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BRIEF HISTORY OF PERKINS SCHOOL

The rich history of Perkins began with its founding over 180 years ago as the first school for the blind in the United States. Within a few short years, Perkins became known for its effective instructional techniques, including teaching Laura Bridgman, the first known deafblind person to be educated. Later, Anne Sullivan brought Helen Keller to Perkins. Keller spent her life breaking down barriers and perceptions about what people who are blind or deafblind can accomplish.

A trip to Paris to see the world's first school for the blind in the early 1820's convinced medical student Dr. John Fisher of the dire need for such a school in America. Upon his return, Fisher and some friends applied for and received a charter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to establish a school for the education of blind students. Perkins school was incorporated in 1829 and using rooms in his father's Boston home for classes, the director, Samuel Gridley Howe, opened the doors of the school in 1832.

Just one year later, the school moved to a larger home owned by Thomas Perkins, vice president and a trustee. Within six years, student enrollment grew to 65. Perkins sold his home and donated the money to the school so it could convert a hotel in South Boston. The school still bears Perkins' name as a testament to his generosity.

The school outgrew its home in the hotel and desperately needed more space for the children to run and play, so it moved to its present 38-acre home on the Charles River in Watertown, Massachusetts in 1912.

As the school evolved, so did the population. Perkins changed its charter in 1982 to accept students with multiple disabilities other than blindness.

The school is committed to providing education and services that build productive, meaningful lives for children at the school who are blind or deafblind, including those with additional disabilities.

For a more detailed history please visit our website at www.perkins.org
SUPERINTENDENT’S WELCOME

Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year at Perkins School for the Blind! This handbook contains important information such as policies and procedures, and contacts that hopefully will help you throughout the school year.

Our campus hosts a variety of concerts and events throughout the year, and we always welcome your attendance. We also welcome you to visit campus at any time and refer you to our visitor policy that is included in this handbook.

Students are the heart of Perkins School for the Blind and are at the center of all that we do. Thank you for entrusting us with your child’s education. I look forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

Ed Bosso
Superintendent
MISSION STATEMENT
The Perkins mission is to prepare children and young adults who are blind with the education, confidence and skills they need to realize their potential

Focus Line: Educate, Empower, Engage

Educational Programs Guiding Principles:
- We empower students who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind, including students with additional disabilities, ages 3-22, through excellent educational and residential programming.
- Our culture is built upon a foundation of positive relationships with students and their families.
- We integrate the expanded core curriculum across all teaching and learning opportunities.
- Our curriculum emphasizes instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy as well as critical social skills.
- Using world-class resources, we offer individualized instruction through a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach.
- Through intentional individualized instruction, we build upon strengths so each student can fulfill their unique potential.
- We transition students for success, facilitating a path towards meaningful engagement in their communities, employment or college.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION
Perkins School for the Blind embraces diversity in ability, thought, culture and belief. We provide equal education and employment opportunities and value the unique talents and contribution of all of our students and staff. Perkins seeks to enhance its educational community of intellectually, culturally, and socially diverse individuals to enrich the educational experience of our students.

Perkins School for the Blind does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identity/expression, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, ancestry, disability, and military service, veteran status, or any other category protected by law in treatment, employment, admission or access to Perkins, or any other aspect of the educational programs and activities that Perkins operates.

Perkins is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and their respective implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Parts 100, 104, 106 and 110, not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age. A compendium of those regulations can be found at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=503a5e825dae16425ec0bfd2ca33cbd0&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title34/34cfrv1_02.tpl#100

The following person(s) have been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding discrimination:

Name and Title: Michele Crews, Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator
Address: 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472
Telephone Number: (617) 972-7671 E-mail Address: Michele.crews@perkins.org

Inquiries concerning the application of each of the federal statutes and their implementing regulations to Perkins may be referred to Ms. Crews or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights at (617) 289-0111 or 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109-3921. For more information see Appendix 1, Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Policy.
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Secondary Program
The Secondary Program is an educational community for students with visual impairments and other disabilities. We strive to realize each student’s potential in a school that fosters self-esteem, literacy, and civic responsibility. Our students’ diverse learning styles and strengths are enhanced through the use of the most beneficial media, adaptive technology, comprehensive residential programming, and transition services. Using a positive, supportive approach in our classrooms and residential cottages, we emphasize academic achievement, vocational exploration and experience, and the development of social and independent living skills to facilitate a successful transition into adult life.

The Secondary Program admits students between the ages of 13-22 with a range of abilities. Our students have access to specialized services to meet their unique needs. They also experience the touchstone events of a typical American high school, such as student council, musical, theatrical, athletic activities, community service opportunities, and the Prom. School Hours are 8:00 AM to 3:05 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:00 AM to 2:15 PM on Wednesday.

Deafblind Program
The philosophy of the Deafblind Program is based on the belief that each student is a unique and valuable person who should be treated with dignity and respect. Our goal is to create an individualized educational environment which will encourage and nurture each student’s strengths in order to help him or her become a full and participating member of society within the context of his or her own level of independence.

The Deafblind Program offers comprehensive educational services to students ages 3-22 who are deafblind and deaf with additional disabilities. The education and training of the children incorporate a developmental approach, stressing language and communication development, individualized instruction, and age appropriate curriculum in a total communication environment. The Program offers curricula in early childhood academics, functional academics, life skills, and vocational skills. An interdisciplinary team of: educators, clinicians, related service providers, support, and residential staff work together to implement each child’s educational program. School Hours are 8:30am to 3:00 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:30am to 2:00pm on Wednesday.

Lower School Program
In the Lower School Program, we understand that each child; whether visually impaired or blind, with or without other disabilities; is an individual with unique interests, abilities and challenges. For each of these children, the goal is the same; to grow into a confident, self-aware, contributing member of the community.

Designed for elementary and middle school-aged students, the Lower School Program assembles a unique team of teachers, related services providers and support staff to work with each student and family to develop a program that addresses that students goals and individual needs. Our curriculum features a wide range of instruction in both traditional academics and functional skills. The collaborative team approach used within the program is designed to reinforce skills throughout all areas of the student’s school day to maximize each student’s full and unique potential while striving to achieve greater independence. School Hours are 8:25am to 3:00 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:25am to 2:00pm on Wednesday.

Early Learning Center
At the Early Learning Center (ELC) we offer a playful, educational atmosphere to address the unique learning needs of children ages 3-4 in our Preschool Program and for children ages 5-6 in our Transitional Kindergarten.

Our team of teachers and related service providers work collaboratively to develop each student’s functional and academic skills with an emphasis on; communication, orientation and mobility, early literacy, social interaction, as well as other physical and developmental needs. We take advantage of
the resources found on the campus at Perkins and take the children to the pool, to the Horticultural Center, to activities in the gym, auditorium and cooking kitchen in the Lower School and to the museum in the Howe Building. Students also have the opportunity to venture into the community on our weekly field trips. Family involvement and support is a key component of our program and plays a critical role in a child’s ultimate success. The ELC program works to develop partnerships with families through staff visits to the home and monthly parent observations in the classrooms. Our overall goal is to give all of our students; whether visually impaired or blind, including those with additional disabilities; the best possible start to their formal education. School Hours are 8:25am to 3:00 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:25am to 2:00pm on Wednesday.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

Perkins supports the Parent Advisory Council ("the PAC") which is comprised of parents from each of the on-campus Educational Programs. The mission of this group is to advise the school on matters of health, education, and the safety of our students.

This group also provides an opportunity for parents to meet together for support and socializing and to organize presentations about topics of interest to them.

The Parent Advisory Council is run by parent volunteers and coordinates with a staff liaison, generally the Social Worker.

For information about the group and meeting times, please contact:

Jen Potter, Secondary Program 617-972-7502
Rosie Rodas, Deafblind Program 617-972-7505
Peg Beck or Betsey Porter, Early Learning Center and Lower School Program 617-972-7229 / 617-972-7287

Request for Job Descriptions and/or Policies and Procedures

Please contact your child’s program if you wish to receive a copy of a job description or a copy of the School’s Policies and Procedures.

GENERAL INFORMATION
Registration Packets

To be able to provide safe and appropriate services at school, members of the Perkins staff depend on having the most accurate, up-to-date information about each student. Before each school year, parents are sent a registration packet (either electronically or paper) and are asked to fill out a variety of informational and consent forms so that information may be updated in their child’s record for the coming school year.

When a student begins at Perkins, there is an initial packet to be filled out. After that there is an annual registration packet sent every spring to get information and consent for the following school year. Parents must review and update all information and sign the consent form. Students will not be able to begin the new school year if their registration information has not been received.

In case of emergency, we depend on the information in the file to know the best way to reach you and how best to care for your child. Please make every effort to notify us of any changes in contact information, etc., as they occur. New information can be called in or emailed to Scott MacDowell the school’s Registrar at 617-972-7263 or Scott.MacDowell@perkins.org
How to Reach Us
For student related questions, please first call the programs.
For general questions please call the Perkins switchboard listed below.

Perkins School main telephone number: 617-924-3434
Perkins School main fax number: 617-972-7315

Health Services main number: 617-972-7273
Health Services fax number: (secure for confidential information) 617-972-7345

Lower School and ELC Programs day telephone number: 617-972-7279

Deafblind Program day telephone number: 617-972-7500
- Bradlee Cottage DBBradlee.Cottage@Perkins.org: 617-972-7410
- Glover Cottage DBGlover.Cottage@Perkins.org: 617-972-7412
- Potter Cottage DBPotter.Cottage@Perkins.org: 617-972-7409

Secondary Program day telephone number: 617-972-7236
- May Cottage: 617-972-7408
- Brooks Cottage: 617-972-7406
- Oliver Cottage: 617-972-7405
- Keller-Sullivan: 617-972-7403
- Fisher Cottage: 617-972-7407

Low Vision Clinic Carol Bernazani: 617-972-7296

Audiology Vicki Wilson/ Ellen Branfman: 617-972-7508

Receptionist: A receptionist is on duty Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm to answer general questions, take messages, and direct your calls to the appropriate staff member. After hours and on the weekends there is an answering service that can contact the administrator on call or will forward messages on to the receptionist on the next scheduled business day.

