



**PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**  
**STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK**  
**2022-2023**

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## BRIEF HISTORY OF PERKINS SCHOOL

Perkins pioneered the work of educating students who are blind and deafblind. The first school for the blind chartered in the United States, Perkins has remained a leader in the field for nearly 200 years. Many of the discoveries and achievements that fueled changes in equitable access to education, jobs, and more occurred at Perkins. Achievements include teaching Laura Bridgman, the first child with deafblindness to be formally educated, opening the first kindergarten for children who are blind, and providing the first lending library of tactile books.

In the early 1820s, Dr. John Dix Fisher visited L'Institut National de Jeunes Aveugles (The National Institute for Blind Youth) in Paris. Opened in 1784, it was the first school for the blind in the world. Dr. Fisher was a medical student and native Bostonian, and he became convinced that the United States needed such a school and that Boston should have the first. When he returned to Boston, he gathered support from his friends to found a school. In 1829, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued a charter to create a school designed to "educate blind persons."

The school opened in 1832 in the front room of Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe's father's home on Pleasant Street in Boston with just two students. The high demand meant more space was needed and the school moved locations in 1833 and again in 1837 in Boston.

By 1912, the school had outgrown the South Boston campus and moved to the current location in Watertown. Children had access to beautiful spaces, with many trees and plantings, as well as the Perkins Pond. Perkins continued to grow and develop, including creating the famous Perkins Braille. In 1982, Perkins changed its charter in 1982 to accept students with multiple disabilities other than blindness. The school has also expanded its work outside of Watertown, everything from serving students in their home school districts, to helping support the education of children with multiple disabilities around the world through Perkins International.

Our staff and alumni have gone on to lead and contribute to many other schools and institutions. Alumnae Anne Sullivan became internationally known for teaching Helen Keller, whom she brought to Perkins. Keller spent her life breaking down barriers and perceptions of what people who are blind or deafblind can accomplish. Sir Francis Campbell, a teacher at Perkins, went on to co-found the Royal Normal College, a school for the blind in England. Perkins alum Sir Frederick Fraser was the much-loved superintendent of the Halifax School for the Blind in Nova Scotia, Canada for many years. Robert Smithdas, a Perkins alum and the first person who was deafblind to earn a Master's degree, worked for many years as an advocate and director of services for the deafblind.

For a more detailed history please visit our website at [perkins.org/our-history](http://perkins.org/our-history).

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S WELCOME**

Welcome to the 2022-2023 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.

Although we have recently modified our COVID-related restrictions, we would like to express our continued commitment to the health and safety of our students and staff, and remind you that it is our top priority. We will continue to monitor the COVID landscape and please rest assured that we will make adjustments and take the necessary steps to mitigate infection transmission on our campus. And we look forward to welcoming you back to our beautiful campus for important meetings and events, such as concerts.

Students are the heart of Perkins School for the Blind and are at the center of all that we do. They bring the buildings and grounds alive with excitement and learning. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. I look forward to another great year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Bosso".

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.

Educational Programs 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 education and residential programming.
- Our culture is built on 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.

Core Values:

- Excellence in Education: We pursue excellence and innovation to enable all students to reach their full potential.
- Tradition: We look to our legacy to inform our future.
- Empowerment: We work to ensure that every person has the opportunity to make their voice heard.
- Integrity: We behave in a way that is honest and principled.
- Accessibility: We strive to be a model of accessibility in our actions and attitudes, fostering and advocating for an environment of inclusion.

## **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 by clicking on the link below:

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=503a5e825dae16425ec0bfd2ca33cbd0&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title34/34cfrv1\\_02.tpl#100](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: Nan Qin, Senior People Operations Business Partner and Title IX Coordinator

Address: 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472

Telephone Number: (617) 972-7212

E-mail Address: [nan.qin@perkins.org](mailto:nan.qin@perkins.org)

Inquiries concerning the application of each of the federal statutes and their implementing regulations to Perkins may be referred to Ms. Qin 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 admits students between the ages of 13-22 with a range of abilities. The program focuses on transition to adulthood beginning day one. Students develop post secondary goals and enjoy a range of employment, independent living, educational, and community based opportunities. Secondary students experience the touchstone events of a typical American high school, such as participating in student council, musical, theatrical, athletic activities, community service opportunities, and the Prom.

School Hours are 8:00am to 3:05pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:00am to 2:15pm on Wednesday.

### **Deafblind Program**

The Deafblind Program admits students ages 3-22 who are deafblind and deaf with additional disabilities. The program emphasizes a developmental approach, stressing language and communication development, individualized instruction, and age appropriate curriculum in a total communication environment.

School Hours are 8:30am to 3:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:30am to 2:00pm on Wednesday.

### **Lower School Program**

Designed for elementary and middle school-aged students, 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 3:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:25am to 2:00pm on Wednesday.

### **Early Learning Center**

The Early Learning Center (ELC) serves children ages 3-6 in a playful, educational atmosphere. 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 physical and developmental needs.

School Hours are 8:25am to 3:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:25am to 2:00pm on Wednesday.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Registration Information

State regulations mandate that Perkins collect essential consents and information from parents and guardians each year. Families 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](mailto:Scott.MacDowell@perkins.org)

### How to Reach Us

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: 617-972-7410

Glover Cottage: 617-972-7412

Potter Cottage: 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 and 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](mailto:Admissions@Perkins.org).

## Who's Who for Communication

Who is the best person to call or email when I have a question or concern?

That depends on the reason for communication. Given the large number of staff on your students' team, please refer to the grid below as a general guide to follow so that we can respond to you in the most effective manner.

