needs to be passed in order to earn full credit.

## **5.6 BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### **BEFORE SCHOOL:**

1. The school building opens for students at 7:30 a.m.
2. Students may only arrive at school earlier than 7:30 if they have made previous arrangements with the school.
3. All students wait in the Common Room until 7:50 when they are allowed to head to class, with the following exceptions
4. Seniors may gather in room 103.
5. No students are allowed upstairs on the second floor of the high school or in the middle school before 7:50.

### **AFTER SCHOOL:**

1. Students are released at 3:05 (1:30 on Wednesdays). If you have an emergency and cannot pick up your student or carpool, call the School Secretary who will connect you with the administrator in charge after school. Pick-up for students after 3:15 (1:45 on Wednesdays) is from the U in front of the farmhouse.
2. All students not picked up by 3:15 and 1:45 on Wednesdays are expected to be in a supervised after school program:
  - a. Extra help from a teacher: All core teachers offer an hour of extra help one afternoon a week. Students report to that room by 3:15 and remain there until 4:15. Students who are not picked up at 4:15 are expected to go to Homework Club -- families will be charged.
  - b. Sports: practices from 3:15 to 5:15, 1:45 to 3:15 on Wednesdays
  - c. After School Clubs: 3:15 to 5:15 on designated days.
  - d. Homework Club: The school offers a supervised fee-based after school care program. Homework Club will operate in the library of the Farmhouse on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 3:15 to 5:15.
    - i. The fee is \$6/hour, \$3/hour for families that qualify for reduced lunch, and \$1.50/hour for families that qualify for free lunch.
    - ii. Students picked up later than 5:15 might not be allowed to continue participating.
  - e. On Wednesdays and Fridays, there is no Homework Club or extra help, so families need to make sure they have plans for pick up by 1:45 on Wednesdays and 3:15 on Fridays. Provided there are seats available, students may take the bus to downtown Greenfield to be picked up by parents/guardians.

## **5.7 AFTER SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

### **Behavior Expectations:**

The expectations for behavior and behavior policies are the same after school as they are during the day. Teachers and coaches running our after school activities should be able to do their job without any interruption or interference. Students taking part in after school activities should be able to participate without distractions or disruptions. Attending after school activities is a privilege. Problems with behavior and discipline may result in loss of this privilege.

### **Discipline Procedures:**

The procedures for discipline after school are similar to those used during the school day. Attendance in the after school program is a privilege so our procedures vary some to reflect that difference from the school day.

Whenever possible, students should be given a warning and opportunity to redirect if their behavior is disruptive or inappropriate. Students may be asked to complete blue slips for behavior infractions.

If there is no change in behavior, or if the infraction is serious enough, students may be suspended from after school activities for any period of time.

It is a privilege to be able to participate in afterschool programs at Four Rivers. Students who misbehave during any after school activities run the risk of losing that privilege. Consequences for behavior infractions may include, but is not limited to the following:

1. First Incident: Warning and/or short term (1-2 day) suspension from the activity.
2. Second Incident: Up to two weeks suspension from after school activities
3. Third Incident: Long Term Suspension from after school activities that may last the remainder of the season, term or year.

## **5.8 HOMEWORK POLICY**

### **MODERATION AND BALANCE**

Four Rivers tries to set homework expectations that are moderate and that allow students to find healthy balance in their lives. Learning and growth require just the right amount of challenge. Too little, students coast. Too much, students stress and shut down. Everyone needs down time or time to pursue personal interests apart from school.

Four Rivers intends the following purposes for our assignment of homework:

1. Homework supports classroom learning.
2. Homework allows students to practice/review, prepare, extend, or integrate.
  - a. Practice homework reinforces learning and helps the student master specific skills.
  - b. Preparation homework introduces material that will be presented in future lessons but does not require mastery of the information.
  - c. Extension homework asks students to apply skills they already have to new situations.
  - d. Integration homework requires the student to apply many different skills to a single task.
3. Homework helps students develop independence and good work habits.

### **COMMON EXPECTATIONS**

When teachers assign homework, Families should expect that homework may take up to two hours -- our rule of thumb is to limit the amount of assigned work to about 10 minutes per grade level, so 70 minutes for 7th grade, 80 minutes for 8th, and so on. Autonomy for the timing of assignments changes as students progress through Four Rivers, with Div 1 projects typically requiring shorter homework assignments on a daily basis. Div 3 projects tend to be longer-term and thus may require work outside of class over a period of days, depending on student time management and use of in-school work periods

Families should help set aside this time and they should work with their students to plan ahead if some days in the week are busier than others after school. Because we intend that homework at Four Rivers is a meaningful extension of classroom learning, it is important individually and often for the progress of the class that students complete their homework.

*No assigned homework on weekends.* Changed from past policy, teachers don't assign new work on Friday that is due on Monday. Some students may use the weekend to catch up or get ahead, but the hope is students might spend time engaged by other pursuits.

#### COMMON PRACTICES

1. Teachers post homework on the whiteboard in class.
2. Students copy homework into planners provided at the beginning of each school year.
3. Assignments and handouts may be available at the end of the school day for students who are absent. Assignments can be picked up in the school office with sufficient notice.
4. Homework is collected or checked at the beginning of each class.
5. If a student fails to bring in homework or has a chronic pattern of missed work, teachers may call home to discuss the issue of missing work with parents. The student may also be required to attend extra help. If a student continues not to do homework, that student's advisor will likely set up a conference with the student and his or her parents and develop a clear plan for improvement.
6. Teachers also post assignments to the CLASS WEB PAGES. Teachers update class websites weekly or daily where homework assignments and other class information are posted.