Admissions: For admissions information please contact Amy Ferreira, Director of Admissions and Enrollment, at (617) 924-3434 or Admissions@Perkins.org.

Emergency Contact Information
Perkins has an emergency telephone number which can be accessed by students and parents/guardians between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. on weekends and during some holidays. At these times parents can call the Administrator for Emergency Coverage (AEC) by dialing 617-201-7512 or by calling 617 924-3434, telling the answering service that there is an emergency, and leaving a number where you can be reached.
Directions to Perkins/Campus Map

By Car:

From the Massachusetts Turnpike, also known as I-90 (traveling east or west), take Exit 17 and follow the signs marked "Watertown," which lead to Galen Street. Follow Galen Street, crossing the bridge, to Watertown Square. Bear right (not the hardest right that leads along the river) onto North Beacon Street (Route 20). Follow North Beacon Street for about one-half mile to the Perkins campus (located on the right). Pass the campus and turn right onto Beechwood Avenue. The main parking lot is on the right. First-time visitors without an appointment should proceed to the Howe Building (main building with the tower) and check-in with the Switchboard.

By Public Transportation:

From the Green Line: At Kenmore Station in Boston, take Bus #57, marked Watertown. Get off at the last stop, Watertown Square. Cross the bridge and stay to the right, following North Beacon Street (Route 20). The campus is one-half mile on the right. (Travel time: about one hour.)

From the Red Line: At Harvard Square in Cambridge, take Bus #71, marked "Watertown." Get off at the last stop. With your back to the river, walk to the right following North Beacon Street (Route 20). Follow North Beacon Street for about one-half mile to the Perkins campus located on the right. (Travel time: about 45 minutes.)

From Green Street and Prospect Street in Central Square (Cambridge): Take Bus #70, usually marked "Cedarwood." A few minutes after the Arsenal Mall, get off at Beechwood Avenue (tell driver in advance). Follow Beechwood Avenue to the left for one block. The Perkins campus is located on the right at the intersection of Beechwood Avenue and North Beacon Street. (Travel time: about 45 minutes.)
Once you're here, you can consult our Campus Map.
Personal Items

Spending and Allowance
Parents are responsible for providing spending money for their child's use while at school. Each student may open a personal account at the school's Business Office for the safekeeping of their money. Students often use this money to purchase personal care products or for special purchases of toys or treats. The amount of money necessary will depend on whether your child is a residential or a day student, the age and interests of the child, and whether parents prefer to purchase various items for their child themselves. Please talk with your child's teacher or Coordinator about how much money to provide for your child.

Electrical Appliances
Students are permitted to have some small electrical appliances (such as: a computer, clock radio, hair dryer, etc.) in their bedrooms. Some items such as razors may need to be stored in the staff office for safety. Power strips with surge protectors are required. Extension cords are not allowed. Electrical appliances may be inspected for safety by the Coordinator or Perkins electrician. Please see information below about loss/damage insurance.

Hearing Aid and Cochlear Implant Insurance
If your child wears Hearing Aids or has a Cochlear Implant, it is important that you insure this equipment against loss or damage. Replacement of this equipment can be very expensive. A number of companies offer insurance that will repair or replace damaged or lost equipment. Please call our audiologist if you do not have your child's equipment insured.

Loss/Damage Insurance
Parents are advised to check their personal or homeowners insurance to see if loss or damage of your child's personal property is covered while he/she is at school. In most cases, a student's personal belongings or equipment which is damaged or lost by the student must be replaced by his/her parents.
TRANSPORTATION

Student Transportation Procedures

The arrangement and provision of transportation of students to and from Perkins is the responsibility of the family and school district. For most students, transportation to and from Perkins is provided by a transportation company hired through the special education department of the family’s school district. Other students are transported by their family.

Parents must provide Perkins with the name, address, and telephone numbers of the company providing transportation, including after-hours and emergency telephone numbers. We need as much information as possible to assist families if transportation problems arise. It is important to provide Perkins with updated information at all times.

If there is any change in your child’s transportation plan on a given day (e.g., if your child will be out sick, or if you will be dropping off or picking up your child when they usually ride the bus, or you will need transportation for your child in only the morning or the afternoon) please notify your bus driver or transportation company and your Perkins primary parent contact (teacher, case manager, clinician). If your child will be out of school for an extended period, please remember to contact your transportation company and your Perkins primary parent contact in advance of the time you would like your child’s transportation to resume.

If you live at a distance and your child will be flying or taking a bus or train home for school recesses, it is important that you make travel arrangements well in advance of the recess. During winter months, it is advisable to arrange for students to depart a bit earlier, and parents should make a backup plan in preparation for cancelled or severely delayed trips. If your child is unable to travel independently, you must make arrangements for a family member or designee to accompany them on the trip. Perkins staff may be able to transport students to the local terminal but we need travel information well in advance.

Absences and Late Arrivals
If your child is going to be absent or late in arriving to school we ask that you notify your child’s program.

Deafblind Program: Parents are expected to call the Deafblind office at 617-972-7500 before 8:00 a.m. if their child will not be in school that day or will be late.

Lower School Program and Early Learning Center: Parents are expected to call the Lower School office at 617-972-7279 before 8:30 a.m. if their child will not be in school that day or will be late.

Secondary Program: Parents are expected to call the Secondary office at 617-972-7236 before 8:00 a.m. if their child will not be in school that day or will be late.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures
When family members provide transportation, they should bring their child to the receptionist in the program upon arrival to school and should pick them up in the designated area unless different
arrangements have been made. We ask that family members do not go to classrooms during drop-off and pick-up.

**Motor Vehicle Accident**
If a student is involved in a motor vehicle accident while being transported to school, a Perkins nurse must evaluate the student before the student can be released from the transportation company personnel to Perkins staff. The transportation company vehicle and driver will be required to stay until the student has been evaluated and parents have been notified.

**Weather Related Transportation Information**
As a residential school, Perkins does not have “snow days” and our programs continue in operation during inclement weather. Individual towns and transportation companies may choose not to transport students during snowstorms. Please contact your local school district for further information regarding their snow transportation policy. For safety reasons, parents may choose to keep their child home during snowy or bad weather.

When severe weather conditions develop during a school day, school staff will contact you and request that you make arrangements for your child to return home early. If severe weather is forecast for an important travel day (e.g., a bad storm due on the day before February vacation) you may be asked to make arrangements for your child to return home early to avoid being stranded at the school.

**Whom To Contact**
Please contact your primary parent contact (teacher, case manager, clinician) to convey transportation related information such as a change in transportation schedule or change of contact information, or to report a concern or ask a transportation related question.

**HEALTH SERVICES INFORMATION**

**Physical Exams and Immunizations**
- Students are required to have a recent physical examination, proof of required immunizations and TB (tuberculosis) risk screening before starting school. If TB risk is high, then a TB skin test is also required. Proper documentation of all must be submitted to the school.
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires student to remain current with immunizations for school attendance. Health Services sends out the current immunization requirements with the physical exam form each year so that parents can review them with the student’s healthcare provider and ensure that updates are done as required.
- Each student is expected to have an annual physical exam done by his/her pediatrician. Students will not be permitted to participate in sports if they don’t have current physical exams.
- All students should be screened for TB risk at the time of the annual physical exam. If there is a high risk, a TB test is required. A TB test may also be required for some vocation placements.
- Health Services will send reminders three months before the student’s annual physical is due and the required forms one month before the physical is due.
- If you have questions about the annual physical exam or immunizations, you can contact your child’s program nurse or Health Services.
- Perkins Health Services offers annual flu vaccines to all students with parental/guardian consent.
Medication Administration at School

What you need to know

- Medication safety is an absolute priority for us.
- Each day at Perkins we administer between 800 and 1000 doses of medication, so to do so safely we must pay close attention to details and keep strict safeguards. We ask parents to assist us in maintaining these safeguards.
- We are required to comply with a variety of rules and regulations determined by the Massachusetts Departments of Public Health, Elementary and Secondary Education and Early Education and Care. Many of our practices and safeguards are based on the required rules and regulations.

Medication Administration

- Perkins Nursing Staff trains and delegates medication administration to the cottage Coordinators of Residential Living (CRLs), the Assistant Coordinators of Residential Living (ACRLs) and teachers in the Early Learning Center.
- ALL staff working with students are trained in the administration of EpiPen.
- The trainings listed above are reviewed yearly to comply with Massachusetts regulations.
- All medications, whether new, refills, prescription or over-the-counter are checked by a nurse when they arrive on campus.

Parent/Guardian Consents to Administer Medications

- Consents for medication administration are included in the initial and annual registration packets.
- Additional, specific written consents are requested annually for Diastat and antipsychotic medications.
- The Perkins physicians or nurse practitioner will contact parents anytime a child is sick and new medications are prescribed or recommended.

Written Orders from the Health Care Provider

- Perkins must have a written order from the prescribing Health Care Provider in order to administer medication at school. This includes over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medications, whether regular or only given when needed.
- All medications orders must be reviewed and re-signed by the prescribing healthcare provider at least annually. There is a specific section on the Perkins annual school physical form for the healthcare provider to renew routine orders, including those for common OTC meds.
- Written orders are also required for medication changes and discontinuation.
- The Health Care Providers can be the child’s physician, nurse practitioner, dentist, podiatrist, optometrist, or any other provider with prescriptive authority in Massachusetts.