Role	Responsibility	Things to Communicate
Family Contact	<p>Depending upon the program, this role is fulfilled by a social worker, school psychologist or administrator. Your assigned Family Contact is your general "go to" person for questions or concerns about any aspect of your child's experience at Perkins.</p> <p>Whenever there is a problem, your Family Contact is the best place to start. Your Family Contact can listen to your concerns and help you sort out the issues. When necessary, they can help you make a request or suggestion. At other times, they may help you understand the reasons behind a particular policy or procedure.</p> <p>The Family Contacts act as a resource for outside agency support and assistance with transition-related tasks.</p>	<p>Changes in family situation (divorce, new baby, move)</p> <p>Safety issues, change in behavior at home</p> <p>Family emergencies, sleepless nights, appointments (send a note in to classroom teacher as well)</p> <p>When you can't keep a scheduled appointment</p> <p>Observation request</p>
Case Manager/ Administrator	<p>Depending on the program, a Case Manager or administrator can answer questions and address concerns regarding your student's IEP, progress reports, graduation requirements, MCAS, coordinating with the local district, change in teams, class schedule, and issues with transportation. They may also collaborate with your Family Contact to set up and use your individualized system for communication.</p>	<p>Requests for specific classes and experiences for the next school year prior to and during the IEP meeting</p>
Program Nurse	<p>Each student has an assigned Program Nurse. If you have any concerns or questions that are health related: sickness, weight, nutrition, medications, please contact the nurse directly.</p>	<p>Medical issues that arise or change</p> <p>Illness</p> <p>Medication changes</p> <p>See Health Service Information section</p>

<p>Classroom Teacher</p>	<p>Classroom teachers will collaborate with your Family Contact to set-up and use your individualized system for communication.</p>	<p>If you have questions about your student's educational progress, curriculum, workload, and/or classroom concerns</p> <p>Please include your Family Contact (and Case Manager, when applicable) in communications with the teachers</p>
<p>Residential Coordinator/ Coordinator of Residential Living</p>	<p>The Residential Coordinator is available for brief check-ins and updates on your student's day and can address questions and concerns regarding the residential experience.</p>	<p>Confirming plans for approved visits.</p> <p>Any change in plans regarding students arriving/ leaving the residence</p> <p>Please include your Family Contact (and Case Manager, when applicable) in communications with the Coordinators</p>
<p>Program Office</p> <p>Deafblind 617-972-7500</p> <p>Lower School/ ELC 617-972-7279</p> <p>Secondary 617-972-7236</p>	<p>The Administrative Assistants in the program offices receive information from families in regards to absences, tardiness, early dismissals and emergencies. During school hours, the program office always has a staff available to receive calls. If the Assistant is on the phone, please leave a message.</p>	<p>Emergency during school hours</p> <p>Change in transportation plan</p> <p>You can call and leave a message any time of day to report an absence, tardy, early dismissal, etc.</p>
<p>Related Service Provider (OT, PT, Speech, O&amp;M, Behaviorist, School Psychologist, Social Worker)</p>	<p>Please see below (page #33) for more information about each type of related service. The RSPs may communicate information about student specific programming in coordination with your Family Contact.</p>	<p>If you have questions about your child's progress in a certain specialty area or if you would like to understand more about that area in your child's life, contact the appropriate RSP. Short telephone calls and emails are often the best communication strategy.</p>

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Perkins has an emergency telephone number which can be accessed by students and parents/guardians between 5:00pm and 8:00am on weekends and during some holidays. At these times families 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.

## **Parent Advisory Council (PAC)**

Perkins supports the Parent Advisory Council (“the PAC”) which is comprised of parents/guardians 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/guardians to meet together for support and socializing and to organize presentations about topics of interest to them.

The PAC is run by parent/guardian volunteers and coordinates with a staff liaison. If you would like to be connected with the PAC, please email: [PerkinsSEPAC@gmail.com](mailto:PerkinsSEPAC@gmail.com)

## **Superintendent’s Site-Based Advisory Council (SSBAC)**

The purpose of SSBAC is to engage our key stakeholders in a student-centered approach to program excellence. The Council will allow for increased communication and offer a feedback loop in the decision-making process where appropriate. Additionally, the Council will review our progress with our strategic initiatives and continuous improvement planning ensuring accountability to outcomes.

The Council’s membership will have diverse representation from the following groups, parents/guardians, staff, and leadership. There shall be 6 parent/guardian representatives with 2 from each of the 3 school programs (Early Learning Center/Lower School, Secondary, Deafblind). There shall be 12 staff representatives with 4 from each from the 3 school programs. There shall be 3 representatives from the school’s administration. Members shall commit to serving a two-year term. Initially, some members may be designated to serve a 1-year term to allow for staggered membership.

## **Request for Job Descriptions and/or Policies and Procedures**

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

# Perkins School 2022-2023 Calendar



## PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND SCHOOL YEAR FY'23

Day Program Days: 205  
Residential Program Days: 283 (205+78)



**Early Learning Center and Lower School: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:25am - 3:00pm; Wednesday 8:25am - 2:00pm**  
**Deafblind Program: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30am - 3:00pm; Wednesday 8:30am - 2:00pm**  
**Secondary Program: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:00am - 3:05pm; Wednesday 8:00am - 2:15pm**

  Holiday (no classes)  
  Break (school closed)  
  Early Dismissal at 12:00pm  
  Designated Snow Days  
  Residential Program Open  
  Residential Program Closed

July 2022 19 School Days / 3 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

AUGUST 2022 0 School Days / 0 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SEPTEMBER 2022 19 School Days / 5 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

OCTOBER 2022 20 School Days / 11 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

NOVEMBER 2022 20 School Days / 6 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

DECEMBER 2022 15 School Days / 6 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JANUARY 2023 20 School Days / 9 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2023 15 School Days / 5 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

MARCH 2023 23 School Days / 8 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL 2023 15 School Days / 5 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

MAY 2023 22 School Days / 9 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JUNE 2023 17 School Days / 6 Residential Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**July 4** Independence Day (No Classes, Residences closed)  
**July 5** Students Return and Classes Resume  
**August 29** Teachers, Related Service Providers, Teaching Assistants, Residential Staff Report to Campus  
**September 5** Labor Day (No Classes)  
**September 6** Students Return and Classes Resume  
**October 10** Indigenous Peoples' Day (No Classes, Residences open)  
**November 23** Start of Thanksgiving Break (Early Dismissal: 12:00 for Students and Staff)  
**November 24-27** Thanksgiving Break (Residences closed)  
**December 21** Start of Winter Break (Early Dismissal: 12:00 for Students)  
**December 22-January 1** Winter Break (Residences closed)

**January 3** Students Return and Classes Resume  
**January 16** MLK Day (No Classes, Residences open)  
**February 17** Start of February Break (Early Dismissal: 12:00 for Students; 4:00 for Staff)  
**February 20-24** February Break (Residences closed); Residential Students may return after 3:00pm Sunday 2/21  
**April 14** Start of April Break (Early Dismissal: 12:00 for Students; 4:00 for Staff)  
**April 17-21** April Break (Residences closed)  
**May 29** Memorial Day (No Classes, Residences open)  
**June 23** Graduation Day (Early Dismissal: 12:00)  
**June 26-July 4** June Break  
**July 5** Students Return and Classes Resume

approved 2/15/22

# Campus Map



**Perkins** SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Scale = 100 ft

## **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.

## **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/guardians 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 student's transportation plan on a given day (e.g., if your student will be out sick, or if you will be dropping off or picking up your student when they usually ride the bus, or your student will only need transportation in the morning or the afternoon) please notify your bus driver or transportation company and your program office. If your student will be out of school for an extended period, please remember to contact your transportation company and your Perkins primary Family Contact in advance of the time you would like your student's transportation to resume.

