

PARENT HANDBOOK

Cotting School

Revised August 2018

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Dear Parents:

We know that sharing information for effective communication will be an important component of this partnership. This handbook is intended to provide you with a starting point for locating the information you need to participate in this conversation. Inside, you will find an overview of Cotting's programs and support services, explanation of school policies, and contact information for the staff members who can answer the questions you might have concerning your sons and daughters.

This handbook is designed to be a first reference for parents in understanding the way things work at Cotting. We see it, and hope you will also see it as a living document that continues to include what you need to know as your child grows. We welcome your feedback about the clarity and usefulness of the information that is included, and please let us know if there are other items you would like to see in future editions.

We thank you for your support, cooperation, and feedback. In working together as partners, we can continue to provide your children with the programs and experiences they need to develop as fully as possible.

Sincerely,

Krista Macari, Chief Academic Officer

Pamela Varrin, Family Support Coordinator

WHERE WE CAME FROM: A BRIEF HISTORY OF COTTING SCHOOL

Cotting School is one of the oldest independent day schools for children with physical, medical and learning disabilities in the United States. It was founded in 1893 by Dr. Edward H. Bradford and Dr. Augustus Thorndike, orthopedic surgeons at Children's Hospital in Boston, and was first known as The Industrial School for Crippled & Deformed Children.

Classes began in the fall of 1894 in a church basement with eight students, one unpaid teacher, and a cook. Provisions were donated by S.S. Pierce, and a horse-drawn carriage was provided for the children's transportation by the Armstrong Transfer Company. The church classroom at St. Andrew's Parish was also offered rent-free.

Between 1895 and 1904, the School moved into larger quarters three separate times. The third and final move in 1904 was into a newly constructed schoolhouse at 241 St. Botolph Street in the South End of Boston. The acquisition of land and funds for the building was primarily the work of Francis Joy Cotting, who served as president from 1899 until his death in 1914, and in 1974 the school was renamed Cotting School in honor of the Cotting family.

In the new schoolhouse on St. Botolph Street, Miss Mary M. Perry, the School's volunteer teacher, became the school's first superintendent and enrollment soon reached 60 pupils. Her successor further increased the number of students enrolled to 95, expanded the curriculum, and added a junior high school program. The student population continued to grow, and in 1924 a wing was added to the School building, more than doubling the space for primary, junior high school and "industrial" classes.

Most of the students that came to Cotting in the first half of the 20th century had disabilities from polio, tuberculosis, and bone, hip, and foot disorders. As the numbers of students needing Cotting's services grew, so did the need for teachers, equipment, and new programs. Donations enabled the school to maintain its policy of offering education at no cost to the families of its students. This would continue until 1978, when under the new special education law Chapter 766, Cotting began to charge a modest tuition to be paid by the towns of residence (under Chapter 766).

In the second half of the 20th century, medical breakthroughs succeeded in preventing many of the most common disabling diseases, including polio and tuberculosis, while advances in medical technology made it possible for many more children born with or acquiring more complicated conditions to survive and develop. As a result, the needs of students attending Cotting continued to change. In response to these needs, Cotting School was relocated to its present state-of-the-art campus in Lexington, greatly strengthening its faculty and staff, updating its curriculum, and enhancing clinical and enrichment support programs. Today, Cotting students represent a wide and diverse range of physical, cognitive, communication, and medical challenges who learn together in a close and supportive community.

WHO WE ARE: MISSION AND VISION, PURPOSE, AND PHILOSOPHY

Cotting School Mission and Vision

Our Mission: To enable students with special needs to achieve their highest learning potential and level of independence.

Our Vision: Cotting School creates an inclusive community, which fosters academic achievement, skill development, and social-emotional maturity. We meet the unique needs of students with a broad spectrum of learning and communication disabilities, physical challenges and complex medical conditions by providing an array of integrated services. We value partnerships among students and families, staff, public funding agencies, donors, and volunteers. We provide outreach services, nationally and internationally, to expand our commitment and expertise in the field of special education. We design our day and residential training programs to enable students to realize their highest potential both during and after their enrollment.

Purpose and Philosophy

Cotting School is an independent elementary and secondary day school program, offering an appropriately structured and supportive learning environment to students with varying degrees of physical, cognitive, and learning disabilities, complex medical needs, and communication disorders. At Cotting, the term education reflects a balance among meeting the goals of specific individual academic development, social-emotional adjustment and the ability to function as independently as possible in society.

To this end, Cotting School offers individualized academic, prevocational, and social experiences to strengthen skills, build confidence and enhance self-image. Instruction is carried out in small classes, small groups, and on an individual basis in a manner most compatible with each student's learning style. The curriculum is geared to offer each child a range of attainable goals for future educational, vocational, and living experiences upon completion of the program. Each Cotting School staff member shares the comprehensive responsibility for conveying to each student academic knowledge, social values, and appropriate behavior for the school environment. The school is committed to providing each student with the requisite cognitive and affective skills for success in their communities and in the future.