Medication Packaging

- Prescription medications must be in the original pharmacy bottle or blister pack with the correct label and instructions.
- Medications cannot be transferred from bottle to bottle.
- We can never administer a medication that is in a bottle without a legible label or a medication in a bottle with a label that belongs to a different medication.
- If you need an extra bottle of a medication for school you can ask the pharmacy to package the medication in two bottles, one for home and one for school.
Student Illness Policy

There are times when children become ill while at school. At Perkins, the Program Nurse will be asked to evaluate the student. She may then refer to one of our Medical professionals (MD or Nurse Practitioner) if needed. If it is determined that the student has a contagious illness OR is unable to participate in school activities because of illness symptoms, the student may be released from school to home. The parent or guardian will be notified and (while awaiting dismissal) the student will be kept separate from other students as much as possible given the staffing and setting. Health Services will work with the staff involved in the child’s care regarding appropriate separation or isolation measures to maintain effective infection control.

In the event that a residential student becomes ill (as described above), the student will return to the cottage and be kept separate from other students as much as possible until travel arrangements can be made or the child is no longer contagious. Health Services will provide specific guidelines for the student’s care, including infection control measures, based on the child’s symptoms, diagnosis, and the child’s ability to contain his/her secretions.

Any student who has been hospitalized, including for emergency care, will need clearance through Health Services prior to returning to school.

Return to School after Hospitalization or Surgery

To ensure the safety of all students at Perkins School for the Blind, the School has developed specific criteria for a student to return to the School after a period of hospitalization or surgery. Hospitalization and/or surgery can potentially result in changes in a student's activities, treatments and care plan. Therefore, the student's enrollment status and activities may have to be modified as a result. If there are any changes to the child’s medication regimen or health care plan, an updated plan must be developed in collaboration with the provider and caregiver, and treatment orders must be on file prior to the student’s return to campus.

As part of the re-entry planning process, each student will be evaluated to determine any new behavioral, medical and/or educational needs. The School will assess 1) whether the student may be discharged directly from a hospital to the School, or whether a period of recovery at home is needed prior to returning to the School, and 2) what changes, if any, in the student's activities at the School may be necessary on a temporary or permanent basis.

The Perkins medical, educational, clinical and residential staff do not provide post-operative care. If rehabilitative services are needed beyond what is included in the child's Individual Education Plan, the family must arrange for rehabilitative services off campus, separate from School hours.

For a student to return to the School:
- The student must be able to participate fully in the school day;
- The student may not be taking any narcotics for pain control;
- The student's behavior must not constitute a risk to the student; and
- The student's mobility must be at a level to not place the student or staff at high risk during an evacuation.

It is particularly helpful if the family or caregiver can notify the Program Nurse when a plan has been made for a student's discharge from a hospital. Once this date has been set, the Program Nurse will need to consult with the student's care coordinator, physician or physicians and the student's family or guardians to obtain any needed medical orders and documentation from providers so that planning for return to the School can be initiated. Any prescription orders for new medications--including over the counter medications--need to be written by a provider and checked in with the Program Nurse.

Following an initial check-in with the parent or guardian, the Program Nurse may also consult with Perkins providers to review orders and instructions and determine next steps for meeting with the
family/caregivers(s) and educational staff prior to re-entry. A Program Nurse may require documentation from the student’s provider that the child is ready to return to the School, as well as documentation and/or clarification regarding additional needs or accommodations that can be safely managed at the School. As part of this re-entry planning process, the nurse and pediatrician will gather information from the caregiver and providers will determine whether a check-in with physical assessment at Health Services is required.

If the Perkins medical team determines that a student may return but has new or complex needs or changes in status or routines, then prior to engaging in any activities at the School, an appointment will be arranged for the student to be physically evaluated by a provider at Health Services to ensure that safety and care planning needs are fully assessed. As part of this process, a Perkins medical provider will perform a physical assessment, including vital signs, review medications and provider recommendations, and get input from the caregiver. The student's relevant educational, clinical and residential personnel may be asked to participate in this evaluation.

If the medical team determines that a remote check-in with the provider is appropriate during this process, then that option may be considered.

On the basis of this re-entry evaluation, the Program Nurse will work with educational and clinical personnel to implement the student’s new plan of care, and develop plans for necessary supports and services to be put in place.

Those students considered by Health Services to be stable and returning without changes in treatment orders, supports or services may return directly to School and will be seen by the Program Nurse as soon as possible upon return.

All required medical consents and must also be on file prior to the student’s return to campus.

The above may also apply if a student has been off campus for an extended period and requires updates to their care plan for any reason.

**CPR and First Aid Training**

All staff that work directly with students are trained annually in CPR and bi-annually in First Aid.

**Nutrition/Special Diets/Food Allergies**

Promoting Healthy Nutrition at Perkins

Perkins is committed to providing a well-balanced diet to promote the health of its students and to meet the licensing requirements of the Department of Early Education and Care.

We provide a healthy well balanced menu and snacks that strive to be trans-fat free, free of high fructose corn syrup and largely 100% whole grain. This diet must take into account the special needs of many of our students who are at risk for developing medical complications if they receive poor nutrition and inadequate exercise. All meals and snacks provided are created based on the individual nutritional needs, allergies and necessary modifications in textures.

Perkins is also committed to teaching principles and skills that will promote a healthy lifestyle as our students assume more responsibility for their own nutrition.

- Perkins prepares individualized menus for students who cannot consume the regular menu items, specifically with regard to allergies and food textures.
- Perkins encourages students to eat well balanced diets.
- Perkins is committed to creating a positive mealtime experience.
- Staff members eat with the students and are available to assist with feeding, serving, and other mealtime skills and to act as good role models.
Food Allergies and Sensitivities

Many students at Perkins experience food allergies and sensitivities. In addition to nuts and peanuts, some of the common foods of concern include dairy (milk), eggs, wheat, shellfish and fish, soy and some fruit. There are students with uncommon food allergies as well. Staff are trained regarding the importance of following allergy safety at all times and confirming students’ allergies before offering ANY food.

No Peanut and Nut Policy - Perkins is a Nut Safe Campus

Peanut and nuts allergies have become more prevalent and serious in school settings. A small exposure, even just peanut or nut residue on the hands of another person can, in some cases, result in a severe allergic reaction. Due to the severity of nut allergies, we continue to be proactive to prevent inadvertent exposure of a student with these allergies by having a peanut and nut free environment in all student areas.

This includes peanuts, ALL tree nuts and other nuts, products that MAY CONTAIN nuts or that have been processed in the same facilities as nuts.

Please read labels carefully for the safety of our students.

The following are Perkins’ strategies for reducing potential exposure to nuts or peanuts.

- Peanut butter has been replaced with Wowbutter.
- Student food sent in from home needs to be checked for peanuts, peanut butter, or tree nuts and parents reminded when a lunch contains any of these.
- Staff may not bring these products for their personal use into student areas.
- Ingredients for all products should be checked and those labeled with “may contain traces of nuts” or are made with any peanut products need to be avoided in all student or common areas.
- Baked foods and foods used for student fundraisers, such as bake sales, must be peanut and nut free.

Food Sent in From Home or Obtained Off Campus

- All food brought in from off campus needs to adhere to the food allergy policy.
- Food served to students must not only meet the allergy policy, but must also meet the campus-wide initiative to provide healthy, wholesome foods.
- Although sending food is unnecessary, if students do bring or receive food sent in from home, we highly recommend these foods be healthy and reflect the student’s individual nutritional situation.
- For the safety of our students, please alert staff when sending in food to campus so that they can check labels for the presence of nuts and other allergens. This is particularly important during holiday and celebration times.
- Please check in with the cottage staff, teaching staff or the dietitian regarding birthday celebration plans.
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen (Kate) Maher, MS-PHCNS, RN Director of Health Services</td>
<td>7437</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Kathleen.Maher@perkins.org">Kathleen.Maher@perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Anne O’Leary, APRN, PNP Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td>7290</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:CarolAnne.OLeary@Perkins.org">CarolAnne.OLeary@Perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Benvie, RD, Dietitian</td>
<td>7467</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Michelle.Benvie@perkins.org">Michelle.Benvie@perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue Buckley, Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>7273</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Sue.Buckley@Perkins.org">Sue.Buckley@Perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allison Belmonte, RN, Deafblind Program Nurse</td>
<td>7564</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Allison.Belmonte@perkins.org">Allison.Belmonte@perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kimberly Ebbert, RN, Lower School Program Nurse</td>
<td>7274</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Kimberly.Ebbert@Perkins.org">Kimberly.Ebbert@Perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Newman, NP, Secondary Program Nurse</td>
<td>7585</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Vicki.Newman@Perkins.org">Vicki.Newman@Perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vallorie O’Donnell, RN, Lower School Program Nurse</td>
<td>7276</td>
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<td>Vallorie.O’<a href="mailto:Donnell@Perkins.org">Donnell@Perkins.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Darlene Stanton, RN, Secondary Program Nurse</td>
<td>7277</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Darlene.Stanton@Perkins.org">Darlene.Stanton@Perkins.org</a></td>
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Student Rights and Resolving Student Concerns

Students at Perkins have rights and privileges that promote a positive, healthy, and safe educational environment. The school provides opportunities for students to employ self-determination skills, and to engage in a variety of social, recreational, academic, and independent living endeavors. Students are encouraged to address a personal concern or grievance with the person to whom it relates; and to directly resolve it with the person.

Students can present non-personal concerns to staff members such as their teacher, counselor, case manager, or coordinator of residential living; or at a cottage meeting with peers in their Perkins residence. Also, the Secondary Program has a student council that addresses broad-based student concerns and interests.

If a student believes that their rights have been disregarded, or that they have been discriminated against, the student may follow the resolution procedure or file a report with the student rights committee. The student may have an advocate go through the process with them. The process will be carried out in a timely manner.

Resolution Procedure:
The student will discuss the concern with a staff person of the student’s choice. The discussion will include the nature and seriousness of the concern, possible actions to take, and confidentiality issues (if relevant). If the student wishes to have an advocate, an advocate will be identified and provided. When possible, the student and advocate will discuss the concern with the person to whom it relates in an effort to seek resolution.