If you live at a distance and your student 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/guardians should make a backup plan in preparation for canceled or severely delayed trips. If your student 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 student is going to be absent or late in arriving at school, we ask that you notify your student's program.

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

Lower School Program and Early Learning Center: Families are expected to call the Lower School office at 617-972-7279 before 8:00am if their child will not be in school that day or will be late.

Secondary Program: Families are expected to call the Secondary office at 617-972-7236 before 7:30am if their student will not be in school that day or will be late.

Please refer to the policy section beginning on page 36 for more detailed information regarding Perkins Attendance Policy.



### Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

At arrival and dismissal times, our teachers and other program staff need to focus on the safe and smooth transition of students into and out of the school environment. Additionally, teachers need time immediately before and after school for class preparation. For these important reasons, arrival and dismissal times are not effective times for conversation.

To support smooth transitions, to encourage the development of independent travel skills, and to respond to heightened security and safety concerns, we ask for your cooperation in following these guidelines for the drop off and pick up of students.

- When you arrive at the designated drop-off location for your program, please wait in your car for staff to retrieve your student. Staff will be present.
- If you know that your student will be late, please notify the program office in advance. Upon arrival, please contact the program office.
- When picking up your student, please remain in your car, joining the line at the designated pick-up location for your program and wait for a staff person to bring your student to you.

### 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/guardians 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/guardians may choose to keep their student 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 student 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 student to return home early to avoid being stranded at the school.

### Whom to Contact

Please contact your program office 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 students 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 families 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 student'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 families 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/guardians anytime a student 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 student'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.
- Prescription medication bottles or blister packs must match the doctor's order for the medication and have NOT expired.

## Student Illness Policy

Many of the students attending Perkins have complex health issues that may make them more vulnerable to illness. All members of the Perkins community, including parents/guardians, students, teachers, cottage and clinical staff, play an active role in maintaining a healthy environment for our students. In order to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious illnesses at the school, the following Student Illness Policy has been developed. Please read this Policy carefully and contact your **Program Nurse** if you have any questions.

Families/Caregivers should keep their student home, or students may need to leave school, if they:

- may have a contagious illness;
- are unable to participate in the school day activities comfortably;
- have unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying or difficulty breathing, pain or other signs which may raise concern for illness
- need more care than the usual staffing level can provide

In addition, caregivers are requested to notify Health Services of any health conditions, illnesses, or injuries that their student experiences during the school year or if their student has been exposed to a family member with a communicable disease. Perkins staff members are required to notify Health Services regarding any student who appears ill so that the student may be evaluated. Health Services will assist the parent/guardian and school staff in determining if the nature of the illness or condition is communicable and what specific health care, assistance or separation the student may require that may be different from their usual school day. In general, students should only attend school when they are well enough to participate in their usual school day schedule. Students may, at times, experience acute, short-term illnesses or conditions that may develop during the school day. Day and residential students must have on-file emergency contact, primary caregivers, and alternative adults to whom the student may be released to in the event that this occurs.

Perkins, like other schools, is required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to temporarily exclude students with certain contagious illnesses or symptoms. In some instances the specific illness may not yet be identified, but certain symptoms may indicate that a student may be required to stay out of school until these symptoms resolve or medical treatment has been initiated per medical judgment. If the student is unable to return home due to extenuating circumstances, efforts will be made to separate the student from others and provide appropriate care until it is determined that the illness or period of contagion has resolved.

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

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- Fever greater than 100.0 (Students need to be fever free without Tylenol or ibuprofen for 24 hours before returning to school.)
- May have a contagious illness
- Has unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying
- Difficulty breathing or severe respiratory congestion
- Is unable to participate in the school day activities comfortably
- Vomiting
- Watery diarrhea (3-4 watery bowel movements that are not able to be contained by diaper or underwear). (The student should be free from vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours prior to returning to school.)
- Rash accompanied by fever, or rash that both cannot be covered and may be contagious
- Open draining wounds that cannot be kept covered
- Jaundice
- pain requiring narcotic pain medications for management
- abdominal pain persisting for more than 2 hours or associated with fever or other signs of illness
- other signs of possible significant illness
- Needs significantly more care than the usual staffing level provides due illness or injury
- Persistent or new-onset coughing (without a diagnosis of asthma or allergies) with discolored mucus
- Has not returned to baseline after seizure
- Concussion symptoms
- COVID-19-like symptoms that have not yet been evaluated by a provider or nurse

Examples of contagious illnesses include, but are not limited to, the following:

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- Chicken pox (lesions must be crusted over and the student fever free for 24 hours before returning)
- Measles
- Influenza (flu)
- Infectious diarrhea
- Other communicable diseases determined by DPH
- Purulent conjunctivitis or 'pink eye' with white or yellow discharge, (24 hours of antibiotic treatment required before return)
- Strep throat ( 24 hours of antibiotic treatment required before return)
- Meningitis
- Pertussis/whooping cough (5 days of antibiotic treatment required before return)

Any student who develops the above symptoms during the school day may be released from school to home to rest and recover. The parent or guardian will be notified by Health Services of any possible contagious illness or symptoms, and 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 student's care regarding appropriate separation or isolation measures to maintain effective infection control.

In the event that a residential student becomes ill, the student will return to the cottage and be kept separate from other students to the extent possible until travel arrangements can be made or the student is no longer contagious. Health Services will provide specific guidelines for the student's care and

infection control measures based on the student's symptoms, diagnosis, and the student's ability to contain their secretions. Parents and guardians should have a plan at all times to be able to have their student cared for in the event of illness or injury.

Perkins reserves the right to amend this Policy from time to time in its sole discretion.

### **Return to school after Hospitalization, ER Visit and Medical/ Dental Procedure**

*Please use the following steps when planning students' return to school following hospitalization, medical/ dental procedure, surgery, and Emergency Room/Department visit.*

#### **Before Discharge:**

Student's family contacts their assigned Program Nurse to communicate that there has been (or will be) a hospitalization, surgery, or ER visit.