#### PLANNERS

Success for a student requires preparation and organization. Four Rivers provides students with an assignment planner at the start of each school year. Each student should bring the necessary tools to each class daily, including his or her planner. The student's planner is used daily in each class to record assignments and work due. It should be brought home each night, and we encourage parents to review it as needed with their students.

### **5.9 HOMEWORK CLUB EXPECTATIONS**

Homework Club is intended as a time for students to get work done. Behavior during this time must be respectful for both fellow students attending and teachers running it. All effort should be made to have this be a productive work environment.

Computers may be used for work purposes during Homework Club with permission of the teacher in charge. As the RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICIES make clear, students may not play games during this time. Laptops must be used on a desk or table (not on laps or while sitting on the floor). Computer screens should be visible to the teacher in charge. Laptops must be properly returned to the computer cart at the end of the work session.

### **5.10 CONDOM DISTRIBUTION POLICY**

As part of its Wellness Program, Four Rivers teaches a comprehensive sex education program to all of its students in grades 7-10. The program delivers factually accurate, age-appropriate information on a range of topics pertaining to sexual health, sexuality, accessing health care, and healthy relationships. The program is grounded in the principles of social and emotional learning, which focuses on the areas of self-awareness, self-management, awareness of others, relationship skills and responsible decision making. By building in time for practice and assessment of these skills, students are given the foundation to make responsible decisions about sex and sexuality, as well as to build and maintain healthy relationships in all aspects of their lives.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework of 1999 provides the following standards which support the implementation of such a program: Students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to make effective personal decisions that promote their emotional, sexual, and reproductive health.

Students will learn the signs, causes, and treatment of chronic and communicable diseases, and will gain skills related to health promotion, disease prevention, and health maintenance.

The Policy:

As part of the school's overall efforts to promote reproductive health and in order to reduce risks of unprotected sexual activity, the Four Rivers Charter School makes condoms available to students through the health services, wellness, and counseling offices. The school also provides appropriate counseling.

1. This policy will be implemented upon the approval of the Board of Trustees.
2. The school's comprehensive wellness program aims to increase student awareness of Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS.
3. The school's comprehensive wellness program develops and ensures understanding of the concepts of abstinence, safer sex practices, and knowledge of community health resources.
4. The wellness and health staff are trained to provide counseling prior to distribution of condoms.
5. The school distributes parental opt-out forms which would maintain parental control; condoms would not be available to students whose parents choose to opt them out of the program. This form is presented to families every year with registration materials. The school maintains a process that allows those authorized to distribute condoms to know who has opted out.
6. Information be disseminated to students who use this program in the following areas:
  7. abstinence related behaviors
  8. prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections
  9. proper use of condoms and rates of effectiveness
  10. sexual health resources within the community
11. Develop a record keeping system which identifies use statistics of the program. No records of individual student involvement in the program will be maintained.

## **5.11 DRIVING AND PARKING POLICIES**

### **STUDENT DRIVERS**

Driving to Four Rivers is a privilege, holding with it the responsibility of following the school's driving regulations. An application for student driving privileges may be obtained from Ms. Taylor, Registrar (also available on our web site under "For Students").

The application form must be completed, signed and submitted to the school along with a photocopy of the student's driver's license and a copy of a current insurance policy cover page (or binder) showing the student as a named insured driver and the limits of coverage, and a copy of same any time it is changed. Students may drive to school only after the application has been signed (and approved) by Ms. Taylor, Registrar. Parking permits may be restricted in number due limited space. Behavior in cars on campus should at all times comply with student behavior guidelines as outlined in previous pages of this Handbook.

### **ADULT VOLUNTEER DRIVERS**

From time to time our teachers may be doing an activity or field work that requires volunteer adult drivers. Any parent wishing to volunteer should complete the Adult Volunteer Driver form and meet with Amy Wales, Director of Operations.

The application form must be completed, signed and submitted to the school along with a photocopy of the applicant's drivers license and a copy of a current insurance policy cover page (or binder) showing the student as a named insured driver and the limits of coverage, and a

copy of same any time it is changed. We ask that these forms be completed well in advance of any school trip for which you are driving.

Four Rivers Charter Public School cannot assume any responsibility for damage done to a vehicle while on school grounds. All drivers are subject to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Motor Vehicles. Violators of state law will be reported to the local authorities. The purpose of the school's permission forms and policies is to keep all of our students safe.

## **5.12 EQUAL ACCESS AND FREEDOM FROM BIAS**

It is important that all students and families feel welcome and included in all aspects of Four Rivers. The following procedures are aimed at ensuring equal access and freedom from bias in all school programs.

1. Counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotyping:
  - a. The Director of Academic Support and School Psychologist meet annually to discuss concerns related to bias and stereotyping in counseling and counseling materials.
  - b. The Guidance Counselor encourages students to consider classes and opportunities on the basis of their interests, abilities and skills.
  - c. School personnel examine testing materials to screen for bias and counteract any bias when administering and interpreting testing results.
  - d. School personnel make sure communications with limited English proficient (LEP) students is effective.
  - e. School personnel support educational and occupational pursuits considered nontraditional for the student's gender.
2. Scholarships, prizes and awards sponsored or administered by the school are free of restrictions:
  - a. The Guidance Counselor and division team leaders check for restrictions or bias when considering any awards.
3. Instructional locations for different groups are comparable:
  - a. The Director of Finance and Operations ensures all students, staff, and families have equal access to all facilities.
  - b. At least one facility at each level is accessible to all individuals with disabilities for educational and vocational programs and services.
4. The school's curriculum is free from bias and stereotyping:
  - a. Teachers review all educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation as part of the Beginning of the Year Checklist.
  - b. Teachers review activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials that are used to provide balance and context for any stereotypes depicted in such materials.
  - c. The Principal reviews all curriculum maps on an annual basis for possible bias or stereotyping.
  - d. The Student and Family Handbook includes a message asking anyone who perceives bias or stereotyping in curriculum or materials to report such concerns to the Principal.
5. Self Evaluation:

- a. Each year, the Principal reviews of all aspects of its program to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities.
  - b. No changes have been warranted by this review last year.
- 6. The school protects the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information that it collects, uses or maintains:
  - a. The Privacy Policy is published in the Student and Family Handbook.
  - b. The Registrar monitors adherence to the Privacy Policy.

## **5.13 FAMILY COMMITMENT**

All members of the Four Rivers Charter Public School community—teachers, students, parents, staff and trustees—have responsibilities to promote student learning and the growth of our school. This is a brief description of the essential commitments we ask from parents and guardians at the time of their application, and every parent now enrolled has signed this.

### **BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL LIFE**

Attend important meetings with your child and his or her advisor, including conferences, exhibitions, and portfolio presentations. Go over your child’s progress reports and other school communications together. Review with your child the school’s Family Handbook when it is distributed this summer. Contact your child’s advisor or the school Principal about issues that may affect your child’s learning and positive participation in the school.

### **HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP GOOD HOMEWORK HABITS AND MAKE SCHOOL A TOP PRIORITY**

Check that your child’s assignments are clear and homework is completed each night. Limit TV, video, telephone and on-line time which interfere with homework, and encourage your child to read at least one-half hour each night. Help your child to live a healthy lifestyle, with regular bedtimes and good nutrition. Ensure that your child arrives on time each day, and inform the school promptly of absences. If your child is required to stay after to work with a teacher to make up late or incomplete work, arrange alternative transportation to support this consequence.

### **SUPPORT FOUR RIVERS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL CHARACTER VALUES AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Show your child that you understand and support the school’s emphasis on character development and the Expeditionary Learning Design Principles. Promote and reinforce the school’s Code of Conduct. Work closely with faculty to support appropriate consequences for misconduct. Help promote a school community free of any form of substance abuse and work closely with the school when concerns may arise.

### **PARTICIPATE IN FAMILY COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND VOLUNTEER IN SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL**

Take part in the school’s Family Council and the programs or projects it develops. Offer to volunteer your skills and time, as needed by the school and workable for you. Support the work we all need to do to build a strong school community, in the Expeditionary Learning spirit of “We are crew, not passengers!”

## **5.14 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **CONTACTING OR TELEPHONING YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL**

The School strives to keep the school day free of interruptions and distractions, therefore we request parents not contact their student at school unless for an urgent matter, and then only make contact by calling the school office. Students are instructed to keep electronic devices, including cell phones or any texting devices turned off and stowed out of sight until the school day is over. We hope that parents will respect this rule and not telephone or text their student during the school day, and remind them to keep cell phones turned off and stowed out of sight. Students caught using their phones during the day have them confiscated and turned in to the front office; parents have to come in to retrieve them. Students may call home if necessary by using the phone available in the school office during lunch or after school. We ask that parents do their best to have plans in place for their student and avoid last minute phone calls to the school.

#### GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

We invite you to contact us by phone or email whenever you have questions or concerns.

For schedules, logistics, school operations, etc, contact the School Secretary

For academic issues, contact your child's advisor.

For behavior or school culture issues, contact Dean of Students, Matt Leaf.

We do ask you to be considerate about the frequency and length of your requests.

#### **5.15 HOMELESS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

Four Rivers Charter Public School is open to all students and families in Franklin County and is committed to serving the needs of all our students. The school has specific policies addressing the needs, concerns and rights of homeless students, copies of which are available in the School Office. The homeless education liaison is Kate Conant, Academic Support Director. She may be reached through the School Office for questions or support. Should a Four Rivers student become or be identified as homeless, the homeless education liaison will put the student and his/her family in touch with local and state agencies that provide assistance. She will also make available to that student the same counseling and family support that is available to all students at Four Rivers.

#### **5.16 AGE OF MAJORITY: TRANSFER OF DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY**

Massachusetts Law recognizes that a child has reached adulthood upon his or her 18th birthday. When a student turns 18, therefore, all of the decision-making rights that you have as a parent transfer to the adult child unless a court has appointed a legal guardian for your child. The school district must discuss with you and your child the impact of this transfer of rights approximately a year in advance of the student's 18th birthday. As the parent of an adult child, both you and your son or daughter will continue to receive all required notices from the school, and you will continue to have access to your son's or daughter's educational record.

#### **5.17 IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR PREGNANT STUDENTS**

If a student at Four Rivers becomes pregnant, that student is allowed to participate in all programs and services available to all other students

Pregnant students are permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave.

The school does not require a pregnant student to obtain the certification of a physician that the student is physically and emotionally able to continue in school unless it requires such certification for all students for other physical or emotional conditions requiring the attention of a physician.