We are committed to the following principals in carrying out our work with each student in our community:

1. To provide the appropriate tools, instruction, and learning atmosphere to enable each student to succeed in learning to his or her fullest extent.
2. To provide opportunities for students to develop the full range of skills necessary to function as independently as possible: communication skills, social skills, academic skills, physical and daily living skills, personal responsibility and community participation skills.
3. To provide each student with individualized, attainable, and meaningful tasks and activities to choose from.

4. To structure our learning community so that each student feels comfortable taking risks in learning new skills, engaging in creative problem-solving, and responding with resilience to frustration and failure.
5. To provide opportunities and services to support students and families in the experience of living with a disability in the larger culture.
6. To provide each student with the skills to move from the Cotting environment to a less structured setting.
7. To actively engage parents as partners in the education of their children.

GENERAL INFORMATION SHARING

A receptionist is on duty each weekday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at the main desk to answer general questions, take messages, or direct your call to the appropriate staff member. After school hours, messages can be left for any staff member at any time in the voice mailbox at his or her personal telephone extension. Messages can also be left after hours, before school, or on weekends in the general Cotting voice mailbox for any staff member. Those messages will be received at 8:00 am when school opens again. Faxes may be sent at any time at the following numbers.

Cotting School telephone number: 1-781-862-7323

Cotting School Fax: 1-781-861-1179

Cotting Medical Department Fax (secure for confidentiality of information): 781-862-5959

Student Services Office Fax (materials for Krista Macari or Rachael Sciola): 781-861-2947

Absences, Late Arrivals, and Early Dismissals

Please contact the receptionist, email at attendance@cotting.org or leave a message in the general voicemail box if your child will be absent from school or will need to leave school before dismissal.

If you know that your child will be absent or late, we ask that you contact the receptionist by 8:30 am so this information can be noted on our attendance sheets. If you bring your child in late, please make sure he or she checks in at the reception desk before going to the classroom. The attendance sheet will then be marked with the time of the child's arrival. Conversely, please make sure that you or your child checks out at the reception desk if you come for an early pick-up. This too will be recorded on the attendance list. Accuracy of the attendance sheets is necessary so that we can account for each student in case of emergency, fire drill, or evacuation.

It is the policy of the school to call families regarding student absences if we have not heard before 8:30 am that the child will be absent or late. If you find yourself in this circumstance but are not able to call the school before 8:30 am, expect a call from the receptionist just to check that your child is accounted for. If the receptionist is not able to reach you directly, and your child will be absent, please call the school as soon as you are able to later in the day to let us know the reason for the absence.

Please remember that if your child is transported by a transportation company, the company must also be informed of any changes in the transportation plan for any given day, whether that

means that the bus will not be transporting your child at all that day or that you will need transportation for your child in only the morning or the afternoon.

If you will be picking your child up early, please let the receptionist know the approximate time you will be arriving so we can arrange to have your child ready and waiting at reception. And in cases of early pick-up, including going home sick, or if your child will be staying for an after-school activity with alternate transportation home, please inform your transportation company that afternoon transportation will not be needed for your child on that day.

Long Term Absences

Please inform us as soon as possible if it will be necessary for your child to be absent for a longer period of time, for example for a hospitalization. This will enable us to work with you to ensure that you and your child have the appropriate materials available to continue with schoolwork during the absence if possible. If you expect that an absence will be longer than two school weeks, please contact Leah Thibodeau, Special Education Coordinator to schedule services for academic continuity.

School Cancellations

School cancellations due to snow or other inclement weather are likely to occur during the winter months, but may occur at any time during the school year. If school is cancelled, you will receive an **automated call from Cotting** through our **ConnectEd system** early in the morning if school will be cancelled. The phone numbers that will be called will be the most current numbers we have on file for you. Cotting's **NO SCHOOL** announcement will also appear on the local televised cancellations list. If for any reason school needs to be cancelled in the middle of the day, parents will be contacted in person via phone and the **ConnectEd** system, again trying the most current phone numbers we have received from you regarding emergency contacts. **No child** will be dismissed before his or her parent or emergency contact has been reached and is able to receive the student at home.

Annual Consents and Information

To be able to provide safe and appropriate services at school, members of the Cotting staff depend on having the most accurate, up-to-date information about each student. Before each school year, parents will be asked to fill out a variety of informational and consent forms so that information may be updated in their child's record for the coming school year. Although this is a lot of work and can seem quite repetitive, it is the only way we can be sure that the information we have is correct. 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. As information may change during the school year, please make every effort to notify us of those changes as soon as they occur. New information can be called or emailed in to the Cotting receptionist.

The following consent and/or information forms are ***required for all students***:

1. Emergency Medical Treatment Form
2. Administration of Prescription Medication
3. Administration of Non-Prescription Medication
4. Emergency Dismissal Information

5. Updated Physical Form - Please note: physicals are required by DESE within a year of admission to Cotting and every three years afterward. Cotting recommends a physical every two years, but only requires documentation of a physical every three years
6. Acknowledgement of receipt of the Student Handbook

Consent forms are required *annually* by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and by Cotting School. ***Any student whose file is incomplete and does not contain the required paperwork will not be permitted to participate in any after school or supplemental activities.*** This includes all Supplemental Services programs, all after school sports, Circle of Friends, the Cotting ski trip, the Senior Trip, and after school dances.