- This helps to ensure that all instructions for re-entry to school can be communicated to the family, and appropriate information can be gathered in a timely manner during the hospitalization, discharge, and school reentry planning process.
- Once a family is aware of the discharge date, please have the discharge nurse contact the school nurse directly (if possible) to communicate the course of stay, any changes in medication and care plan instructions, and the plan for provider follow-up,
- The family will need to request this at the hospital prior to discharge
- If discharge summary has not been completed prior to discharge, the discharge summary can sometimes be requested from a student's Primary Care Provider if it has been forwarded to them. You may need to ask for this to be done while at the hospital.

**Family requests that the hospital send the Discharge Summary to the Health Services secure fax at 617-972-7345 or email to [deb.kelly@perkins.org](mailto:deb.kelly@perkins.org).**

#### **Post Discharge:**

- Once the discharge paperwork is received at Health Services, a review and check-in will be scheduled.
- Depending on the student's medical need, an in-person check-in at Health Services with the parent or guardian present may be required.
- In some cases, written clearance to return to school may be required from the Primary Care Provider or Specialist (Orthopedic, Cardiac, GI, Pulmonary, Surgical, etc.).

**Please fax the school clearance note to the Health Services secure fax at 617-972-7345 or email to [deb.kelly@perkins.org](mailto:deb.kelly@perkins.org).**

Following receipt of pertinent medical information, and discussion with health services **a decision can be made regarding the student's appropriate return date to school.**

The return date may depend on several factors but not limited to:

- Receiving the student's updated school medication orders

- Obtaining a supply of current medication or formula for school.
- Communication and training with staff regarding the new care plan. (May include modifications in activity and physical transfers.)

#### **Reminders:**

- Perkins School for the Blind does not provide postoperative rehabilitative services. School Services Providers (PT, OT, SLP, Behaviorist, etc.) are focused on the student's educational goals.
- The student should be recovered enough to be able to participate in a regular school day upon return.
- For safety reasons, students who have received procedure-related sedative or narcotic medications should wait to return the following day.

***Thank you for your support in ensuring a smooth, safe transition back to school for your student!***

#### **CPR and First Aid Training**

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

## How to Reach Us

Name	Extension
Debra (Deb) Kelly, DNP, MS, RN Director of Health Services <a href="mailto:deb.kelly@perkins.org">deb.kelly@perkins.org</a>	7437
Nurse Practitioner (to be hired)	7273
Michelle Benvie, RD, Dietitian <a href="mailto:Michelle.Benvie@perkins.org">Michelle.Benvie@perkins.org</a>	7467
Sue Buckley, Lead Administrative Assistant <a href="mailto:Sue.Buckley@perkins.org">Sue.Buckley@perkins.org</a>	7273
Roxanne Chvirko BSN,RN Manager of Nursing Resources <a href="mailto:roxanne.chvirko@perkins.org">roxanne.chvirko@perkins.org</a>	7367
Deborah Abrahams, RN, Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Deborah.Abrahams@perkins.org">Deborah.Abrahams@perkins.org</a>	7273
Allison Belmonte, RN, Deafblind Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Allison.Belmonte@perkins.org">Allison.Belmonte@perkins.org</a>	7564
Kimberly Ebbert, RN, Lower School Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Kimberly.Ebbert@perkins.org">Kimberly.Ebbert@perkins.org</a>	7274
Kami Guthrie, RN, Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Kami.Guthrie@perkins.org">Kami.Guthrie@perkins.org</a>	7470
Mingh Hattori, MS, RN, Secondary Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Mingh.Hattori@perkins.org">Mingh.Hattori@perkins.org</a>	7470
Vallorie O'Donnell, RN, Lower School Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Vallorie.O'Donnell@perkins.org">Vallorie.O'Donnell@perkins.org</a>	7276
Darlene Stanton, RN, Deafblind Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Darlene.Stanton@Perkins.org">Darlene.Stanton@Perkins.org</a>	7277
Anne Young, RN, Secondary Program Nurse <a href="mailto:Anne.Young@perkins.org">Anne.Young@perkins.org</a>	7351



## **STUDENT AND FAMILY RIGHTS**

### **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 an inter-personal concern or grievance with the person to whom it relates; and to directly resolve it with the person. Students can present other 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. There is a student council that receives proposals and 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.

### **Family Rights and Resolving Family 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 families 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 Family Contact and/or Case Manager. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached after the discussion, they may communicate with the Assistant Education Director or 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 and/or guardians of all students are provided access to this handbook in order to inform them of the process for registering a complaint.

### **Custody Issues**

It is imperative that families provide written notification of custody determinations, including any visiting rights and rights to information.

### **Interpretation and Translation Services**

Parents/guardians and students have the right to be able to understand and access any school-related information and communicate successfully with school teachers, administrators, nurses, therapists, and other staff. It is your right to be provided information in your preferred language. Perkins and your student's district representative will work to provide interpreter services and translation of written information at *no cost to you*. Students, siblings, friends and untrained staff members are not considered qualified interpreters, even if they are bilingual (per U.S. Department of Education).

Interpreter services are provided for *formal* meetings, such as Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, evaluation results meetings, or other meetings you request with your student's team.

Interpreter services may also be used for *informal* communication, such as phone calls with school administrators, nurses, teachers, providers, and others. For urgent matters, an instant telephone interpreter may be used when speaking to school staff in-person.

Translation may be used for *formal* written communication, such as procedural safeguards and parent/student rights, Individualized Education Program (IEP) document, evaluation reports, progress reports (upon request), enrollment and registration information (upon request), information about school programming, requests for parent/guardian permission for student participation in school activities, and invitations to school events. Translation may also be used for *informal* communications, such as e-mails from staff, daily or weekly notes sent home from school.

School interpreters "must be trained in the role of an interpreter or translator, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need to maintain confidentiality." Anything you or others say in school meetings is CONFIDENTIAL. Interpreters will not share any information from your meeting with others.

Interpreters are expected to translate the speaker's message as accurately as possible, without imparting judgment, personal beliefs, or adding additional content.