## **5.18 LATECOMERS AND VISITORS**

Students arriving late must check in at the Office. Parents and other visitors arriving during the day must sign in at the office and pick up a visitor badge which must be displayed while they are on campus. Visitors must return to the office to sign out before departing campus. Any student leaving before regular dismissal time must meet their parent/guardian in the lobby of the Farmhouse and be signed out by the parent/guardian, or someone authorized by the parent/guardian.

## **5.19 LOCKERS**

Every student is assigned a locker. Although lockers are school property, each one is the responsibility of the student assigned to use it. They should not be marked, scarred or damaged in any way, nor decorated inappropriately. Only the student assigned to the locker may have access to it. Students may not take things from, or put things in, another student's locker. We want everyone's personal belongings to be safe and respected.

## **5.20 LUNCH AND SNACK**

Lunches are available each day during the designated lunch period (except on some days with 12:00 pm dismissal). The cost of a regular lunch with milk is \$3.25, or \$0.40 for those who qualify for the reduced price. Milk alone costs \$0.60. Credit is not extended for cookies; large cookies cost 75 cents each. Students purchasing the prepared lunch from the menu are expected to keep current with payments. Parents may call the School Secretary to discuss payment options to suit their needs. Students may also bring their own lunches, which should be stored in their lockers (no refrigeration is available). Lunch will take place in the Common Room in the High School. We encourage each student to bring a healthy snack for breaks.

## **5.21 LUNCH/BREAKFAST AND FEES**

### **PAYMENTS**

The cost of a regular lunch with milk is \$3.25, or \$0.40 for those who qualify for the reduced price. Milk alone costs \$0.60. The cost of a regular breakfast with milk/juice is \$1.70, or \$.30 for those who qualify for the reduced price.

The school tracks what is ordered and bills are emailed to parents every two weeks – beginning September 15th. Payment is expected within a week of receiving the bill.

Paper bills are not mailed home until the outstanding lunch account reaches \$30. When the account reaches \$45, the student will be unable to purchase further lunches or a la carte items until the bill is paid in full. Payment of any outstanding bill from the previous school year is required prior to being given credit to order lunches starting in the new school year. Prepayment of a few weeks' meals is strongly encouraged.

### **FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH PROGRAM**

To apply for free or reduced price school lunch, or to renew for this year, parents need to complete the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application. A determination of eligibility will be made by Greenfield Public Schools' Nutrition Services, which runs our lunch program.

Please read the application and instructions carefully, fill it out and return it to the School Secretary. Application information and records of receiving such assistance are maintained in a strictly confidential manner.

### **REDUCTIONS FOR ATHLETIC OR SCHOOL TRIP FEES**

To apply for reduced fees for sports or school trips, parents must first determine if they are qualified for free or reduced price school lunch (see above). Those who qualify for free or reduced lunch will also qualify for a partial athletic fee reduction.

#### LUNCH PROGRAM DETAILS

Greenfield Public Schools' Nutritional Services caters our lunch program with a daily choice of a hot entree, sandwiches, salads, other offerings, and fruit or veggies and milk. Hot meals include a side salad and dessert or fruit. Sandwiches, subs, and wraps usually have meat and/or cheese with lettuce and tomato, a pasta or potato salad. Chef Salads are a fresh variety of vegetables with meat, cheese, or hard-boiled eggs, and a choice of dressings. A vegetarian option is available as a sandwich or Chef Salad as well. A fresh veggie and fruit bar is set up every day. Students may buy lunch on any day, placing their order during the morning advisory/crew period. The menu for each month can be found on: [www.fourriverscharter.org](http://www.fourriverscharter.org).

For students who either buy or bring lunch, a variety of 10 ounce containers of white 2% or chocolate milk is available.

Please look over the "Questions and Answers" about free and reduced price lunches below, and fill out the form if you want to be considered for free or reduced lunch.

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Who can get free or reduced price meals?* Children in households getting Food Stamps or TANF and most foster children can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, if your household income is within the limits of the Federal Income Chart, your children can get free or reduced price meals.

*Will the information I give be checked?* Yes. Greenfield Public Schools' Nutritional Services may ask you to send written proof of the information you give.

*What if my household size or income changes?* If your children qualify for free or reduced price meals based on your income, you must tell us if your household size goes down or your income goes up by more than \$50 per month (\$600 per year). Call us at 413-775-4577. You do not need to fill out another application.

*Do I need to re-apply every year?* Yes, a new application is required each school year.

*If I don't qualify now, may I apply again later?* Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you start getting Food Stamps or TANF. If you lose your job, your children may be able to get free or reduced price meals during the time you are unemployed.

*What if I disagree with the program's decision about my application?* Eliza Calkins (Director of Food & Nutrition) at the Greenfield Public Schools Nutrition Services will be able to discuss the situation. You may also ask for a hearing.

*Why should I file the application if my student plans to bring a lunch from home?* Many grants are based on the number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunches, whether or not the student takes advantage of the service.

*If my family qualifies for a free or reduced lunch, can my student take only the milk?* No, the program requires that a qualifying student take a full lunch (which includes one milk and one

dessert). Lunch items bought “a la carte” are charged at full price for all students, regardless of free or reduced.