If resolution is not attained or ineffective, the student and advocate will meet with the supervisor of residential living and/or the education director to determine appropriate steps to take to resolve the concern. The meeting will be documented in writing by the supervisor or director.

If possible, the student will be present and part of the resolution. If the concern is resolved by others without the student being present, the student will be informed of the outcome.

Student Rights Committee Process:
Each educational program has a student rights advocate to collect and communicate any student rights concerns to the Student Rights Committee. A concern related to a student's rights can be raised by a student or by a staff member.

The student rights advocate will attempt to address and resolve issues within the program, as appropriate, and inform the committee of the presenting issue and whether or not it has been resolved.

If further support is needed regarding the reported issue, the committee and advocate will consult with the program to help resolve the issue.

The committee also addresses concerns about whether student rights are being infringed upon by behavior interventions, and if so, will work with the behavior treatment manager to address the concerns.
The committee may take on special projects to promote the rights, safety, health, and wellbeing of students.

If the student or reporting staff member disagrees with a decision related to resolution of a student rights concern, the matter can be appealed to the School-Wide Safety Committee.

**Resolving Parent/Guardian Concerns**

The staff at Perkins is committed to providing quality and comprehensive services to all students registered at the school. We also recognize and respect the critical role that parents and guardians have in their child’s education program. We welcome parents’ and guardians’ active participation in the planning of their child’s program, and we wish to maintain ongoing and open communication with the parents and guardians of our students.

If parents or guardians have any questions, concerns, or complaints regarding their child’s education or care at the school, they are encouraged to discuss them with the student’s social worker and/or case manager. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached after the discussion, they may communicate with the Education Director. Parents or guardians may also request a meeting with the President or Superintendent of the school if it is felt that an issue has not been fully resolved with the social worker, case manager, or the Education Director. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and will be resolved in the most time efficient and thorough manner possible.

Parents or guardians of newly enrolled students are notified of the procedures for registering complaints by letter from the Registrar prior to the student’s admission. Parents or guardians of returning students are notified by letter from the Registrar prior to the start of school in the fall.

**Parent Custody Issues**

If only one parent has legal custody of their child, it is imperative that the parent notifies their child’s program in writing of the visiting rights and right to information of the parent who does not have legal or physical custody.

**EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION**

*Superintendent’s Office*
Superintendent: Edward Bosso (617) 972-7316  
Project Manager: Scott MacDowell (617) 972-7263

*Education Directors and Assistant Education Directors contact information*

**Secondary Program**
Education Director: Patrick McCall (617) 972-7230  
Assistant Education Director: Jessica Brown (617) 972-7885  
Assistant Education Director: Patrick Ryan (617) 972-7370

**Deafblind Program**
Education Director: Martha Majors (617) 972-7509  
Assistant Education Director: Maureen O’Brien (617) 972-7255  
Assistant Education Director: Kristin Carlson (617) 972-7504

**Lower School and Early Learning Center Program**
Education Director: Patrick McCall (617) 972-7230  
Assistant Education Director: Alex Lavoie (617) 972-7479  
Assistant Education Director: Elizabeth Torrey (617) 972-7475
Individualized Education Program
The term “individualized education program” or “IEP” means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised with input from the student’s program staff members, representatives from the student’s sending school district, the student’s parents or guardians, the student, and on occasion, other interested and concerned parties. The local educational agency shall ensure that the IEP Team:

- reviews the child’s IEP periodically, but not less frequently than annually, to determine whether the annual goals of the child are being achieved;
- revises the IEP as appropriate to address any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals;
- reviews classes for the coming year.

The IEP is documented and, if the student agrees with the IEP, is 18 years of age or older, and is his or her own guardian, he or she signs the IEP. If the student is younger than 18, then the student's parents or guardian sign the IEP. Students who are between the ages of 14 and 18 also may sign the IEP with their parents or guardian. The IEP can be provided in electronic format or transcribed into Braille upon request. A transition plan is developed at the appropriate age. This plan describes the student's goals for work and living situations as an adult and describes the process for arriving at these goals.

Progress Reports
A report of the student's progress is made four times during the school year. A copy of the report is sent to the student's local education authority (L.E.A.). If the student is 18 or older and is his or her own guardian, he or she may receive a copy of the report; otherwise, it is sent to the student's parent or guardian. A copy is kept in the student's file.

If a student turns 18 during the school year and is his or her own guardian, he or she may request any ensuing progress reports be sent only to him or her. Secondary students are responsible for notifying the Secondary office of this change. Unless otherwise informed, the office will assume the arrangements it has on file are satisfactory. If desired, both student and parent or guardian can receive a copy of the report. The report can be transcribed into Braille or electronic format upon request.

MCAS
The 1993 Education Reform Law mandates that all students who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). MCAS tests are given in the spring, and cover ELA, Mathematics, and Science/Technology/Engineering. Perkins students ordinarily participate in the state tests with accommodations, or are involved in alternate assessments. The student's educational team determines how the student will participate in statewide testing during the development of the I.E.P. Massachusetts students must pass the MCAS English and Mathematics and science tests to earn a high school diploma in addition to meeting course, credit and attendance requirements. Out of state students are not eligible to take the MCAS. They may earn Perkins diplomas or diplomas from their districts or states by meeting Perkins, state and/or local requirements. In many cases they are required to take their own state tests. Perkins will cooperate with local or state agencies to enable out of state students to take required tests.

Options for Graduation
Massachusetts students can receive high school diplomas from their own districts, or Perkins can issue high school diplomas to Massachusetts students. Students must meet the attendance and course requirements of Perkins or their districts, as well as the Massachusetts state testing requirements, to earn these diplomas.

Districts will be asked to provide graduation requirements to Perkins students, who would like to earn a high school diploma, and discussions will be held prior to enrollment or during annual reviews to determine if the student will meet the Perkins requirements or the requirements of the local district. Students from other states or countries may also receive district, state or Perkins diplomas.
There are four options for graduation:

1. High School Diploma from local district.
3. Special Education Diploma from local district (out of state students).
4. Certificate from Perkins or local district.

**High School Diploma**

Eighty credits are required to earn a high school diploma from Perkins. An academic class carries credits corresponding to the number of class hours it is scheduled to meet during the week. Thus, an English class scheduled to meet 5 periods a week is a 5-credit course. A student may earn 5 credits toward graduation by successfully completing the course.

A non-academic course carries credits corresponding to one half the number of class hours it is scheduled to meet during the week. Thus, a Home and Personal Management class scheduled to meet twice a week is a 1-credit course. A student may earn one credit toward graduation by successfully completing the course.

Credits earned at Watertown High School and other schools may be transferred to Perkins and applied towards graduation.

Students may also receive diplomas from their own school district if they have fulfilled the requirements for graduation.

**Certificate of Attainment**

Massachusetts students who meet Perkins graduation requirements or the graduation requirements of their local districts, but do not pass MCAS English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science/Technology/Engineering tests at the tenth grade level are eligible to receive Certificates of Attainment. Students who receive these certificates remain eligible for special education services up to the age of 22.

**Perkins Issued Certificate of Accomplishment**

This certificate is issued by Perkins and is given when the student turns twenty-two or at the age when the student's local educational agency states that the student is no longer eligible for educational services. A student may leave the program at an earlier age if this is determined to be appropriate by the student's educational team. The students in the certificate program may not be accepted for funding for work and/or residential placements by adult state agencies until they are no longer eligible for an educational program.

**Access to Student Records**

Parents or students who wish to access student records may do so by making a request to their program’s Educational Director. Arrangements will be made to review the contents of the record within 10 days of the request. Students and parents or guardians may make additions to the record or request that information be amended or deleted. They may meet with the program supervisor to discuss their concerns. The supervisor’s decisions about the concerns will be available in writing within a week of the meeting.

**Educational Records**

“Temporary records” include all the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript such as standardized test results, class rank, extracurricular activities, and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff. Per Massachusetts law, the student’s temporary record will be destroyed seven years after a student’s graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the School Program.

“Transcripts” include name, address, and phone number of the student; his/her birth date; name, address and phone number of the parent or guardian; course titles, grades (or their equivalent),
course credits, grade level completed, and the year the student completed the program. Transcripts will be maintained for at least sixty years.

Request for Transcripts

Transcripts of Academic grades are available upon written request to the Education Director.

Turning 18: Guardianship

Like all children, when disabled children reach the age of eighteen they are considered legally competent adults and are presumed able to make informed decisions about their personal, medical and financial affairs. Correspondingly, parents no longer have the right to make those decisions. Parents need to seriously consider whether their child will be able to make informed decisions once they turn 18, or whether they would benefit from the appointment of a guardian to make decisions on their behalf. Parents are welcome to consult with program staff if they are unsure about their child's needs in this regard.

If you decide to petition for guardianship, a social worker will provide you with appropriate information and resources. This process is usually begun approximately three months before the child's eighteenth birthday. Typically, a petition packet is obtained from the Probate Court of your local county. This packet includes the petition itself, financial documents and a clinical information form. In Massachusetts, there is a form called the Clinical Team Report, which must be filled out and signed by a doctor, a licensed psychologist and a social worker. In most cases, program staff can assist with completing this report. The paperwork and petitioning process differ somewhat from state to state, so residents of other states should check with their local Probate Court for more information. Massachusetts residents file the completed paperwork with the Probate Court, and a judge determines whether guardianship is appropriate. If a guardian is appointed, Perkins must have a copy of the court decree for its records.

From time to time the school offers parent education programs by an attorney to discuss this and other legal matters in further detail. Social workers will be able to answer many questions for you, or can help you identify other legal resources in the community.