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html>

## **EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Superintendent's Office**

Superintendent: Edward Bosso (617) 972-7316

Assistant Superintendent: Pat McCall (617) 972-7230

Project Manager: Scott MacDowell (617) 972-7263

### **Education Directors and Assistant Education Directors contact information**

#### **Secondary Program**

Education Director: Jessica Brown (617) 972-7777

Assistant Education Director: **To be Hired**

Assistant Education Director: Patrick Ryan (617) 972-7812

Assistant Education Director, Curriculum and School Success: Jordynn Nowak

#### **Deafblind Program**

Education Director: Chris Montgomery (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: Jessica Brown (617) 972-7777

Assistant Education Director: Taylor Chasey Brisbin (617) 972-7302

Assistant Education Director: Elizabeth Torrey (617) 972-7475

### **Individualized Education Program**

The term "individualized education program" or "IEP" means a written statement for each student 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 student's IEP periodically, but not less frequently than annually, to determine whether the annual goals of the student are being achieved;
- revises the IEP as appropriate to address any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals;
- reviews programming 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 their own guardian, they sign 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 information will be provided in an additional format (e.g. Braille, large print) upon request.

### **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 district representative, such as the local education authority (LEA). If the student is 18 or older and is their own guardian, they 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 their own guardian, they may request any ensuing progress reports be sent only to them. 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.

## Report Cards

Students who are working toward a diploma receive report cards with letter grades four times a year. The marks or comments found on a report card are as follows:

<u>Academic Grades</u>		<u>Grade Point Average</u>
A	93 - 100	4.0
A-	90 - 92	3.67
B+	87 - 89	3.33
B	83 - 86	3.0
B-	80 - 82	2.67
C+	77 - 79	2.33
C	73 - 76	2.0
C-	70 - 72	1.67
D+	66 - 69	1.33
D	60 - 65	1.00
F	Below 60	Fail

### Non-Academic Grades

P	Pass
F	Fail

### Other

I	Incomplete
W	Withdraw

### Effort Grades

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

## Honor Roll

If a student earns a GPA of 3.33 and is taking 10 class hours or more of academic subjects, they are placed on the honor roll for that term. Placement on the honor roll is noted on the report card. A student who meets these qualifications and has a GPA of 3.67 is awarded "High Honors."

## MCAS Participation and Requirements

All Perkins students who live in Massachusetts participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and take the statewide MCAS tests. MCAS tests are given in the Spring, and cover ELA, Mathematics and Science/Technology/Engineering content. Retests take place throughout the year. Perkins students ordinarily participate in the state tests with accommodations, or through alternate assessments. The student's educational team determines how the student will participate in statewide testing during the development of the IEP. More information about MCAS can be found [here](#).

Out-of-state students are not eligible to take the MCAS. In many cases they are required to take their own state tests. Perkins will accommodate local or state agencies to enable out-of-state students to take required tests.

### Options for Graduation:

There are three options for graduation:

- High School Diploma from local district
- High School Diploma from Perkins
- Certificate from Perkins or local district

### High School Diploma

Students can receive a high school diploma from their own districts, or a high school diploma issued by Perkins. 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.

Students must receive a passing score on the 10th grade MCAS tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, and one of the Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests (Biology, Introductory Physics, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering to meet their Competency Determination (CD) requirement (exceptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic are noted). The Chemistry and Technology/Engineering tests will be phased out with the last administration in June 2023. Students may fulfill the CD requirements through the standard MCAS tests or the MCAS Alternate Assessment Portfolio for Competency. Students who do not pass the MCAS tests in Grade 10 may take retests.

Discussions will be held prior to enrollment or during annual reviews to determine if the student will work toward the Perkins requirements or the requirements of the local district.

### Perkins Diploma Course Requirements

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 other schools may be transferred to Perkins and applied towards graduation.

<u>Subject or Area</u>	<u>Hours of Instruction</u>	<u>Credits</u>
English	20 class periods + <i>passing MCAS score</i>	20
Math	20 class periods + <i>passing MCAS score</i>	20
Science	15 class periods + <i>passing MCAS score</i>	15
Social Studies	15 class periods (U. S. History I and II)	15
Health/Sex Education	4 class periods	2
Computers/Assistive Tech.	4 class periods	2
Physical Education	4 class periods	2

Creative Arts	3 class periods	1.5
Vocational Training	8 class periods (Voc. Planning required)	4
Independent Living	8 class periods (Adult Living required)	4
Electives	6 class periods	3

As Perkins students have highly individualized programs, alternate graduation pathways may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

For students considering college, it is recommended that the course of study include typical college admissions requirements: Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, two science courses with labs, and a world language.

### **Certificate of Attainment**

A Certificate of Attainment will be issued to those who successfully complete required coursework at grade level, but who do not meet the MCAS competency determination in all three subjects (see MCAS section for additional details). Students who are eligible for these certificates remain eligible for special education services up to the age of 22.

### **Certificate of Accomplishment**

A Certificate of Accomplishment will be issued to those who successfully complete an IEP-driven program focusing on functional academics, community access, and vocational experience. A certificate is given when the student turns twenty-two, or at the age when the student is no longer eligible for educational services per their local education authority and state’s regulations.

### **Access to Student Records**

Parents/guardians or students who wish to access student records may do so by making a request to their program’s office. Arrangements will be made to review the contents of the record within 10 days of the request. Students or guardians may request or request that information in the student record be amended, added, or deleted. They may meet with a program administrator to discuss their concerns and make a request. Decisions about the concerns and requests 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 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. After the student has graduated, Perkins shall send a notification letter to the family informing them of the intent to destroy the student’s temporary record seven years after the student has left Perkins. Families may request a copy of the student’s most recent IEP, progress reports, and evaluations, anytime prior to the destruction of the records.

“Transcripts” include name, address, and phone number of the student; their 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 program office.

## **Age of Majority and Transfer of Rights**

In Massachusetts, regardless of the severity of their disability, students are considered adults and competent to make their own decisions about their health, money, education and safety at age 18.

Parents/guardians and students are notified about the transfer of rights to the student at least one year before the student turns 18. Prior to the 18th birthday, the following options for decision-making are offered:

- I will make all decisions related to my special education programs and services.
- I will share decision-making authority with my parent/guardian or other willing adult.
- I will delegate decision-making authority to my parent/guardian or other willing adult.
- My parent/guardian has received guardianship of me from the court and will make all decisions related to special education programs and services for me.

The decision is documented on the Administrative Data page of the IEP. The student can revoke delegation of or sharing of decision-making, and if there are disagreements related to special education decision-making, the choice of the adult student prevails.

Perkins maintains regular communication and shares educational documents with the parents and guardians of adult students who make their own decisions, unless the adult student makes a formal request to stop this communication.

Family Contacts are able to provide resources and information regarding guardianship and alternatives to guardianship.