If you have other questions or need help, call 413-775-4577. To apply for free or reduced price meals, use the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application (available on the Four Rivers website). Return the completed application to:

Four Rivers Charter Public School  
School Secretary  
248 Colrain Road  
Greenfield, MA 01301

## **5.22 PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY**

It is the policy of Four Rivers Charter Schools to utilize verbal and non-verbal behavior management techniques prior to utilizing physical intervention whenever possible. Physical Restraints are only used when needed to protect a student or member of the school community from serious harm. When utilizing a physical restraint, staff will use the least restrictive means to protect the student from self or others. Physical Restraints are used in situations when less restrictive alternatives have failed and safety is of concern. Nothing in the DESE regulation or in Four Rivers School policy and procedure would preclude any teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other staff or themselves from assault or serious physical harm. Four Rivers Charter Public School requires staff to be familiar with the School policy and provides training to staff as required by DESE regulation.

**Student Safety:** Four Rivers works to foster strong, healthy relationships between faculty/staff and students. Small class size allows teachers to get to know their students well and the Crew program ensures that all students have at least one member of the staff who they can go to in the event of a problem. Crew curriculum focuses on, among other things, building and maintaining good, productive relationships between students. Additionally, the Wellness curriculum in grades 7 - 10 teaches communication and conflict resolution skills. The school uses meditation and disciplinary consequences when conflicts arise between students. Students may also meet with the school’s Wellness Advocate if they have a concern about themselves or a peer.

**Time Out:** Students who are removed from class activities, whether directed to do so or by their own volition, must be supervised during this “time out”, Time out may take place in the classroom (inclusionary) or in a different location (exclusionary). Alternate locations for time out must be clean, safe, and appropriate to calming. Doors to time out rooms are to remain unlocked and accessible to students. Time outs lasting more than 30 minutes must be approved by the Principal, Dean of Students, or designee. Time out lasting more than half of the school day will be considered an In School Suspension, regardless of whether the student chose to leave or was told to do so by staff,

**Physical Escort:** Physical escort is not considered to be physical restraint. Physical escort is defined as a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

**Restraint Prevention:** Use of a physical restraint is always a last option and is to be used only if a student presents a clear risk to themselves or others. Before a restraint is used, Four Rivers staff may try any of the following alternative strategies:

1. Check-in
2. Re-direction

3. "Take a Break" in an alternate and supervised space
4. De-escalation skills
5. Removal from classroom setting or asking other students to go to an alternate setting
6. Escort (last resort and preferably done by a member of the Crisis Response Team)

Restraint: Four Rivers Charter Public School personnel shall only use physical restraint for the following reasons:

1. When needed to protect a student and/or staff member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm.
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student.
3. No other intervention has been or is likely to be effective in averting danger.

Whenever possible, the restraint shall be witnessed by at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint.

A person administering a restraint shall use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm.

A person administering a restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation.

Additional requirements for the use of physical restraint:

1. No restraint shall be administered in such a way that the student is prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint, a staff member shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration.
2. Restraint shall be administered in such a way so as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during a physical restraint, the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress including, but not limited to, difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
3. If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, program staff shall obtain the approval of the principal. The approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.
4. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
5. After the release of a student from a restraint, the public education program shall implement follow-up procedures. These procedures shall include reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint, reviewing the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

The following practices are prohibited:

1. Medical Restraint
2. Mechanical Restraint
3. Prone Restraint
4. Restraint that restricts breathing
5. Seclusion
6. Any use of restraint not consistent with CMR 46.00
7. Restraints lasting longer than 20 minutes, unless approved by the Principal.

Training: All Four Rivers staff will receive CPI-based training on verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques annually. The Crisis Response Team shall receive initial in-depth training of 16 hours on restraint, including de-escalation and escort. The Crisis response team shall receive annual training to review skills. Only members of the Crisis Response Team may initiate the use of restraint and are considered “principal” when restraints are deemed necessary.

Review and Reporting: In the event of the use of a restraint, a report must be completed. Staff performing the restraint must verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible. The report must be submitted no later than the next working school day. The school must make reasonable effort to verbally inform families of any restraint within 24 hours. A written notification (email or regular mail) must be sent to families within 3 working school days of the use of restraint. The written report required by 603 CMR 46.06(2) and (3) shall include:

1. The name of the student; the names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the principal or designee who was verbally informed following the restraint; and, as applicable, the name of the principal or designee who approved continuation of the restraint beyond 20 minutes pursuant to 603 CMR 46.05(5)(c).
2. A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
3. A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
4. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any consequences that may be imposed on the student.
5. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student, and any other related matter.

In the event that a restraint is used on a student, the school will convene a meeting with the parents/guardians of the student and the student to review the incident and discuss ways to prevent the use of restraint in the future.

If the administration of physical restraint results in an injury to a student or to staff, regardless of the seriousness of the injury, the written report must be submitted to DESE no later than three school days after administration of the restraint.

The Crisis Response Team and principal will review any restraint data weekly (especially for students involved in multiple restraints) and monthly.

The school must submit an annual report of restraint data to the DESE.

#### COMPLAINT PROCEDURE REGARDING STATE/FEDERAL LAWS

1. A parent, guardian or other individuals or groups who believe that the school has violated or is violating any provision of M.G.L. c 71, sec. 89 or 603 CMR 1.00 may file a complaint with the Four Rivers Charter School Board of Trustees.
2. The Board of Trustees shall respond no later than 30 days from the receipt of the complaint in writing to the complaining party.