Turning 22: Transition to Adult Services

In Massachusetts, students are entitled to special education services until their 22nd birthday or until they receive a diploma. Other states have different eligibility and age requirements. Parents need to determine with their school district specific state policies regarding the transition age for adult services. Regardless of the age at which it occurs, the process of transitioning from the familiar regulations and practices of special education and Perkins can be a very anxious time for students and families.

It is very important that parents understand that, while special education services are mandated by federal and state legislation, adult services for the most part are not mandated or entitled services. Adult services are provided and funded solely at the discretion of the state government. The Transition Planning Specialist will begin to work with parents and students, as well as with adult service agencies when the student turns 19. This work may begin at younger ages for out-of-state students whose states stop special education services earlier than age 22. This includes attending IEP meetings and other critical meetings concerning the student. Referrals to adult service agencies will be made with the input of parents and students. Beginning at age 14, an Adult Planning Profile and/or the IEP Transition Plan is filled out and updated for each student.

The Transition Planning Specialist monitors the overall transition process, as it differs in each state, and provides critical information to help out-of-state agencies with appropriate planning and services for students, as they reach adulthood and return to their home states. Staff from adult service agencies are invited to observe the student at work, in a particular class, or in the residential setting.
We will also help you arrange visits to housing and vocational programs within the community. We generally encourage students’ transitions to occur gradually during the last few months of the Perkins program. This will allow for the continuation of Perkins staff support as the student is becoming familiar with new staff at a home or vocational setting. If the student will be living at home after graduation we will help parents identify and utilize local resources.

Clinical and Related Services

Low Vision Services

Low Vision Services at Perkins include both clinical (optometric) and educational (functional) components. It is our philosophy to combine these two areas to ensure an accurate understanding of each student’s needs, abilities, motivations and learning styles.

Low vision educational services include functional vision assessments and environmental evaluations with suggested modifications. When it is indicated, partially sighted students receive vision stimulation and training in visual efficiency and the use of optical and non-optical aids. Training in the use of remaining vision may occur during individual sessions or during classroom and cottage time in conjunction with other functional activities. Consultation and inservice training is available to staff and families from the low vision education specialists and the optometrist. Ophthalmological health care and examinations are available through Perkins Health Services. **NOTE:** We have students who are blind attend low vision for annual ocular health examinations as well**

Low Vision service offerings include:

Optometric Low Vision Examination: A one-hour examination is provided by an eye care specialist with training in low vision and the low vision needs of children.

Functional Vision Assessment: A specially-trained teacher will determine how a child sees under "real world" conditions. It occurs in a child's classroom or cottage setting and takes into account the dynamic nature of environments.

Vision Stimulation Training: A specially-trained teacher will develop systematic and sequential activities to help expand and improve a child's visual functioning. A clinical and functional assessment will help determine an individual child's needs.

Environmental Evaluations: Assessments will consider various aspects of a child's learning environment. They include type, direction and amount of lighting, glare, color and color contrasting. Other aspects include size, distance, location and figure ground and how they affect a child who has a vision problem. Frequently, changes can be identified which will have a positive effect on a child's use of his or her remaining vision.

Training in the Use of Optical and Non-optical Aids: Assessments will help identify the prescription of optical aids which can be loaned to a child. Instruction in the proper use of aids will be provided to each child. We encourage parents to participate in the process so that there will be reinforcement in a child's home.

Audiology

The Audiologists provides complete audiologic services, including annual evaluations, auditory training, hearing aid and FM system maintenance and resource services.

Continued direct service by the Audiologist is determined by specification in the student’s IEP. Auditory training, combined with proper hearing aids, helps students make better use of their residual hearing and develops effective communication strategies. Students also receive training in hearing aid use and care skills. Teachers and cottage staff are trained to perform daily listening checks and visual inspections of hearing aids and equipment to ensure they remain in proper working order.

It is strongly recommended that each student with hearing aids obtain hearing aid insurance in the event of loss or damage. Hearing aid insurance forms can be obtained from the Audiologist.

Perkins maintains a supply of “loaner” hearing aids which can be used on a temporary basis while a
student's aid is being replaced or repaired. Perkins also has a supply of FM auditory trainers available for student use. Vibrotactile devices are available for students who might benefit from this type of alerting system.

Orientation and Mobility

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training develops a student's ability to travel in a safe, comfortable manner and to remain oriented while traveling. The goals and objectives are adapted to the needs and abilities of each student. The goal of Orientation and Mobility training is to develop the student's ability to travel as independently as possible.

Depending on the student's independent travel potential, lessons may focus on any or all of the following:

- environmental awareness
- concept development
- visual attention
- safety skills
- following directions
- adapted travel techniques
- community experiences

Behavioral Consultation

Behavior specialists provide behavior consultation to student’s educational teams, including cottage staff, teachers, related service providers, families, and doctors on a regular or as needed basis. The role of the behavior specialist includes conducting functional behavior assessments (FBA), as well as identifying appropriate replacement behaviors for interfering behaviors and behavior reduction techniques based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA). Family involvement is very important in the process of developing behavioral support plans/strategies for the student. The behavior specialist develops individualized behavior support plans (BSP) and data collection systems, monitors student’s progress, and provides training to staff on student BSPs. Additionally, the behavior specialists provide support during crisis intervention situations. Behavior specialists are also available to help design individual plans for teaching students academic, vocational, social, and community skills. The behavior specialist works closely with instructors in these areas, as well as with other clinical staff to produce desirable outcomes.

Toilet Training

Perkins offers assistance with toilet training for students of all ages who require it. The behavior specialist works with staff and families to assess the student’s prerequisite skills and individual needs such as adaptive equipment, transfers and pivots, and scheduling. A unique plan is developed for each student and implemented by classroom and cottage staff and families as appropriate. Toilet training may take the form of toilet/bathroom desensitization training, schedule training, self-initiated toilet use or an intensive toileting training program. Please call the Social Worker, Behavior Specialist or School Psychologist for additional information.

Counseling

Counseling is available on an as needed basis to help students deal with a variety of issues such as: adjustment to sensory loss, issues of adolescence and family life. Counseling may take the form of drawing, role and doll play, discussion, and play observation. Counseling may be provided by a Social Worker or a School Psychologist.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy enables students to maximize their potential within their daily routines and classroom activities. Occupational Therapy is provided as a direct service to students, and as a consultation service to classroom and residential staff to ensure carryover across all settings.
The Occupational Therapist evaluates, designs and implements programs that encourage children to develop the use of hand skills and the eye-hand coordination necessary for active participation in the students' daily routines. These programs typically focus on developing the student's ability to use their arms and hands for self-care activities such as feeding and dressing, and for classroom activities such as cutting, gluing and writing, as well as for communication such as language or accessing a switch. The Occupational Therapist often works in collaboration with the teaching staff to modify the presentation of the curriculum, the tools used for an activity, or the seating position, so that students can meet their academic goals with their current level of hand skills.

Occupational Therapy also focuses on the sensory needs of the students (i.e. hearing, vision, touch, movement) throughout their day. Some students who have difficulty processing sensory information may overreact or underreact to stimulation in their environment. The Occupational Therapist designs individualized sensory programs, or sensory diets, for these students. These programs are implemented within the classroom or in the Sensory Motor Integration room that provides swings, therapy balls, mats, bean bags and a variety of other equipment.

Physical Therapy

The Physical Therapist evaluates the function of the neuromusculoskeletal system and identifies areas that would benefit from physical therapy intervention for the purpose of having adequate access to the student's academic and expanded core curriculums. Such areas may address range of motion, strength and flexibility, endurance, posture, balance and coordination, and developmental motor skills (i.e., rolling, crawling, kneeling, standing, and walking).

The Physical Therapist may design, build, consult with and order from outside vendors regarding adaptive equipment to address the student's positioning and mobility needs (i.e., seating/standing in the classroom/cottage, wheelchairs, gait trainers, walkers, standers and transportation). Orthotic equipment, such as braces, body jackets, splints, if recommended are ordered from on and off campus vendors and are monitored for proper fit and function.

The Physical Therapist develops programs to meet the needs of each student. Services include direct treatment and consultation to the classroom and residential staff (i.e., instruction on positioning, equipment and daily exercise programs) and family. Students are reevaluated frequently and their programs are updated as necessary. A student may be discharged from therapy if he/she no longer needs PT services to gain full access to the curriculum.

Psychology

As part of a team of parents, teachers, and clinical specialists, the School Psychologist provides a number of services. The School Psychologist provides individual or small group counseling and social skill development instruction to students, as needed. The School Psychologist conducts psychological evaluations to assess students in the areas of cognitive, social-emotional, and adaptive skills, functioning. In addition, the School Psychologist provides consultation to the educational teams and families regarding the social-emotional development and well-being of students with vision impairments, deafblindness, and/or multiple disabilities.

Social Work

Social Workers act as a family advocate and as liaison between families and school staff. The Social Worker will help to communicate your concerns and priorities to staff, seek answers to your questions about the school and your child’s program, set up meetings or telephone contact with other staff, and make sure that communication is satisfactory. In addition to regular telephone contact, visits to Perkins and home visits can be arranged.

Social Workers also keep families informed about what is happening in the Program, upcoming
events, the school calendar, etc. The Social Worker can provide information about respite care services, summer programs, SSI, Medicaid, guardianship, other programs and services, and can help your family obtain any services you may need.

Jen Potter, Secondary Program 617-972-7502  
Rosie Rodas, Deafblind Program 617-972-7505  
Peg Beck or Betsey Porter Lower School Program and ELC, 617-972-7229 / 617-972-7287

Speech Language Pathology/Therapy Services

Speech, language, communication services are available to students and staff on a consultation and/or direct services basis depending on each student's individual needs. These services augment ongoing instruction of functional communication skills being taught in each classroom and may address articulation skills, sign language development, augmentative communication access (both low- and high-tech), symbol learning and language learning disabilities.