## **Transition Planning**

Transition planning is the process of preparing to move from high school to adulthood. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) mandates that transition planning begins no later than age 16; in Massachusetts, the starting age for mandated transition activities begins at age 14. This does not mean that transition services and the preparation for adulthood are isolated to the last few years of high school. Transitions occur at many stages throughout an individual's life and early planning is a helpful way to ensure that the student, family, school, and community are well-prepared. Careful transition planning, starting no later than age 16:

- Identifies the strengths, needs and preferences of the individual across multiple settings including school, work, home, and community
- Involves a coordinated set of activities designed to be results-oriented
- Promotes self-determination and a person-centered process
- Identifies the student's postsecondary goals through age-appropriate transition assessments
- Is the driving force of a student's IEP

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/guardians 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/guardians 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.

Transition planning is most effective when there is a strong partnership between the student, the family, school-age services and program providers, post-secondary services and program providers, and local community members. A member of the transition team is available to assist families in fostering these connections, answering questions, providing resources, guidance and training throughout the student's experience at the school.

Two to three years prior to graduation, a Transition Specialist at Perkins will begin to work more actively with parents/guardians, students and adult service agencies. This includes attending IEP meetings and other critical meetings concerning the student.

The assigned Transition Specialist monitors the overall transition process, as it differs in each state, and provides critical information to help in- and out-of-state agencies with appropriate planning and services for students. Staff from adult service agencies are invited to observe the student at work, in a particular class, or in the residential setting. The Transition Specialist will also help the student, staff or family to arrange visits to housing and vocational programs within the community. Transitions that occur gradually during the last few months leading up to a student's transition is recommended as it allows 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, the transition team will help families identify and utilize local resources.

The student, family and adult agency take the lead in the future planning process. For family members assisting during this time, you'll find yourself assuming many roles throughout the process. At times, you'll step forward and at times you'll step back. You may be researching community options and establishing connections, you may be scheduling, advocating and giving encouragement. While the transition team can't decide a student's future, we can navigate this process together with you, provide resources, activities and share best practices and key elements in the transition process that will ease your workload and help you along this journey.

## 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 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 Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) will determine how a student uses their vision under various conditions. It occurs in a student's classroom or cottage setting and takes into account the dynamic nature of environments. Environmental considerations include type, direction and amount of lighting, glare, color and color contrasting. Other aspects include size, distance, location and figure ground.

### Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI) Center

The CVI Center at Perkins provides campus students with assessment and consultation services focused on CVI-related accessibility. Formal CVI training is also provided for staff through Perkins eLearning.

- CVI Assessments: students with CVI will receive comprehensive CVI Assessments that are completed through a collaborative effort between the CVI Center's Program Coordinator and the students educational team members. Ongoing assessment is also provided to capture the efficacy of promising practices and the impact on the student's goals and objectives. The goal of the CVI Assessment is to identify how CVI uniquely impacts each student and to identify the appropriate accommodations, adaptations, and methodology required for access to learning. Compensatory strategies (skills utilized beyond vision) are also an area of focus. This assessment is a complement to essential assessments that are completed during a separate process; such assessments may include the Learning Media Assessment (LMA) and the Functional Vision Assessment (FVA) completed by non-CVI Center team members. CVI Assessments are conducted as initial evaluations (new students or students who have yet to receive one) and from there, align with three-year reevaluations as part of the IEP process.
- Consultation: The CVI Center Program Coordinators provide ongoing consultation to students, teams, and families. CVI Coordinators are not documented within the IEP service delivery grid. Consultation may include:
  - Attendance and support at the student's Perkins Low Vision Clinic appointment.
  - Interpretation of CVI assessment results and support for student educational programming development.
  - Environmental assessments and design.
  - Classroom and therapy based observations, either by request or as initiated by the CVI Coordinator.
  - The development of systems that teams can use to monitor visual accessibility. and goal/objective measurement in between three-year reevaluations.
  - IEP development support.

## **Audiology**

The Audiologists provide 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 the student's IEP. Students 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 consultation to a student's educational team, 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). 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 available to help design individual plans for teaching students academic, vocational, social, community, and personal care skills. The Behavior Specialist works closely with instructors in these areas, as well as with other clinical staff to produce desirable outcomes.

## **Speech and Language Pathology**

Speech-Language therapy evaluates and develops a student's ability to communicate and understand language, using a total communication approach (i.e., augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), speech, sign, symbols, pictures/photos, etc.) in order to access the academic curriculum and social engagement. The goals and objectives are adapted to the needs and abilities of each student.

## **Occupational Therapy**

In the school setting, OT services are designed to ensure students have equal access to all aspects of the school day and support student participation and success in general education. At Perkins, where general education includes components of the Expanded Core Curriculum, OTs focus on academics, play and leisure, social participation, self-care skills (i.e. naturally recurring routines within their school context), and transition / work skills.

## **Physical Therapy**

In the school setting, PT services are designed to assist your student to achieve the educational goals developed by the IEP team, promote access to the academic curriculum, facilitate participation in other school activities, improve their access to the school environment, and address post-secondary transition goals.

## **Psychology**

School Psychologists conduct psychological evaluations to assess students in the areas of cognitive, social-emotional, and adaptive skills functioning. In addition, they provide consultation to the educational team and families regarding educational intervention and the social-emotional development and well-being of students. They also provide individual and small group counseling and social skill development as needed, and may act as family contacts.

## **Social Work**

Social Workers provide individual and small group counseling and social skill development as needed. They act as Family Contacts, helping to communicate concerns and priorities to staff, seeking answers to your questions about the school and your student's program, providing information about community resources and benefits, and ensuring that communication is satisfactory. In addition to regular telephone and/ or email contact, visits to Perkins can be arranged.

## **Perkins Educational Leadership Program (ELP)**

The Perkins ELP program focuses on the leadership training of teachers and other educational specialists from around the world. 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 and students with multiple impairments. Training is provided to individuals who are currently employed in a school or organization serving individuals with sensory impairments. You may have an opportunity to see some of these trainees on campus or in 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.

## **PERKINS SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Attendance**

Massachusetts defines Chronically Absent as missing at least 10% of days enrolled (e.g., 20 days absent if enrolled for 205), regardless of whether the absences are considered excused, unexcused or for disciplinary reasons. Being chronically absent can have a big impact on a student's achievement and progress. Regular and consistent attendance is essential to learning and necessary for meaningful engagement in the school community. At Perkins, your Family Contact is available to provide support if there are barriers to attendance.