3. The Board shall, pursuant to a complaint received under 603 CMR 1.10, or on its own initiative, conduct reviews to ensure compliance; and the school and the specific individuals involved shall cooperate to the fullest extent with such review.
4. Any complaining party who believes the complaint has not been adequately addressed by the Board of Trustees may submit the complaint in writing to the Commissioner of Education, who shall investigate such complaint and make a written response.
5. In the event the school is found in non-compliance with M.G.L. c. 71 sec. 89 or CMR 1.00, as a result of a complaint or upon investigation, the Commissioner or Board of Education may take such action as it deems appropriate, including but not limited to suspension or revocation of the school's charter under 603 CMR 1.12, or referral of the matter to the District Attorney or the Office of the Attorney General for appropriate legal action.
6. A parent, guardian or other individuals or groups who believe that the school has violated or is violating any state or federal law or regulation regarding special education may file a complaint directly with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## **5.23 PRESENTATIONS OF LEARNING**

There will be times when your student is expected to participate in a Presentation of Learning. These may be held after school in the evening. They are not optional and you will need to do your best as a family to get your student to school for them.

## **5.24 PRIVACY POLICY**

### **NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Four Rivers Charter Public School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Four Rivers Charter Public School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with Four Rivers Charter Public School's procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Four Rivers Charter Public School to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

1. An annual yearbook
2. Academic and other school recognition of achievement
3. Graduation programs
4. Sports activity sheets and reporting of game results
5. A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, colleges and universities that wish to mail information to your child, and companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs- like Four Rivers Charter Public School) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want Four Rivers Charter Public School to disclose some or all of the directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must

notify the school in writing by October 15, 2019. You may restrict any of the directory information categories listed below. Your restriction will cover any request for that category, unless specific permission is granted by you as requests occur. Please remember that restrictions will create an additional burden on both the school and on you for notification and for returning written consents.

Four Rivers Charter Public School has designated the following categories as directory information:

-Student's name -Address -Telephone listing -Grade level -Age	-Participation in officially recognized activities and sports -Recognition, honors, and awards received  -Dates of attendance
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### **5.25 RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

We value computers, technological tools, and access to online resources as a way to support and advance teaching and learning. The policies below apply to use of digital technologies, social media tools, and learning environments accessed using school-owned networks or systems, including (though not limited to): school-owned devices (desktops, laptops, printers, scanners, cameras, etc), mobile phones, email and instant messaging, internet, social networking sites, video and photo sharing sites, blogs, forums and online discussion groups, wikis, podcasts, and video conferences.

#### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Four Rivers provides instruction in appropriate use of the Internet and digital tools for both staff and students. Staff and students must agree to follow the policies stated here. Parents are asked to help ensure proper use of the Internet by reviewing this policy with their student and signing the RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY PLEDGE along with their student. Students are not allowed access to the Internet unless the form has been signed by both parents and students.

As a school, we

1. support the rights of all members of the school community to engage in a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment.
2. educate our students to be safe and responsible users of digital technologies.
3. raise our students' awareness of issues such as online privacy, intellectual property and copyright.
4. supervise students when using digital technologies for educational purposes.
5. provide a filtered internet service but acknowledge that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed.
6. respond to issues or incidents that have the potential to impact on the wellbeing of our students.

#### **USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

We have made a considerable investment to ensure that we have access to digital resources. In return we expect everyone to be responsible and respectful users of the school's technology and to adhere to the following:

1. **SCHOOL-RELATED:** Technology resources (on-line, hardware, software) should be used only for purposes related to school work and school activities and with the permission of a teacher.

- a. Users should only use printers to print documents related to their school work and activities.
  - b. Computers are not to be used for socializing e.g., personal email, instant messaging, or for downloading music -- during class.
  - c. While at school, students may use only the Four Rivers email account that has been provided.
2. RESPECT AND CARE: Technology resources should be handled carefully and treated with respect.
  - a. Laptops should only be used while sitting at a desk, not used while eating or drinking.
  - b. Laptops should be returned and plugged into the computer cart when finished with.
3. INTEGRITY:
  - a. Students need to leave their taskbar visible at all times.
  - b. Users should log on only under their user name.
  - c. Students are not permitted to change or alter any computer, for example by installing software, removing hardware or changing configurations etc.
4. RESPONSIBLE USE OF THE INTERNET: The Internet provides many educational opportunities, but also necessitates personal responsibility for its use. A responsible user will use the school's electronic resources:
  - a. To access curriculum-related sites on the World Wide Web
  - b. To gather information from diverse sources.
  - c. To exchange information with others -- students, educators and experts from a variety of fields.
  - d. To support learning and enhance instruction.
  - e. To complete instructional and administrative tasks requiring research, inquiry, problem solving and/or communication.
  - f. In a manner that complies with Four Rivers Charter Public School policies.
5. INTERNET USE PROHIBITIONS: A responsible user will NOT:
  - a. Use electronic resources for personal or commercial profit-making enterprises, political lobbying or campaigning, electronic theft, or copyright violations.
  - b. Transmit or download material in violation of state or federal regulations.
  - c. Use language or retrieve information that is profane, obscene, abusive or threatening.
  - d. Use electronic communications to disrupt the use or compromise the security of any electronic resources including hardware/software, networks or files.
  - e. Reveal personal information such as home addresses or phone numbers of self or others.
6. STUDENT COMMITMENT: When I use digital technologies, I agree to be a safe, responsible, and ethical user at all times, by:
  - a. respecting others and communicating with them in a supportive manner, and never writing or participating in online bullying.
  - b. protecting my privacy; not giving out personal details, including my full name, phone number, address, passwords, and images.
  - c. protecting the privacy of others; never posting or forwarding their personal details or images without their consent.
  - d. talking to a teacher if I feel personally uncomfortable or unsafe online, or if I see others participating in unsafe, inappropriate or hurtful online behaviours.