STAFF-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Expectations

You can expect regular communication with your child's teacher, therapists, and other staff members at Cotting. These members of your child's team will look forward to hearing from you and will welcome your sharing any new information or updates about your child throughout the year. Communication between home and school can occur in a number of formats, including communication notebooks, telephone conversations, email messages, and face to face meetings. At the beginning of each school year, parents and teachers are encouraged to have a conversation to explore communication needs and preferences and to decide on a format for communication that works well for both.

Phone Contact

You are welcome to contact your child's therapists or teachers by phone. Since professional staff is not able to leave scheduled appointments or classes to receive phone calls as they come in, you will likely have to leave a message for a return call. Please feel free to leave a voicemail message at any time. Your call will be returned as soon as possible, in most cases within 24 hours, or, in the case of weekend messages, on the next day that school is open. Staff telephone extensions are listed in the Student/Staff Directory.

Email

All Cotting staff members have access to email at work, and those parents who also have access to email should feel free to use this method to communicate with teachers and therapists. All Cotting staff email addresses are composed of the first initial and last name of the staff member followed by @cotting.org. For example, pvarrin@cotting.org is the email address of Pam Varrin, Cotting's Family Support Coordinator. Under most circumstances you should expect to receive a response to your email by the end of the next school day. It is helpful if you indicate the kind of response you are expecting, i.e. an answer to a question, confirmation that you have received information, finding a time to have a meeting, etc. If several days go by without a response, please follow up with a telephone message, as occasionally emails do not reach their intended recipients. **It is important for staff and parents to remember that there is no expectation of privacy in Cotting's email system. Any email that is sent or received in our system can be retrieved through the email server and viewed by our technology support**

staff and/or administration. In addition, please be aware that all emails regarding a student become part of the student's record.

Faculty and staff are advised that it is against school policy to contact parents through personal email accounts or home phone numbers. We ask that parents and students not call or email staff members at their homes. Email and phone messages can be left on the Coting system at any time for retrieval when school is in session.

Planning a Meeting

If you would like to plan a meeting with a staff member or a visit to the classroom, please call a few days in advance to schedule a time for your visit. Planning in advance will insure that staff members you would like to meet with will be able to spend the amount of time needed for the meeting and will be prepared to discuss the issues you have in mind. Please make sure that you schedule the meeting directly with the individual staff member, as the receptionists do not have access to individual schedules. **Please do not ask the receptionists to make an appointment for you or contact a staff member on your behalf.** In order to keep disruptions in the school day to a minimum, parents are also asked not to stop by their child's classroom without an appointment.

School/Classroom Observations

We welcome visits from parents during the school day. However, we know that maintaining "time on learning" is crucial to the academic achievement of our students.

In order to maximize time on learning for our students, we all have to work to control and limit the number of distractions and interruptions that occur within the school and classrooms as much as possible. Although parents are always welcome to come into the school and to observe their child in his/her classroom or therapy time, we know that presence of any parent in the educational and therapy areas of the school can serve as a potent distraction for any student. Consequently, we ask that parents follow these guidelines for coming and going within the school:

- If you would like to observe your child in the classroom or in one of the therapies, please contact the teacher or therapist in advance to set up the best time for the visit.
- We ask that parents do not ask to speak to a teacher during class times. Teachers will be happy to set up a specific appointment time to discuss issues or share information. If you wish to meet, please contact the teacher by note, email or voicemail to set up a time. Drop-in visits are not encouraged since they are highly disruptive to the activity being conducted.
- There may also be times when an outside professional may need to observe a student in a classroom or therapy area. Only professionals with a specific need to observe or evaluate a student will be allowed to observe in classroom settings, and only with parent notification and/or consent. School districts may also send their professionals to perform

evaluations of their students at Cotting with the consent of the team.

- Professionals should arrange visits through the Special Education Office and will only be allowed when the school district or parents of the child being observed have made a specific request. Observations should generally be limited to one period. Some flexibility can be made in areas such as gym, art, etc., where distractions may not be as debilitating to the activity at hand.

The teaching day is full of disruptions that cannot be avoided, but we want to do our best to ensure that interruptions are kept to a minimum when and wherever possible. Our purpose in establishing these guidelines is not to discourage or limit visits by parents, but to ensure that such visits do not detract from the educational process going on within the classroom.

Resolving Complaints and Grievances

Even when communication between home and school is going well, it is possible to run into differences of opinion or intense emotions that feel difficult to resolve. “Difficult conversations” can build over time, or even emerge suddenly in the midst of a “routine” interaction. Given the importance and intensity of guiding the development of children with diverse disabilities, it is inevitable, and even necessary, for both parents and staff members to experience strong feelings about their work. Consequently, we have made it a priority to nurture an atmosphere at Cotting where doing all that is possible to resolve these difficult issues and conversations is both supported and expected. We will continue to provide professional and parent opportunities to develop skills and comfort in moving through the process of fully understanding concerns and taking steps toward resolution.