The Deafblind Program supports a Total Communication philosophy and works with each student to develop the means for accessible language and communication. Accessible modes of communication can include the use of sign and spoken language, written language, Braille, pictures (photographs or line drawings), objects, tangible symbols, gestures and/or other augmentative communication modes. The Program is committed to maximizing the communication potential of each child by exploring the use of all modes available.

Perkins Educational Leadership Program (ELP)

The Perkins ELP program focuses on the leadership training needs of teachers and other educational specialists from overseas. The goal of the training program is to assist schools and organizations throughout the world to improve and expand services for individuals who are blind, deafblind or multi-handicapped. Training is provided to individuals who are currently employed in a school or organization serving individuals who are handicapped. You may have an opportunity to see some of these overseas trainees on campus or in some of the classrooms. The trainees often live in the cottages and perform duties under the supervision of residential coordinators. They also work in classrooms under the supervision of Program teachers.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Perkins seeks to provide students with numerous activities and experiences within and outside the school that support the curriculum, enrich the learning experience, develop individual interests, extend social experiences, provide the opportunities to practice skills in a variety of circumstances and support the expanded core curriculum for the visually impaired.

Perkins offers students a variety of opportunities for social activity through the student center, dances, sports, student government, after school activities and clubs, and overnight and community based trips.

PERKINS SCHOOL POLICIES

Visitors Policy

Parents and families are welcome to come to the campus to see their child's school and residential program. This often happens as part of scheduled meetings, parent/teacher meetings, open houses, or for special events and parties. If you want to visit at other times, we ask that you schedule your visit at least 24 hours in advance. This will help you avoid missing your child when he or she is participating in activities outside of the classroom, such as art, music, therapy or field trips and safeguards all of the students’ privacy.
If you would like people other than your family members (such as a respite provider, a child care worker, etc.) to visit your child in the program, you must first receive approval from the Education Director or designee.

When visiting the school program please first check in with the receptionist in your child’s program to obtain a visitor’s pass.

Classroom visits should last for no more than an hour unless special arrangements are made with the Educational Director or designee.

Respecting the learning environment and confidentiality of all of our students is very important. We may ask that you sit in an inconspicuous area, out of the view of the students.

Having visitors can be very distracting and a situation may arise when another student in the classroom needs privacy, causing the observation to be suspended briefly.

We appreciate your understanding that if there is a behavioral or other sensitive situation with any of the students; we might ask that you wait outside of the classroom until the situation is under control. We ask for your cooperation and understanding during these situations.

We usually ask that visitors refrain from having any conversation with staff while in the classroom. Visitors generally have a staff person escorting them through the building for the reasons stated above.

When visiting the residential program, please first check in with the Coordinator of Residential Living as soon as you arrive at the cottage.

The cottages are home for many students and their privacy needs to be respected. Parents are expected to stay on the first floor in common areas, especially during hours when students are engaged in personal hygiene or bedtime routines.

If for any reason you would like to visit areas that could affect the privacy of other students, you must check in with staff beforehand to make sure it is okay. We will generally have a staff person escorting you in these areas.

We appreciate your understanding that if there is a behavioral or other sensitive situation with any of the students; we might ask that you wait outside of the area until the situation is under control.

If you are taking your child off campus at any time of day or evening please provide the school with as much notice as possible and tell the appropriate staff when you are leaving campus and when you plan to return.

The following protocol is expected of all visitors:

• Cell phones, pagers, or any other personalized electronic devices are turned off or muted during the visit.
• No recording by any means is allowed. Photographing students other than your own must have parental approval.
• Respect for the classroom instruction and residential programming is essential.
• Following all campus policies, practices and procedures is expected.

Please note: any official from ESE, EEC, or other similar agency from other states may visit with or without prior notice.

Thank you for your help in making your visit to the campus enjoyable and respectful for all of our students.

Behavior Support Philosophy

The staff at Perkins is committed to the goal of maximizing the strengths and potential of each student as we prepare them for life after Perkins. Toward this end, a positive approach to instruction and
discipline is emphasized; support and praise for appropriate behavior become the philosophical basis for all programming efforts. Perkins has a campus-wide Restraint Safety Committee (RSC) to review and approve any behavioral treatment plan which may make use of more restrictive methods or when there is a question of safety for the student or other students and staff. The RSC meets with Behavior Specialist or Behavior Analyst monthly to approve new programs and review existing programs to ensure that they utilize the most positive, least restrictive methods possible. Families are always kept informed and treatment program recommendations are made available for their review and approval.

**Student Discipline**

Depending on the situation there are several forms of disciplinary action that the school may take to maintain a safe educational and residential environment. Whenever possible, disciplinary action will be taken to help the student learn the consequences of a mistake, and develop a mature sense of right and wrong. They include the following:

**Detention**

Students may occasionally be assigned to detention by a teacher for such infractions as skipping class, being late for class, not doing assigned work, or minor infractions of the rules.

**Suspension**

A student will receive a suspension following a serious infraction of the rules. A meeting involving the student, the program supervisor and concerned staff will be held. The student's parents or guardian and representatives from the student's town will be notified and may attend the meeting if they wish to do so. The incident will be discussed.

A suspended student will be asked to leave school; usually he or she will be sent home. The school will take the responsibility for determining that there will be a responsible adult at home to receive the student. If a student has been suspended for more than 3 consecutive school days or more than 5 non-consecutive school days in a school year, a meeting involving the student, parent, LEA and other involved human service agencies will be held to explore program modifications and avoid further suspensions.

If suspensions exceed 10 consecutive or cumulative school days, the LEA will be asked to plan a meeting to address the issues related to the suspension and consider any program modification that would better address the student's needs. The number and duration of suspensions will be recorded and kept in a separate folder in the student's file.

**Leave of Absence**

Occasionally, a student may be asked to leave Perkins temporarily because he or she is urgently in need of services Perkins is unable to offer. The student, parents, and representative of the town will be notified. A meeting may be held, and the reason for, and terms of, the leave of absence will be given. Leaves of absence are usually given for medical or psychological crises.

**Termination of Enrollment**

A student's enrollment at Perkins may be terminated following a series of suspensions, or following an infraction of the rules which seriously threatened the student's safety, or the safety of other students or staff. A series of suspensions or serious threats to the student's safety or the safety of others indicate that Perkins is not suitable for the student, and discussions of the need for a more appropriate school will be held with the student, parents, LEA and/or funding agency as soon as possible. Perkins will offer to attend a meeting to discuss the incident, or incidents, and to make recommendations.
A clear and specific termination plan will be developed to be implemented in no fewer than 30 days unless there is an emergency. In an emergency, Perkins will immediately notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and will maintain the student for two weeks or more if this can be done safely.

Room Search
A residential student's room may be searched, in certain circumstances, without the student's permission. Reasons for searching a student's room without his or her permission include the seriousness of the alleged or suspected event, the reliability of the information leading to a search, the likelihood that the evidence would be destroyed if the search was delayed and the likelihood the evidence is to be found in the student's room. The student will be notified and given the opportunity to be present during the search unless the situation is regarded as life threatening. A search will be made only in the presence of a witness and will be documented in writing.

Other Actions
Disciplinary actions other than those described above may be deemed appropriate. Such action may be a restriction of privilege or privileges, repair or replacement of damaged property at the student's expense, or a meeting with the Education Director and appropriate staff.

Restraint Policy
In situations where a student causes the occurrence of, or serious threat of, injury to himself/herself or others, staff at Perkins may utilize physical restraint in the form of holding the student until there is no longer a risk of injury. Physical restraint is not a normal or usual part of the school's behavior support and will only be used if a student presents a serious threat of, injury to himself/herself or others. All staff members working with the students are trained in the proper use of calming and de-escalating strategies and attend an 18 hour Crisis Prevention and Physical Intervention Class (CPPI) at the beginning of their employment at Perkins. Thereafter they take an eight hour refresher course annually. Only staff who have participated and graduated from this training program may participate in physical restraints. All occurrences of restraint are reported to the parents of the student and are recorded and logged in accordance with state regulations.

The full Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy is available upon request.

Acceptable Computer/Internet Use Policy
All students using a school computer or any school technology or internet must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy.
Students must always ask and gain permission before using any school computer/technology/internet. Students may not damage computers, computer accessories, or computer networks. Students may not remove, move, unplug, or alter equipment without the permission of staff. Students may not alter software or computer settings without the permission of staff.
The administration considers files stored on the school's computers/iPads to be school property. School personnel may review any material stored on the school's computers/iPads at any time.
All students must have clearance from their computer teachers to use the school library and cottage computers/iPads. Students may gain independent clearance for writing and/or saving in word processing, Internet use, and email use. Students may also gain clearance for use of school printers or embossers with their own iPads, Braille n’ Speaks, Notetakers or computers. Students who do not have independent clearance may use the school computers/ iPads with staff supervision.
Students must have permission and staff supervision to download or install any software. Any user who receives a virus alert on any school computer/iPads must notify staff. Every effort is made to ensure the integrity of data stored on the school computers/iPads; however, it is the user’s responsibility to maintain a back-up copy of files important to the user. Students will not violate copyright laws. If a student finds material or a website on the Internet which may be deemed inappropriate by the staff person in charge, he or she will refrain from continued access to the website or material, and will not share the information with others. The system may not be used for illegal purposes, for support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by school policy. Students may not give out any information about themselves or others on school computers/iPads, including name, address, telephone number, school name, or passwords. Correspondence with strangers, including chat rooms, on school computers/iPads is not permitted, except with the permission and supervision of a staff member. When appropriate, students may use a classroom email account in computer classes. Parental permission will be requested for personal email accounts for students who are under the age of 18. Although students’ access to school computers/iPads and the Internet is within a supervised setting, students are expected to behave responsibly. The library is to be used for research and study purposes. Students may use the computers/iPads in the library or cottages when staff are present and with the permission of the librarian or staff. Students requesting use of the library or cottage computers/iPads for educational purposes are given priority over those requesting use for non-educational purposes. Students must take assigned seats at computer stations when instructed to do so. Food and drinks are not permitted at any school computer stations. Students who do not follow the Acceptable Use Policy may lose their privilege to use school computers/iPads outside of computer classes.