- e. carefully considering the content that I upload or post online.
- f. handling technology devices with care and notifying a teacher if it is damaged or requires attention.
- g. abiding by copyright and intellectual property regulations.
- h. not interfering with network systems and security, the data of another user or attempting to log into the network with a username or password of another student.
- i. not bringing to school or downloading unauthorized programs, including games.
- j. not using my phone during class for calls or texts or personal emails; and respecting the privacy of others by only taking photos or recording sound or video at school when I have formal consent or it is part of an approved lesson.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Access to the Internet provides connections to other computer systems located worldwide. Parents of students who are users must understand that neither Four Rivers Charter Public School nor its staff controls the content of the information available on these other systems. Some of the information available is controversial and may be offensive. Four Rivers Charter Public School staff makes an effort to restrict access to sites it considers inappropriate for FRPCS students.

## CONSEQUENCES

Unacceptable uses of the school's technology, the Internet or any telecommunications services may result in immediate revocation of access privileges and, for students, parents notification. Unacceptable uses may result in additional disciplinary action as set forth in Four Rivers Charter Public School disciplinary policies. Misuse could have legal implications.

- First Offense: the student loses the privilege of using any laptop for a one week period; he or she may use classroom desktops for school work at the discretion of a teacher. Parents will be notified.
- Second Offense: the student loses the privilege of using any laptop for a two week period, he or she may use classroom desktops for school work at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Prior to being allowed to resume use of a laptop, the parents, student and advisor will meet to review user guidelines.
- Third Offense: the student is no longer allowed to use a laptop computer at school. He or she can use a desktop only when under the direct supervision of a teacher.
- These consequences are in addition to any violation of the school Code of Conduct.

**PERSONAL LAPTOPS** Students are welcome to bring their own personal laptops to school provided these are used in ways which are consistent with the above guidelines; we expect personal laptops to be used only for school related activities.

## **5.26 SAFETY LETTER--KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE**

Written by Family Council March 2006, reaffirmed May 2010.

The Family Council, with full support of the school administration and in keeping with the tradition of community, trust, and respect at Four Rivers Charter Public School, strongly encourages families to communicate with one another using the published School Phone List. As our sons/daughters grow, it becomes more difficult to monitor all their activities. It is our hope that parents/guardians will feel comfortable calling each other to support/confirm appropriate supervision is provided while our son/daughters are not under our own supervision. Student plans are often fluid, flexible, and occasionally made without adult input. If your son/daughter is visiting, know that it's ok to call to be sure that a gathering or party will be actively supervised.

Exposure to, and experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs is a difficult, challenging, and real fact of life in our culture. Safety first.

The goal is to have a strong community of families that support each other to keep our students (sons/daughters) safe and healthy with the following guidelines in mind.

1. When other friends visit, it's important to let them know that the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other drugs will not be tolerated/allowed, and that parents will be called. Safety first.
2. Four Rivers Charter Public School hopes that parents will call and accept calls from other parents freely, without judgment. Be an open listener.
3. We encourage parents to let their son/daughters know that a call to a parent for a ride will always be responded to positively if they find themselves in a situation that is unsafe or uncomfortable. Safety first, questions later.
4. If your son/daughter is a passenger or driver of a car when there has been alcohol or drugs in use, they should always call a parent or other adult for a ride regardless of the hour of day or night. Safety first, questions later.

While these are just some suggestions about how to keep our sons and daughters safe, please have conversations with your children about what to do before something happens. What are your family's expectations? Help them by guiding them to be best prepared in any situation. Safety first!

## **5.27 SCHOOL CANCELLATION**

Four Rivers will follow the lead of the Greenfield Public Schools in determining when school should be cancelled, delayed or dismissed early due to harsh weather conditions. Information about cancellation or delayed opening will also be posted on the School Events calendar. The school uses an automated calling system to notify families of cancellations due to weather or other emergencies. Information is also listed on local radio and TV stations. When Greenfield has not cancelled or delayed opening, but weather in other parts of Franklin County presents dangerous driving conditions, parents should use their own discretion about sending their students to school.

## **5.28 SCHOOL INFORMATION IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH**

Four Rivers seeks to be accessible by all families in Franklin County and beyond, which at times includes families who speak a language other than English.

At present, only our school brochure has been translated into Spanish and Romanian. Under the school's new Recruitment and Retention Plan, these brochures will be distributed to area community organizations that might serve a Spanish-speaking population.

The school will seek to provide oral translation for any parent who might need that service either to learn about the school or to participate in conferences or school events.

## **5.29 SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION POLICY**

In order to prevent disruption of school operations, ensure a productive and secure environment and create an environment conducive to teaching and learning, the school has established the following rules governing the solicitation of individuals and the distribution of materials on Four Rivers Charter Public School ("School") property.

The solicitation, distribution of literature, or trespassing by non-employees is prohibited on School property. It is the policy of the School to treat all of its property as a non-public forum. Non-School-sponsored events or announcements may be posted for a limited time in a publicly

visible bulletin board designated for that purpose only if it is determined by the Principal that the requested posting is of general interest and value to the School community.