With any concern, parents are encouraged to start by talking with their child’s teacher, therapist, or another direct care provider. If additional assistance is needed to move toward resolution, parents are encouraged to contact the appropriate member of the supervisory staff:

Krista Macari: Lower School

Ann Buckley: Middle School

Laraine Wilson: Upper School/Capstone

Leah Thibodeau: IEP related concerns

If concerns remain after these conversations, members of the Administrative Team (Krista Macari, Chief Academic Officer, Bridget Irish, Chief Operating Officer, or David Manzo, Executive Director) may be contacted for further assistance. Parents should also feel free to contact Pam Varrin at any point in these conversations for support and direction.

The appropriate administrator will respond within one (1) business day to discuss the concern, and if need be scheduling a meeting with the parent(s) or student and appropriate personnel. This could possibly include the public school liaison, (e.g. regarding discrimination or sexual or disability matters). If the concern or problem has not been resolved, the complaint or concern will be reported to the CAO (Krista Macari) or the Executive Director (David Manzo).

Cotting School is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment that is free of sexual harassment as well as harassment based on factors such as race, color, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, pregnancy, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

Discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, will not be tolerated by Cotting School. This policy applies to all harassment occurring in the work environment, whether on Cotting's campus or in any Cotting School-related setting, and applies regardless of the gender of the individuals involved.

Prohibited Behavior

Harassment includes any unwelcome, verbal, physical or visual conduct that (1) creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment; (2) unreasonably interferes with the education of any student or an individual's work performance; or (3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning or employment opportunities. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: slurs, negative stereotyping, ethnic jokes, written or graphic material displaying offensive objects, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that denigrate or show hostility or aversion toward any individual or group because of race, color, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, pregnancy, veteran status or medical condition.

Sexual Harassment

In a school environment where warmth and nurturance are valued, and where staff may need to provide physical care for some students, it is important for all members of the community to be clear about the definition of appropriate boundaries in staff-student interactions. Obviously, any sexual involvement, or suggestion or threat of sexual involvement, with students is prohibited. Staff members are also prohibited from using suggestive, profane, or vulgar language with students at any time. Staff orientation and professional development provide opportunities for training in how to exercise care in monitoring staff behavior and contact with students so that actions will be less likely to be misinterpreted, particularly by adolescent and young adult students who are still learning the conventions of appropriate social behavior. Staff members are encouraged not to be alone with students in informal situations, not to allow any unnecessary physical contact with students, and to take care in engaging in out-of-school contact with students.

Through the Health classes and the use of the Circles Curriculum throughout the school, students receive concrete training in maintaining appropriate social distance with peers, developing appropriate levels of closeness with friends and acquaintances, and negotiating relationships with strangers safely. Inappropriate sexual contact and harassment among students is not tolerated at Cotting.

ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

Cotting takes great care to maintain student records accurately, safely, and according to regulations and guidelines.

1. A log shall be kept as part of each student's record that indicates all persons who have

obtained access to the student record, stating: the name, position and signature of the person releasing the information; the name, position and, if a third party, the affiliation if any, of the person who is to receive the information; the date of access; the parts of the record to which access was obtained; and the purpose of such access.

2. Parents and students shall have the same rights regarding access to, amendment of and dissemination to, third parties of the student records maintained by the School as are provided with regard to public school student records by the **Regulations Pertaining to Student Records**.
3. Authorized school personnel from the responsible LEA and authorized representatives of the State Department of Education shall have the right of access to those records as is provided by the regulations with regard to public school records.
4. Records of students shall not be released to third parties without written consent. Students over 18 who are their own guardians must provide their own written consent. Parents must provide written consent for all students under 18 or for those students over 18 who are under legal guardianship.
5. A school may disclose information regarding a student to appropriate parties in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, disclosures to the local police department and the Department of Social Services under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, section 37L and M.G.L. c. 119, section 51A.
7. School health personnel and local and state health department personnel shall have access to student health records, including but not limited to immunization records, when such access is required in the performance of official duties, without the consent of the eligible student or parent.
8. Third party reports in a student's record should be obtained from original sources and generally will not be issued directly from the School.

Reviewing Records

Parents or legally adult students are welcome to review the student's record by making a request that follows these guidelines:

1. Requests are to be made to the Chief Academic Officer and cannot be available with less than two (2) days' notice.
2. Non-custodial parents have rights to copies of student records under Section 34H of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws unless:

1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted. In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record. Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access.

3. Records will be made available only by specific appointment. In cases of dual custody of a child or of limited custody by one parent the school requires a copy of said custody agreement to be kept in the child's folder. We will comply with Department of Education regulations with regard to dual custody situations.
4. Records will be made available only for the length of the appointment.
5. Records are to be reviewed only in the office area of the School specified by the Chief Academic Officer.
6. Records are not to be taken from the School, copied by the reviewer or otherwise distributed.
7. The Records file will be personally checked by the Chief Academic Officer before any appointed inspection and at the end of the appointment before the records are returned for filing before the student and/or parent/guardian leaves the office.