School Computer Equipment

The School provides access to computers and iPads, as one way of enhancing its educational mission to teach the skills and knowledge students will need as successful and responsible adults in the community. The student’s team uses an evaluation process to determine the best tool for the student. The extent of use will be determined by the student’s level of skills, experience, and level of responsibility. Independent access to the school’s computers, iPads and Internet system is a privilege. Students are responsible for their behavior while utilizing the school’s computers, iPads and Internet service, just as they are responsible for their behavior in hallways and classrooms.

Safety Concerns

Use of the Internet has the potential to put students in danger. Students and parents are encouraged to learn about and be aware of Internet safety. Students and parents should be aware that the use of the Internet might provide access to information that may be inaccurate and/or of an objectionable nature.

Wireless Internet Access

Perkins has developed a wireless network for students to access the Internet using their own equipment. The network is currently open for students to access if they have the equipment to do so, are within the range of the wireless network signal, and have approval from the Education Director. The necessary information to connect to the wireless network will be shared with students and parents who are interested in access.
Perkins School for the Blind does not guarantee performance regarding download or upload time, as this will fluctuate depending on the type and amount of traffic at any given time. If you would like information on wireless access, please contact the Education Director.

Unauthorized Recording and Listening Devices

Unauthorized recording or listening devices are strictly prohibited. The term “recording or listening device' means any device or apparatus which is capable of transmitting, receiving, amplifying, or recording a wire or oral communication, including mobile apps, other than a hearing aid or similar device which is being used to correct subnormal hearing to normal and other than any telephone or equipment being used in the ordinary course. The term "record" means to secretly hear, secretly record, or aid another to secretly hear or secretly record the contents of any wire or oral communication through the use of any “recording or listening device” by any person other than a person given prior authority by all parties to such communication.

Pond Usage Policy

The Perkins Pond area offers an immense outdoor classroom that is perfect for learning, exploration, adventure and fun. Perkins students and staff will gain an understanding and appreciation of the environment while learning about natural elements, heightening their sense of responsibility toward preserving and improving the quality of life and working collaboratively with others.

It is Perkins’ policy and goal to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to provide safe use of the Perkins Pond area for the exclusive use of students and staff as well as other specially designated individuals as determined by the President of Perkins or his designee. In pursuit of this policy and goal, the following procedures will serve as the administrative operational rules.

1. Operational Hours
The pond will be open daily from Sunrise to Sunset.

Staff must sign in/out of the Access Log to obtain the gate key; staff using the pond must ensure access gate is securely locked when not next to the gate and return the gate key to its designated secure location.

Perkins Pond area is CLOSED during inclement weather (i.e., snow, severe rain, thunder and or lightning storms).

2. Safety Training
All staff, whether working with students or not, must obtain a pond clearance including training in the use of the pond area and supplied life-saving equipment prior to using the pond area.

Staff must know how to access emergency help from the pond area and know the exact location of life saving equipment.

Staff must have a communication device (cell phone, walkie-talkie, etc.) on their person when they are with students at the pond. This is also strongly recommended when staff are at the pond without students.

3. Prohibited Activities in Perkins Pond
Prohibited activities include:
- Swimming, wading, ice skating or fishing
- Boating
- Smoking or alcohol
• Littering

No obstruction or barriers may be placed in the walkway or pathway ordinarily used by students and staff.

4. Signage
Staff will observe and comply with all posted signage.

5. Student Approval
All students must have written approval from an Educational Supervisor (or designee) in order to use the pond. Approval levels include:
- May use pond in a one-on-one situation with staff
- May use pond in a group situation with staff (one staff with several students)
- May use pond with additional staff or other restrictions as noted by supervisor
- Not approved to use pond without specific review by supervisor for each usage.

6. Staff Requirements When With Students
Staff who directly supervise students at the pond must have current CPR and First Aid prior to taking students to the pond.

Staff must have a communication device (cell phone, walkie-talkie, etc.) on their person when they are with students at the pond.

Permission for usage of the pond with a student must be granted by supervisor or designee prior to usage.

The supervisor on duty must be informed when staff take students to the pond.

Anti-Bullying Policy
Perkins School is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Perkins School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan affords protection to all students and was developed in accordance with Massachusetts law and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Requirements.

The full Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is included in Appendix 2.

Anti-Hazing Policy
Perkins strictly prohibits any acts of hazing associated with student groups, teams, or organizations.

The Perkins anti-hazing policy is included in Appendix 3.

Mandated Reporting Policy
Consistent with its mission and philosophy, Perkins School maintains a policy of zero tolerance for any kind of mistreatment of children. Consistent with this policy and the requirement that teachers and others who work with children serve as “mandated reporters” of suspected abuse, Perkins will investigate and report any cases of suspected abuse of children.

The reporting requirements that would be necessary under conditions of suspected abuse are as follows: Massachusetts law requires an individual who is a mandated reporter to immediately report any suspicion of serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect of children less than 18 years of age to the Department of Children and Families by oral communication. A written report must be completed and submitted within 48 hours.
Additional information concerning who must report, what to report, and what constitutes abuse and neglect is provided annually at staff trainings, is in the Employee Handbook, and is available on the Perkins Intranet and in hard copy. Reporting forms are also available.

For students over 18, Massachusetts law requires an individual who is a mandated reporter to immediately report any allegation of abuse of disabled adults between the ages of 18 to 59 who are dependent on another to meet a daily living need. Such reports are made to the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC). Information concerning the DPPC is provided annually at staff meetings and is available on the Perkins Intranet.
Appendix 1

Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Policy

20 U.S.C. § 1681 states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance"

Perkins School for the Blind (“Perkins”) is committed to the health, safety and welfare of our students and employees. We do not and will not tolerate any form of discrimination on the basis of sex in our educational program or activities. We are required by Title IX not to discriminate in any manner.

I. Definitions

Sexual Harassment is conduct that is sexual in nature; is unwelcome; and denies or limits a student or employee ability to participate in or benefit from the school environment. Examples may be unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct can be carried out by school employees, students, non-employee third parties, etc. This conduct may occur in school facilities or at off-campus locations (on a bus, during a field trip, at a training, etc.). Such conduct does not generally included legitimate nonsexual touching or conduct. However if such conduct takes on sexual connotations, this conduct could rise to the level of sexual harassment.

Sexual Violence is a type of sexual harassment, referring to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is unable to give consent.

Gender-Based Harassment is another type of sexual harassment, referring to harassment based on gender identity or nonconformity with sex stereotypes. This type of harassment may not involve conduct that is sexual in nature.

Consent voluntary and knowing agreement. Consent may not be possible due to age or disability.

II. Policy

Under Title IX, all students and employees are protected from sex-based harassment, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator or complainant. Included in such prohibition are claims of discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

It is our responsibility to be sure any sexual violence does not sufficiently limit or deny any of our student’s or employee’s ability to participate in or benefit from our educational environment. Perkins will respond with prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the sexual violence, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent recurrence, and as necessary remedy its effects.

Upon receiving any information to suggest sexual harassment/discrimination/violence, we will immediately begin a prompt, impartial investigation to determine what has occurred within a reasonable time frame (following necessary confidentiality considerations). If such investigation identifies a hostile environment, we will take necessary steps reasonably calculated to eliminate the hostile environment, prevent recurrence, and as necessary remedy its effects.

We are required under Title IX to protect the complainant and ensure this individual’s safety, which may require taking interim steps to protect the individual during the investigation. Interim steps
minimizing the burden on the complainant will be determined considering the specific incident and situation currently affecting the complainant. We will provide the complainant with updates on the status of the investigation as it progresses. We will provide the complainant with knowledge of all resources available to him or her and the right to report the incident to local law enforcement.

Our school employees are trained and aware of their obligations under state and local laws in this area. They are also aware of the consequences for failing to satisfy those obligations. We have specific policies in place to ensure employees of our school know they are prohibited from engaging in inappropriate conduct towards our students and toward each other. Employees are also trained in responding appropriately if problems in this area arise.

When a complainant requests that his or her name not be disclosed to the perpetrator our school will ensure that such information is securely handled. While it may be required to disclose this information to certain parties, the information will still be handled securely considering their request. It is the responsibility of the school to decide if nondisclosure can be followed, while also considering the necessity of providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment.

If a complainant requests that the school not investigate or pursue action against the perpetrator, it is our responsibility to inform them that this may limit our ability to respond fully to the incident. In addition, we are required to inform them that Title IX will protect them from retaliation.

If it is determined that we can respect the complainants request to not disclose or not take action against the perpetrator, we will still limit the effects of the incident and prevent its recurrence. This may be through means of more monitoring, supervision, or security. Additionally, adjustments may be made to our school policy for sexual violence/harassment in response to such conduct.

Our school provides necessary training to all employees who might witness or receive reports of sexual violence. Our trainings inform employees on their obligation to report, who and how to report possible incidents, and the appropriate steps that need to be taken after notification of sexual violence or harassment has occurred.

Our Title IX policy has been distributed and is available for students, families of students, and employees. Any questions concerning Title IX may be directed to our Title IX Coordinator, whose contact information is listed below.

III. Students with Disabilities

Given our student population, any sexual violence towards any of our students may require additional assistance and support. Any sexual conduct will also fall under other federal civil rights laws (Rehabilitation Act of 1973- Section 504 and Title II of the American Disabilities Act of 1990). We will work with our students to help them better understand our sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination prevention policies and procedures. If a student does experience sexual violence, we will report to the appropriate protective service agencies as needed, and we will provide supports and assistance.