#### USE OF THE SCHOOL MAIL SYSTEM

Use of the School's mail system is reserved for School related business and internal communications between employees. Use of the School internal mail and e-mail system by non-employees is prohibited.

### **5.30 STUDENT FEES POLICY**

We do our best to create a budget that pays for the operations of our school. There are times, however, when activities require an additional fee. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that low income students are not excluded from participation because of such fees.

1. There are two kinds of fees covered under this policy:
  - a. Fees for Academic Activities: These activities are part of the core academic program and all students are expected to participate. This category includes the 10th grade Washington DC Trip and the Senior trip to Star Island.
  - b. Fees for Voluntary Activities: These activities are not part of the core academic program -- such as yearbooks or dances -- and so fee reductions are not guaranteed.
  
2. SUBSIDIES
  - a. Need-based fee reductions are available if a family qualifies under the Free and Reduced Lunch Program financial guidelines. Confidential forms are available through the School Secretary, to be filled out once a year to determine eligibility.
  - b. Students whose families qualify for reduced lunch may pay two-thirds of the fee.
  - c. Students whose families qualify for free lunch may pay one-third of the fee.
  
3. PAYING YOUR BILLS
  - a. The school tracks lunch orders and emails bills to parents every two weeks – beginning September 15th.
  - b. Payment is expected within a week of receiving the emailed bill. Paper bills are not mailed home until the outstanding lunch account reaches \$30.
  - c. When the account reaches \$45, the student will be unable to purchase further lunches or a la carte items until the bill is paid in full.
  - d. Cash or check (made out to Four Rivers) can be dropped off in the mailbox on the parking lot side of the Farmhouse (project room). The school also offers an online payment option: [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com)
  - e. Payment of any outstanding bill from the previous school year is required prior to being given credit to order lunches starting the next year. This has been necessitated by unpaid fees.
  - f. Prepayment of a few weeks' meals is strongly encouraged. Other student fees need to be paid before the start of the activity, or according to a specified payment plan.

Please note that we have removed all fees from our Intensives options so that students would not have to choose programs based on cost.

Four Rivers Charter Public School depends on adequate funding to maintain this Need-Based Fee Waiver program and reserves the right to add or remove activities or alter the program as circumstances dictate.

### **5.31 STRUCTURED LEARNING TIME**

Four Rivers ensures that our structured learning time is time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning, or assessments within the curriculum of core subjects and other subjects as defined in 603 CMR 27.02 (including physical education, required by M.G.L. c. 71, s. 3).

The school's structured learning time may include

1. Directed study (activities directly related to a program of studies, with a teacher available to assist students) – which we call Academic Support and Challenge
2. Independent study (a rigorous, individually designed program under the direction of a teacher, assigned a grade and credit), when approved and overseen through a process led by the Assistant Principal
3. Technology-assisted learning, when approved and overseen through a process led by the Assistant Principal
4. Presentations by persons other than teachers, school-to-work programs, and statewide student performance assessments.
5. Courses offered through other institutions, including Greenfield Community College and Virtual High School.

The Assistant Principal oversees all programs of independent study, online learning, or learning through the world of work. The Assistant Principal approves, oversees, and guides the assessment and documentation of all such programs.

The school ensures that its structured learning time does not include time at lunch, passing between classes, in morning crew, at recess, in non-directed study periods (study halls), participating in optional school programs, or receiving school services such as health screening, speech, or physical and occupational therapy, except where those services are prescribed by a student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

The hours spent in any type of structured learning time are verified by the school. Where the school counts independent study or a school-to-work program as structured learning time, it has guidelines that explain clearly how hours spent by students are verified.

### **5.32 TEXTBOOKS**

Texts and other books are issued to students, and these will be an important -- but not the only -- resource for learning. They remain school property and must be well cared for throughout the year. **STUDENTS ARE REQUESTED TO COVER ALL TEXTBOOKS.** Parents will be charged a fee for lost or damaged books belonging to Four Rivers.

### **5.33 THE PARKING LOT**

There is one simple rule we've set up for our parking lot at drop-off and pick-up: park right, pass left. That means people can drop off students anywhere around the circle in the morning, just as you pick them up. You don't have to line up and wait until you get to the High School or the Middle School. One other tip for the morning -- if you're turning right out of the school's driveway, you can go around the bus circle and avoid the line that's turning left. There are still people who stop in the left lane, which holds up everyone behind you. Please pull over to the right to pick up or drop off. You can also use the front circle to drop off in the morning. As always, common courtesy should govern.

**A SPECIAL VIDEO ON THE PARKING LOT! [DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP:](#)**

Please do your best to follow a few simple rules for our parking lot so we can keep it safe and efficient without having to hire traffic monitors to supervise.

**PARK RIGHT, PASS LEFT.** There is room for two lanes around the parking lot. If you are stopping to drop off or pick up, move over to the right where you can find a space -- just like at the airport. Then pull back out to the left in order to leave. Please do not stop to pick up in the left lane -- we're trying to keep that lane flowing as much as possible.

**YIELD.** Students and others are crossing to the middle or far side of the parking lot, so please stop to let them cross.

**PATIENCE.** Your calm cooperation will make everything work much better.

**Further tips:** If exiting to the right in the morning, go around the U to split up the exiting lane. If parking, back in when it's quiet so you can pull out more easily when it's busier.