Excused absences are those that are reported to the program office by phone, email, letter or in-person by a parent or guardian. Examples include:

- personal illness or quarantine
- those attributable to personal trauma, such as a death in the family
- religious observances and holidays
- medical appointments that cannot be made outside of school hours

Unexcused absences are those that occur without proper notification. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- cutting or skipping class (not being where you are scheduled to be)
- trips not approved in advance by the school administration
- staying home to avoid a test or to complete overdue work

An attendance rate of 95% is expected unless a student has a documented medical excuse. Students are expected to make up work they miss due to absences. Excessive absences may affect grades and potentially lead to a loss of credit, if students do not complete the minimal expectations for course completion. Teachers and case managers/administrators are available to support students in making a plan to complete required work. Perkins is required to report extended or excessive absences to the students' local districts.

### **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.

#### Mail

Written and telephone communication shall not be prohibited, nor shall a student's right to open and send mail which is unread by staff be infringed upon, except in accordance with the circumstances described in 603 CMR 18.03(9)(b)(1-5).

#### Telephone

Written and telephone communication shall not be prohibited, nor shall a student's right to open and send mail which is unread by staff be infringed upon, except in accordance with the circumstances described in 603 CMR 18.03(9)(b)(1-5).

Supervisors of Residential Living (SRL) are responsible for oversight of this policy.

### **School/Classroom Observation Guidelines**

Parents/ guardians are important members of the team and there are times when an observation of a class or a related service provides beneficial information sharing. Observations will be coordinated by the assigned family contact. Your family contact will check in with you at the beginning of the school year and midway through the school year in regards to your anticipated observation needs. We will work with you to identify priority areas and determine the day and times that those classes and activities occur.

- One week notice is requested to provide ample time for schedule coordination.
- Complete the Observation Request Form (provided by your family contact via Google form or hard copy on request) to share the purpose of the observation and your questions for the visit.
- Generally, we recommend focusing an observation to 1-2 classes per visit.
- Upon parent/ guardian request, outside professionals may conduct observations.
- There are some dates when observations are generally not scheduled (MCAS testing, weeks immediately prior to or following vacation periods for day students, and special school events.)

To prevent the loss of important learning time, we must work together to limit distractions and interruptions that may occur within the school and classrooms. Though there are benefits to observations, we are also aware that the presence of parents/ guardians in the educational environment can serve as a potential distraction for students. Consequently, we ask that parents follow these guidelines:

- Upon arrival, sign in and receive a visitor pass. Visitors will be escorted through the building with a staff person.
- Keep in mind the learning environment and confidentiality of all of our students. We may ask that you observe in an inconspicuous area, out of the view of the students.
- Please understand 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. Thank you for your cooperation during those situations.
- We ask that visitors refrain from having any conversation with staff during the observation. There will be time allotted for conversation away from students during the visit.
- Cell phones or any other personalized electronic devices must be turned off or muted during the visit.
- No recording by any means is allowed. Photographing students other than your own must have parental approval.
- Following all campus policies, practices and procedures is expected.

### **Behavior Support Philosophy**

The administration and staff of Perkins School for the Blind are committed to ensuring the safety, security and well-being of each individual student in their care. This is accomplished by having supervision appropriate to the students' cognitive, functional and behavioral status at all times. In addition, the supervisory staff at Perkins is responsible for ensuring adequate staff coverage for students at all times. Perkins School for the Blind is dedicated to promoting a positive school environment designed for all learners, to increase their skills and abilities, including appropriate interpersonal skills,

social behavior and personal responsibility. Toward this end, the school emphasizes the use of positive supports as the philosophical basis for all its programs.

The basic principles of positive supports include a focus on building skills and competence, setting high expectations for student skill acquisition, enhancing quality of life and peer relationships, developing antecedent interventions to prevent the occurrence of challenging behaviors and minimizing or eliminating negative consequences.

### **Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy**

In situations where a student causes the occurrence or serious threat of injury to themselves 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 themselves 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/guardians 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.

### **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. When appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken to help the student learn the consequences of a mistake, and develop a mature sense of right and wrong. This includes but is not limited to the following:

#### **Detention**

Students may be assigned detention for infractions such as skipping class, being late for class, not completing assigned work, or minor infractions of the rules.

#### **Suspension**

A student may receive a suspension following a serious infraction of the rules. A meeting involving the student, the administrator and concerned staff will be held. The student's parents or guardian and representative(s) from the student's district will be notified and may attend the meeting if they wish to do so.

A suspended student will be asked to leave school; usually they will be sent home. 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/guardian, a district representative, 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 district representative 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 the student's file.

#### **Leave of Absence**



Occasionally, a student may be asked to leave Perkins temporarily because they are urgently in need of services Perkins is unable to offer. The student, parents/guardians, and district representative 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 typically given in times of medical or mental health crisis.

### 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/guardians, district representative 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.

### Safety Searches

A student's room, locker and/or personal belongings may be searched. When possible and appropriate, the student will be notified and given the opportunity to be present during the search. Reasons for conducting a safety search without their 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. 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, repair or replacement of damaged property at the student's expense, or a meeting with an administrator and appropriate staff to discuss concerns and action plans.

### Personal Items

#### Spending and Allowance

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing spending money for their student'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 student, and whether parents/guardians prefer to purchase various items for their child themselves. Please talk with your student's teacher or Residential Coordinator about how much money to provide.

#### Cell Phones

Students are permitted to bring their cell phones and other personal electronics to school. We recognize the value of these devices as learning tools, and we encourage teachers to incorporate their use when appropriate into lessons.

Cell phone use is prohibited in classrooms, restrooms, and school offices, unless otherwise stated by a staff member. During the instructional day, cell phones must remain out of sight unless permitted by staff. Unless associated with the class activities, students will not text in class or when traveling. There will be times during the evenings and on weekends when residential students are expected to focus on a cottage-based learning activity, when these guidelines also apply.

## Appliances

Students are permitted to have some small 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 Residential Coordinator or Perkins electrician. Please see information below about loss/damage insurance.

## **Pet and Service or Assistance Animal Policy**

Personal pets are not permitted on campus.

A Perkins Secondary student may consider obtaining and using a service or assistance animal. Perkins staff members are willing to provide information, advice and recommendations to students, families and/or service animal providers. In some cases, it may be beneficial to include decisions that are related to the use of a service or assistance animal in the annual review of the Individual Education Program.