IV. Title IX Coordinator

Our Title IX Coordinator is Michele Crews, Director of Human Resources, 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472 and can be contacted at (617) 972-7671 and Michele.Crews@perkins.org.
Our Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing our school’s response to all reports and complaints of sexual discrimination. Our Title IX Coordinator will investigate facts relevant to a complaint, determine appropriate sanctions against the perpetrator and remedies for the complainant, and determine interim measures for a complainant after learning of complaint. Their responsibilities also include:

- Ensuring all policies and procedures are in place and followed by working with local law enforcement and other services if an incident occurs
- Evaluating confidentiality requests and determining how to proceed when such requests are made
- Assistance in any training to employees about what conduct constitutes sexual and gender-based harassment and how to respond appropriately to this conduct
- Be informed of all Title IX reports and complaints at our school
- Coordination of recordkeeping, monitoring of incidents to help identify any repeat offenses by specific individuals or towards specific individuals, addressing any patterns or systemic problems, and making school administrators aware of any patterns
- Recommending increases in safety measures (monitoring, supervision, security) in any areas where harassment has occurred
- Regular review of effectiveness of our school’s efforts to ensure we are free from sexual and gender-based harassment, and using information compiled to recommend future proactive steps that our school can take to comply with Title IX and protect our school community

V.   Grievance Policy and Procedures

Title IX requires that our school adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee sex discrimination complaints. Our grievance policy is as follows:

Michele Crews, Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator, along with the Perkins Administrator, and appropriate agencies (DCF/DPPC) is responsible for investigating and resolving complaints of sexual misconduct regarding students’ education and care. Students or parents/guardians can register complaints with these individuals concerning a student’s education and care. We are committed to providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints from both students and employees alleging sexual misconduct or discrimination based on legally protected categories (race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability) that includes specific timeliness and the appeals process.

Our complaint procedures are included in this policy manual.

VI.   Retaliation

Retaliation from the perpetrator or any individual from our school in response to a complaint is prohibited under Title IX. Prohibited retaliation includes any retaliation against any individual who filed the complaint or any individual participating in the Title IX investigation, hearing or proceeding. Our school will ensure that individuals are not intimidated, threatened, coerced or discriminated against for engaging in this process.

VII.   Resources

Additional questions about Title IX, may also be referred to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights at 617-289-0111
Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Sexual Assault Prevention & Survivor Services

250 Washington Street, 4th floor, Boston, MA  02108-4619
Phone: 617-624-5457
TTY: 617-624-5992

VIII.   Complaint Forms

Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) Form 51A


Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) Form 19C


If you have any questions, please contact: Michele Crews, Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator  Michele.Crews@Perkins.org or 617-972-7671.
Anti-Bullying Policy

It is the policy of Perkins School for the Blind that all students have an educational and residential experience that is safe, secure and free from bullying. Perkins expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

Acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation are prohibited: 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 used by the school, or through use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school and at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic devise that is not owned, leased or used by the school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on their rights at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

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

Definitions

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;

ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;

iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target; infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

iv. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student’s education.

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.
Staff includes, but is not limited to, administrators, educators, teaching assistants, related service staff, school nurses, domestic workers, custodians, support staff and Perkins employees who serve as drivers.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Training and Professional Staff Development

A. Annual staff training on the Plan. Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Superintendent or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered in all of the programs. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

B. Ongoing professional development. The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

(i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
(ii) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
(iii) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
(v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
(vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Additional areas identified by Perkins include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making and;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

C. Students on IEPs: The IEP team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying. This will involve a particular focus on students whose disability affects social skills development.
D. Written notice to staff. Perkins will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by making it available on the internet, and in the employee handbook.

**Academic and Nonacademic Activities/Curriculum**

A. **Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches**

The Bullying prevention curricula at Perkins will be age and developmentally appropriate for each student and will emphasize the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in bullying behavior; help students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying;
- emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication;
- identifying places and ways to avoid cyber-bullying;
- enhancing students’ skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference;
- develop vocabulary or other communication tool so that students can identify and describe bullying.

B. **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:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students,
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- supporting and encouraging staff in developing positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavior supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students’ interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

*Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

**Procedures for Staff, Students and Parents to Report Bullying**

A. **Reporting bullying or retaliation.** Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. Staff members are required to report
immediately to the designated person in their program (Chris Underwood in Secondary, Elizabeth Torrey in Early Learning Center and Lower School, and Rosie Rodas in Deafblind) any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school staff members, may be made anonymously. Perkins will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, an email address and a “bully box” in each program where students can make a report anonymously.

The Incident Report form will be the same form currently being used for other serious incidents. This Incident Report Form will be included in registration packets for students and parents or guardians and will be available in all of the programs and on the school’s website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, Perkins will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the person responsible in each program. It will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the Perkins website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. **Reporting by Staff**
   A staff member will report immediately to the designated program person when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation and must fill out an incident report concerning the incident.

2. **Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others**
   Perkins requires students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the designated program person. Reports may be made anonymously, but no action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the designated program person.

**B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation**

**Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the designated program person will take steps to assess the need to create 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 are 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 in the cottage; 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 designated program person may take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.
The designated program person 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. Case Managers will be made aware if one of their students has reported bullying, witnessed bullying, given information during an investigation, or has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation and will create a safety plan if needed.

Obligations to Notify Others

Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the designated program person will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it.

C. Investigation. The designated program person will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages and developmental stage of the students involved.

During the investigation the designated program person will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary.

Interviews may be conducted by the designated program person, other staff members as determined by the designated program person, and in consultation with the Superintendent, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the designated program person will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The designated program person will maintain a written record of the investigation.

D. Determinations. The designated program person will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, the charge of bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the designated program person will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted from participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The designated program person will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the designated program person may consult with the students’ teacher(s) or any staff involved with the student, and the target’s or aggressor’s parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The designated program person will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is identified, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the designated program person cannot report specific information to the target’s parent or guardian about action taken regarding the aggressor. If the designated program
has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, he must notify the superintendent who will determine if the local law enforcement agency should be notified.

E. Responses to Bullying.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Skill-building approaches that help teach appropriate social skills may include:
▪ offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the anti-bullying curricula;
▪ providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
▪ implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
▪ meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
▪ adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
▪ making a referral for evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the designated program person decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found, including the nature of the conduct, the age, ability and independent functioning level of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

Should discipline be appropriate it will consistent with the Plan and with Perkins code of conduct.

If the designated program person determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the Plan and with Perkins code of conduct.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The designated program person will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well.

VII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Collaboration with Parents

A. 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. It will include ideas on (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyber-bullying. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Parent Advisory Council. Resources will also be available on the internet.
B. **Notification requirements.** Each year the school will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The school will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be available in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VIII.  **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of Perkins, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to Perkins or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of Perkins on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents Perkins from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a student’s membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of Perkins to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or Perkin’s policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.
Appendix 3

Anti-Hazing Policy

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 269, Sections 17-19 makes it a crime to participate in organized hazing and provides for a punishment of a fine, imprisonment or both.

In accordance with the laws of the State of Massachusetts, Perkins School for the Blind does not condone hazing in any activity associated with the school, including athletics, academics and co-curricular clubs and organizations.

Section 17: Definition:
The term hazing as used in this section shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage 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 students or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this section. [Added by St.1985, c.536. Amended by St. 1987, c.665.]

Section 18: Reporting Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section 17 and is at the scene of such a crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger of peril to himself or others, report such a crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practical. Whoever fails to report such a crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars. [Added by St. 1985, c.536. Amended by St. 1987, c.665]

Section 19: Notification
This section of the Massachusetts General Laws requires this hazing law to be issued to all students and to all members of clubs, teams and organizations. Organizers and participants of hazing shall be disciplined in accordance with the measures set forth in the student handbook “Student Discipline Code.”

S.19 (abridged) Each institution of secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen, provided, however, that an institution’s compliance with this section’s requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution’s recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams organizations.

PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND ANTI-HAZING POLICY

Policy Statement and Definition

I. In accordance with the laws of the State of Massachusetts, Perkins School for the Blind does not condone hazing in any activity associated with the school, including athletics, academics, and co-curricular clubs and organizations. “Hazing” means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with being initiated into, affiliated with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, athletic team, or
activity and that is intended, or should reasonably be expected, to have the effect of humiliating, intimidating, or demeaning a student, or endangering the mental health or physical health of that student.”

Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding or otherwise participating actively or passively in such acts. Hazing occurs regardless of the consent or willingness of a victim to participate in the activity. Hazing may occur on or off the school’s campus. The school discourages activities of clubs and teams that are not sanctioned by the school and is not responsible for incidents that might arise from participation in non-school sanctioned events. However, this does not prevent the school from imposing this policy and holding students accountable if events of hazing occur at non-school sanctioned events.

II. Reporting Hazing Activities

Massachusetts General Law 269, Section 18 requires that “whoever knows 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 a crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.” Any person may report hazing directly to any school official, the principal, and/or superintendent of the school. Students should responsibly report hazing incidents to a parent, teacher, administrator, coach, advisor, guidance counselor, local police, or other responsible adult. These reports should include time, place, people involved, and as much specific information as possible about the hazing event as to facilitate an investigation. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge of conduct that may constitute hazing shall inform the building Principal immediately. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of hazing will not affect the complainant or reporter’s future employment, grades, work assignments, or activity participation (i.e. clubs, athletics, band, etc.).

III. Consequences

If a student is found to have organized or actively participated in the hazing of another student, that student will immediately forfeit membership in all academic clubs, extracurricular groups, and athletic teams for a period of ninety (90) school days. The student will face school suspension for a period of up to five school days for minor involvement and five to ten days for organizing and participating.

IV. Reprisal

In accordance with the school’s harassment policy, the school will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, coach, advisor, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged hazing or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such hazing. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

V. Dissemination of Policy

This policy will appear in the school’s student handbook. Prior to participation in any school club, organization, or athletic team, the student must sign and date an Activity Participation Form that includes information about hazing referencing this policy.