Maintaining Records

1. Student records are secured against loss, defacement, tampering, or unauthorized use. Active records are maintained in fireproof file cabinets.
2. The student's transcript shall be maintained by the school and may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.
3. Student records (other than the transcript) will be kept by the school for a period of seven years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the school. Students and/or

parents will be notified of their right to pick up the student record after the student transfers, withdraws, or graduates from Cotting.

Legal Status of Students

On an annual basis, forms are sent out to parents/guardians of Cotting students to request if there have been any changes or updated information regarding the student's legal status (legal custody or legal guardianship after age 18) and of the results of all judicial and administrative proceedings concerning the student. Such information must be disseminated to appropriate personnel as required by the Department of Education regulations.

TRANSPORTATION

For most students, transportation to Cotting is provided by a transportation company hired through the special education department of the city or town of where the family resides. Other students are transported to and from school by their parents.

Cotting School has no direct responsibility or control over the vehicles or drivers who transport our students. Questions about individual transportation schedules and routes should be directed to the transportation coordinator or special education liaison from your school district. Transportation companies receive their direction from the school districts who have hired them, so any problems with transportation must be presented to your school district for resolution.

If there is any change in your child's transportation plan on a given day (i.e. if your child will be out sick or if you will be dropping off or picking up your child when they usually ride the bus) please notify your bus driver or transportation company **and** Cotting. If your child will be out of school for an extended period, please remember to contact your transportation company in advance of the time you would like your child's transportation to resume.

Dan Cuddy is Cotting's Transportation Coordinator and Bill Phelan provides additional supervision. If anything unsafe is observed on a bus or with a driver while they are on Cotting grounds, the situation will be reported to Administration, to the parents of the student(s) involved, and to the school district. If you have any questions or concerns about drop off or pick up time at Cotting, please contact Mr. Cuddy, who will be happy to assist you.

The following guidelines for driving and parking on the Cotting campus were designed to provide a common understanding for everyone in the Cotting community – staff, families, transportation companies and visitors.

Cotting School Transportation Policy and Arrival / Dismissal Process

- Cars, vans and buses will be permitted on the campus beginning at 8:00 am each day. There will not be Cotting staff available before 8:00 am to direct traffic or supervise students.

- Cars, vans and buses will be invited back to collect students beginning at 2:30 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and at 1:00 pm on Wednesdays. Vans parked on campus prior to these times will be asked to leave the campus and return at the designated dismissal time.
- Van drivers and monitors will no longer be permitted in the building to use the restrooms. These new dismissal procedures will require van personnel to stay in their vehicles to enable us to move vehicles on and off campus as quickly as possible.
- Parents should not leave their vehicles during drop off or pick up so that we can keep the flow of traffic moving. Cotting staff will assist students into the building. We invite parents to come back after these busy transition times when parking will be more readily available. In this way, visitor parking at the front of the building will be more accessible.
- Please be considerate of our neighbors. Do not block driveways. Do not honk your horn. If at all possible, please allow other vans and cars through. It will be especially helpful for wheelchair vans on Concord Ave. to give the right of way to cars and vans carrying students who do not use wheelchairs.
- Cotting personnel assisting with transportation at arrival and dismissal times are focused on the safety of the students. They are also implementing the changes that have been dictated to them. Please do not direct questions or concerns to them. Instead, you may contact Bridget Irish, COO at birish@cotting.org or 781-862-7323 x126 or David Manzo at dmanzo@cotting.org or at 781-862-7323 x120.

Morning Arrival Process

Wheelchair Vans – Wheelchair vans should enter the school from the East Entrance. The vans will park under the overhang, as is current practice. Please turn on flashers while unloading students. When all vans in front of you have finished unloading and turned off their flashers, vans will exit via the West Entrance. If all spaces in front of the building are full, Cotting personnel will line up vans to the far right in the East Entrance driveway. This will become a two-way drive in the morning, so please keep to the far right. Once those spaces are occupied, vans will need to wait on Concord Avenue to enter the school building. Please be considerate of driveways and other drivers while awaiting entrance to the school.

Vans for Walk-Ons- Vans for students who walk-on should use the East Entrance in the morning. Vans will be directed to the circle drive at the east end of the building. Cotting personnel will be there to assist you in discharging your passengers but please engage your flashing lights while unloading. Once students have been discharged, you will be directed to exit through the East Entrance.

Parents – Parents transporting students to school each morning will use the East Entrance. Parents will queue up with the vans for our ambulatory students to use the circle at the east end of the school building. Cotting personnel will be stationed at the Concord Avenue end of the

building as well as at the turn in the driveway nearest the school to assist in directing traffic. Other Cotting staff will be available to help you unload your child. You will be directed to exit through the East Entrance (current entrance where you entered). This will become a two-way passage in the morning. There are two handicapped parking spaces nearest the building. Parents who are unloading students who use wheelchairs are encouraged to use those spots as they are available. Pre-school parents and vans, see Staff instructions below. We cannot accommodate parent parking for meetings or other visits until 8:30. We would invite you to come back to campus at that time for meeting.