Prior to using a service or assistance animal on campus, a student must demonstrate the ability to take full responsibility for the animal through meeting general program expectations and abiding by school and cottage rules. Perkins does not assume any responsibility for the animal's care or expenses. A student with a service or assistance animal is expected to follow these guidelines:

- Students and/or families are financially responsible for the animal's expenses.
- The student is expected to use the animal for the purpose for which it was trained.
- The student is expected to assume responsibility for grooming and cleaning up after the animal. A grooming area will be designated by the Coordinator of Residential Living.
- An emergency care plan must be developed for the animal in case of a medical emergency and the plan must be provided to the Coordinator of Residential Living by the student.
- A care plan for the animal for non-emergencies, such as when the student is away, must be developed by the student and approved by the Coordinator of Residential Living.
- All medications and grooming products for the service animal must be kept in a locked container/area. Food must be kept in airtight containers.
- The animal must be under the owner's control at all times.
- An assistance animal that is not a service animal cannot accompany the student to areas on campus besides their residence.

If issues arise because of the presence of an animal, such as allergies of staff or other students, the Coordinator of Residential Living will work with the owner of the animal to try to resolve these problems.

## Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implant Insurance

If your student wears Hearings 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 student's equipment insured.

## Loss/Damage Insurance

Parents/guardians are advised to check their personal or homeowner's insurance to see if loss or damage of your student's personal property is covered while they are at school. In most cases, a student's personal belongings or equipment which is damaged or lost by the student must be replaced by their parents/guardians.

## **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, iPad, computer, or passcode/password 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/braille notetakers at any time.

All students must have clearance from their Technology 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 braille notetakers or computers. Students who do not have independent clearance may use the school computers/ iPads with staff supervision.

Students may not download or install any software onto school computers/iPads. Students must have permission and staff supervision to download or install any software/firmware onto braille notetakers.

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, they 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/braille notetakers, including name, address, telephone number, school name, or passwords. Correspondence with strangers, including chat rooms, on school computers/ iPads/braille notetakers is not permitted, except with the permission and supervision of a staff member.

Students are provided with a school email account and access to Google Workplace Apps, including Google Classroom. Parental/guardian permission will be requested for use of Google Classroom.

Although students' access to school computers/iPads/braille notetakers 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 or while using any school technology in classrooms and cottages.

**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, iPads and other appropriate technology, 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 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.

Use of the Internet has the potential to put students in danger. Students and families are encouraged to learn about and be aware of Internet safety. Students and parents/guardians 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, and are within the range of the wireless network signal. The necessary information to connect to the wireless network will be shared with students and families 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.

### **Unauthorized Use of Photography and Recording**

Unauthorized use of photography and/or video or audio recording is strictly prohibited. Prior to photographing or recording, permission by all parties must be provided.

### **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**

The term "hazing," as defined in Massachusetts General Law 269:17, 18, 19 (see below) shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health of any such student or other

person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Perkins School for the Blind does not have any student organized or run groups, teams, or organizations. All groups are organized and supervised by adults. However, Perkins School for the Blind strictly prohibits any acts of hazing associated with student groups, teams, or organizations. The Educational Director will investigate any reports of hazing within 24 hours. If it is determined that a student participated in an act of hazing the following Board-approved disciplinary actions may be taken:

1. Immediate notification of families of students involved in a hazing incident.
2. Emergency convening of the IEP teams (separately) of the relevant students to determine what adjustments or accommodations need to be made, if any, to their IEPs to support the students. The impact of the student's disability on the incident will be carefully considered.
3. Individual support/counseling will be provided for both perpetrators and victims of hazing. For perpetrators, emphasis will be placed on increasing appropriate behavior and increasing awareness of the impact of behaviors on others. For victims, emphasis will be placed on restoring a sense of safety and security as well as positively reinforce the right for all students to self-advocate and report unsafe behaviors.
4. A student who has been the organizer of a hazing incident may be removed from extracurricular activities, such as sports, after school classes, the Senior Class Trip, etc., as appropriate.
5. Extra supervision will be provided to ensure there are no recurrences of hazing. If a student who has perpetrated a hazing incident needs 1:1 supervision, additional staffing supports will be discussed with the sending school district as appropriate and via a Team meeting.
6. In some situations, it may be appropriate to suspend a student from school because of an act of hazing. All Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations will be followed with regard to suspension (see DESE criteria 9.5 and 9.6).
7. Law enforcement will be notified immediately if in the course of Perkins' investigation it is discovered that a crime has been committed. All students will be provided with a copy of the schools anti-hazing policy via the Student Handbook. In addition, a staff member will explain the policy to them. The policy will be included and updated annually in the Student Handbook.

Perkins School for the Blind will file, at least annually on or before October 1st, a report with the Department certifying:

- Its compliance with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams, or organizations, and every full-time enrolled student, of the provision of M.G.L. c.269 § 17 through 19
- Its adoption of a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing
- That the hazing policy has been included in the student handbook or other means of communicating school program policies

All secondary age students receive a copy of the anti-hazing law, M.G.L. c 269 § 17 through 19. Additionally, all secondary age students receive a copy of the anti-hazing disciplinary policy approved by the Program's Board of Directors.

#### Commonwealth of Massachusetts An Act Prohibiting the Practice of Hazing

Section 17. Whoever is a principle organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$3,000 or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 1 year, or by both such fine and imprisonment. The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections 18 and 19, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section 17 and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

*The full 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, or students of any age. 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 or young adults.

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 include 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 an 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 their 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 complainant's 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 Nan Qin, Senior People Operations Business Partner, 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472 and can be contacted at (617) 972-7212 and [nan.qin@perkins.org](mailto:nan.qin@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 the 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:

Nan Qin, Senior Operations Business Partner 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, 4<sup>th</sup> 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**

<https://www.mass.gov/files/child-abuse-reporting-form.pdf>

**Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) Form 19C**

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/11/14/form-19c-reporting.pdf>

If you have any questions, please contact: Nan Qin, Senior Operations Business Partner and Title IX Coordinator [nan.qin@Perkins.org](mailto:nan.qin@Perkins.org) or 617-972-7212.

## Appendix 2

### 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 device 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 cyberbullying.

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 tools 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/Guardians 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 (Pat Ryan 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 they witness or become 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 promptly investigate 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 notices to parents/guardians 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 be 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/guardians 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/guardian, 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 and Family Handbook. This handbook will be posted on AskHowe (internal Perkins website) and on the [Parent webpage](#).