Staff (and Pre-School Parents only) - Staff will now enter the school through the West Entrance (current exit near HOPEhouse) in the morning. This will be a two-way passage with Cotting personnel directing traffic and alternating between wheelchair vans coming out and staff coming in. Please proceed slowly to the back lot. Please park in the next available spot, do not skip spaces. This creates unnecessary gaps in the parking area. DO NOT double park until all parking spaces have been used.

Afternoon Dismissal Process (After Regular School Day and Supplemental Services)

Wheelchair Vans- Wheelchair vans should enter the school from the East Entrance. The vans will park under the overhang, as is current practice. Please turn on flashers while unloading students. When all vans in front of you have finished unloading and turned off their flashers, vans will exit via the West Entrance. If all spaces in front of the building are full, Cotting personnel will line up vans to the far right in the East Entrance driveway. Once those spaces are occupied, vans will need to wait on Concord Avenue to enter the school building. Please be considerate of driveways and other drivers while awaiting entrance to the school. Vans WILL NOT be permitted on campus prior to 2:30 pm. Vans that arrive earlier will be asked to leave campus and return after 2:30.

Vans for Walk-Ons – In the afternoon, vans for students who walk on will be invited to line up along the west wing of the building beyond the main entrance and toward the staff parking lot. Vans should enter through the WEST Entrance, continue to the back of the school to turn around and line up all the way to the front of the HOPEhouse building across from the main school. Note that this is a different entrance from the morning instructions. The West Entrance will be two way in the afternoon and you will leave by this exit as well in order to avoid being delayed by wheelchair vans in front of the building. Cotting personnel will be stationed at the Concord Avenue end of the street and at the stop signs by the main building to direct traffic. Please use flashing lights while loading students and do not pass other vans with flashing lights on. Vans WILL NOT be permitted on campus prior to 2:30 pm. Vans that arrive earlier will be asked to leave campus and return after 2:30.

Parents (except parents of Pre-schoolers) – Parents should use the East Entrance in the afternoon. You will be directed to the circle drive at the east end of the building. Once you have collected your child, you will be directed to exit through the same, east entrance. Cotting personnel will be stationed to assist you. Parents should not plan to park and get out of the car. When picking up their children, parents should not arrive on campus prior to 2:30 pm.

Staff – Staff will exit the campus as they have been, using the West Entrance. Staff should not pass vans with flashers on. Staff will be positioned to move cars in and out of this entrance in a timely manner. Please be patient as it may take a few moments for students to safely load a vehicle and the van can turn off the flashing lights.

Medical and Safety Issues on the Bus

- The Cotting medical staff is extremely busy with Cotting students at the beginning of each day. The nurses are not available to provide treatment for students from other schools on the bus. We expect that each bus is equipped with first aid supplies to handle minor injuries.
- If a Cotting student has an accident or incident on the bus, please inform Cotting personnel so that the situation can be reported to the Cotting medical staff. Any incident on a bus involving a Cotting student should also be reported to that student's local special education department.

Other Considerations

- All transportation issues should be directed to either Mr. Cuddy or Mr. Phelan. Drivers should not confront each other or faculty members with concerns. However, in order for Mr. Cuddy and Mr. Phelan to maintain a safe environment during busy drop-off and pick-up times, please wait and contact either of them by phone at 781-862-7323 or via email (wphelan@cotting.org and dcuddy@cotting.org) with your questions or concerns.
- In an effort to increase building security and maintain a high level of student confidentiality, drivers and parents are asked not to congregate in the lobby or the front of the building. Drivers may not come in to use the restroom.
- Parents who are in the building for drop-off and pick-up are asked to refrain from approaching faculty members during that time for impromptu updates. This also applies to staff who are outside at dismissal because their responsibility at this time is for student safety. Faculty members will gladly make an appointment with a parent to discuss any issues or concerns, even small ones.
- No door should be propped open at any time during the school day.
- Please drive slowly and use extreme caution when entering and exiting the school property. It is imperative that drivers obey all road signs.
- No transportation vehicle shall be left with the motor running and un-attended at any time.
- We discourage the practice of leaving any vehicle's motor running while parked on our campus, however diesel transportation vehicles may not be left with the motor running for more than 5 minutes.
- For the safety of our students, faculty, parents, and other drivers, all transportation vehicles shall be equipped with an alarm system that indicates that the vehicle is in the process of backing up.

- **The Cotting campus is an entirely non-smoking facility. Not only is this Cotting's policy, it is also the law. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the school grounds, including at the front of the school on Concord Avenue.**

WELLNESS AND SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICES

Wellness

At Cotting we are aware that paying attention to developing habits of wellness is an important part of staying healthy over time, particularly for students with chronic health issues. We believe that in order to develop good habits our students must receive information and instruction in the areas of nutrition, personal care and hygiene, fitness and physical education, social-emotional development, safety, and understanding physical development and sexuality. The overall goal is to provide appropriate and accessible information in these areas that students can begin to use as tools for making healthy choices.

Dental and Vision Clinics

Dental and Vision Clinics are located at Cotting School to provide easily accessible preventive and specialized care to Cotting students at no cost to families.

Seamark Vision Clinic

The Vision Clinic has provided free vision services at Cotting since 1975 through a cooperative relationship with the New England College of Optometry/New England Eye Institute. Every Cotting student receives a vision assessment at the Clinic sometime during the school year, including a measurement of visual acuity, tests to determine the need for glasses or a change in glasses, an assessment of binocularity (the ability to use the two eyes together), and a brief evaluation of eye health. A report of the examination is sent home to parents. There is no cost for the examination, but if glasses or a change of prescription is needed, the Seamark Vision Clinic can provide glasses at cost to Cotting families. The clinic is not able to accept insurance. Vision services are also available to family members of Cotting students and can be accessed by calling and making an appointment during clinic hours.

Dental Clinic

The Dental Clinic operates one morning a week at Cotting. It is staffed by a dental professor from the Tufts School of Dental Medicine and trained dentists who are completing a rotation in pediatric dentistry. Dental services are provided only to those students whose parents request them. At the beginning of each school year, permission slips for dental services are sent home in the packet of information and forms. If parents fill out and sign those forms, their child will be scheduled for one of the appointments in the dental clinic. Parents should receive notification of when the appointment is scheduled and should receive a report from the Clinic after each appointment. Students are brought to the clinic by classroom staff, and return to class after the appointment. Parents who wish to continue to have their child receive care from their community dentist may also access the dental clinic for additional assessment or care, for example, for extra cleanings or monitoring throughout the year.

School Medical Services

Six registered nurses, two licensed practical nurses, and one medical assistant from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. staff the Medical Department at Cotting School each school day. A nurse remains available for emergencies until 4:00 pm on days when there are afterschool Supplemental Services activities. The school's physician is available during school hours for consultation for the Medical Department.

Some of the services provided by the Medical Department include:

- Health maintenance, screenings and prevention
- Administering medication and treatments as ordered by the child's physician
- First aid and emergency management
- Medical assessment and monitoring of specific health concerns
- Gastrostomy tube feedings
- Managing colostomies
- Assisting with various personal care needs (We recommend that an extra set of clothing is available at school for situations requiring a clothing change.)
- Individualized teaching and monitoring of various activities of daily living skills

Our school physician is available for consultation and limited direct care service. We strongly encourage annual physical examinations. Each student shall have a physical within one year prior to entering the program or within 30 days after program entry and every two years afterwards.

Immunizations

As required by state regulations (102 CMR 7.07 and 105 CMR 220.00), the Department of Public Health has established requirements for children to attend school. These requirements include the minimally acceptable number of immunizations for attendance at schools. To comply with state law, accurate information concerning up-to-date immunizations must be annually provided to the school nurse. There are two situations in which children who are not appropriately immunized may be admitted to school. A medical exemption is allowed if a physician submits documentation that an immunization is medically contraindicated. A religious exemption is allowed if the parent of guardian submits **an annual written statement** that immunizations conflict with their religious beliefs. In the absence of an emergency or epidemic of disease declared by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the school does not require any student to receive medical treatment when the parents object on the grounds that such treatment conflicts with a religious belief.

Health Screenings

Each child receives individual hearing screenings during the school year. Vision screening is available for students seen in the Vision Clinic. Dental screenings, cleanings and minor restorative work are available with parental consent. Postural screenings are conducted in accordance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations. Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings are performed as mandated by the Department of Public Health and results are reported to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Medication Administration

The following state mandated policies have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of children needing medicines during the school day.

1. Parents must sign an Authorization to Dispense Medication form annually if medication is to be dispensed at the school. This order must be renewed as needed and at the beginning of each academic year. A new order is required for any change of medication or dosage outlined above. No medication will be dispensed without authorization from a parent.
2. No prescription medication is administered to a student without the written order of the physician prescribing the medication to that student. The Health Record Form includes reference to prescribed medications and must be signed by a physician.
3. If the Administrator questions the necessity of dispensing certain medications, he/she or his/her agent may consult with the school physician and/or the student's personal physician for further information or advice.
4. The parent, guardian or other designated responsible adult must bring medications to the school in their original pharmacy or manufacturer labeled containers. Students should not deliver medication. Expired bottles are not acceptable. A medication order, signed by the physician should include the student's name, medication, daily dosage, route and time when the medication is to be taken. Homeopathic remedies cannot be dispensed as contents may not be standardized. Other information such as potential side effects, if any, must be provided. No more than a thirty-day supply of regularly scheduled medications should be delivered to the school. Medications that are taken on an as needed basis may be held for longer periods of time.
5. All such medicine will be taken in the presence of and under the supervision of the school nurse, or designated staff member. Cotting School is registered with the Department of Public Health to permit unlicensed, properly trained responsible adults to administer prescription medications to students on field trips and special school events when a school nurse is not available. This registration must be renewed every year. Unlicensed personnel must pass a comprehensive written test prior to become certified in medication administration, and must pass an annual review quiz to maintain such certification.
6. All such medication shall be stored under the school nurse's direction in locked cabinets in the Medical Department. Provisions will be made for refrigeration of medication when necessary. Unused or expired medication will be returned to parents, or destroyed after informing parents.
7. School personnel will not generally assume the responsibility for administration of medication requiring injection. Flu vaccine may be administered in the fall depending upon availability of the vaccine and may be given with parental consent.
8. The school nurse shall maintain a record of each time a medication is dispensed. The record will include the time the medication is dispensed, the name of the person administering, and any additional pertinent information, including any side effects of the medication.
9. If a student refuses the administration of an ordered medication, the nurse will contact the parent or guardian. The nurse may consult with the school physician or the

prescribing physician to determine whether or not it is safe for the student to remain in school without the medication.

10. A review of medications administered to a student is incorporated into all case reviews conducted at the school with staff regarding the student.

Privacy of Student Health Information

All student health information is kept in locked files in the medical department according to the following regulations:

HIPPA Privacy Information

Enacted pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”), the federal HIPAA privacy regulations generally prohibit covered health care providers, health plans and health care clearinghouses from using or disclosing protected health information (“PHI”) except as authorized by the individual or as otherwise permitted by regulations. The term “health care provider” is defined to mean a person or entity who in the normal course of business furnishes, bills, or is paid for care, services, or supplies related to the health of an individual, such as a school nurse. HIPAA privacy regulations apply only if a health care provider transmits health care information electronically in connection with certain transactions with payors, such as billing for services. Cotting School does not electronically transmit health information in connection with any such transactions. Accordingly, Cotting School is not subject to the HIPAA privacy regulations.

In accord with the school’s usual practice, the school does, however, intend to adhere to reasonable and relevant privacy standards.

- Permitted Disclosures. The School may use and disclose PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. The school may also use and disclose PHI for certain public policy objectives, including where disclosure is required by law, reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, or pursuant to a judicial or administrative subpoena or order. All other disclosures of PHI require specific authorization from the student’s parent or guardian or the student when applicable.
- Privacy Notice. Students of legal age and/or parents must sign a written acknowledgment indicating that they have received this Health Privacy Policy.

Administrative Requirements. The Cotting School Nurse has been designated as the school’s privacy official in regard to Health Care Records. Faculty and staff are trained concerning the school’s privacy policies and procedures; there are sanctions for employees who fail to follow the school’s policies and procedures; and the school has adopted reasonable technical, physical and administrative safeguards designed to protect the privacy of PHI. Access to PHI is limited to those employees with a “need to know,” and, to the extent feasible, to the information relevant to such person’s job responsibilities.

Sick Child Exclusion/Return Policy

In order to protect the health of all students, the school must implement sick child exclusion and return policies. The following are symptoms requiring the removal of a child from the school setting.

- **Fever**—alone or associated with sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache irritability or confusion. Fever is defined as having a temperature of 99.4°F or higher taken under the arm, 100.4°F taken orally or rectally.
- **Diarrhea**—student may return once bowel pattern has returned to normal and all stools can be contained. Certain more aggressive diarrhea illnesses such as E. coli or Shigella require resolution of diarrhea and two documented negative cultures prior to return.
- **Vomiting**—none in a twenty-four-hour period prior to return to school.
- **Body Rash with Fever**—same as fever guidelines. Certain rashes may be associated with lengthier periods of exclusion, i.e., chicken pox needs to be entirely crusted over prior to return. Some rashes may require physician review prior to readmission. Rash without fever and without behavioral changes is not reason for exclusion.
- **Sore throat with Fever and Swollen Glands** – If streptococcal infection is documented, child can be readmitted 24 hours after initiation of antibiotic therapy. If no streptococcal infection is documented, same as fever guidelines.
- **Conjunctivitis**—after assessment by physician with appropriate treatment in place.
- **Lice and Scabies**—after treatment has been administered and nits are no longer visible.
- **Herpes Simplex with open sores**—May return when lesions are crusted over. If child drools, all lesions must be cleared up prior to return to school.
- **Impetigo**—24 hours after treatment is initiated.
- **Hand/Foot/Mouth Disease**—Return after resolution of fever and ability to take adequate hydration.
- **C/Difficile**—return after appropriate antibiotic treatment has been initiated and diarrhea is resolving. Stool must be containable. Readmission cannot be allowed if this is not the case.

In most cases the child should be fever free for 24 hours or have been on antibiotic therapy for 24 hours before returning to school.

If a student is demonstrating any of these symptoms, the school nurse will contact the parents to dismiss the student. Parents are expected to pick up a symptomatic child within one hour of being contacted by the school nurse. If the parents cannot be reached or are unable to pick up their child within one hour, the school nurse will contact a person designated by the parents to dismiss the student. The student will be monitored in the Medical Department until the parent or person designated by the parent arrives to dismiss the student. The school receptionist will notify the student's transportation company of the student's dismissal.

In cases where there is a question regarding a student's return, the school medical director will have final authority.

Post-Hospitalization Procedures for Returning to School

Many students require absences during the academic year due to hospitalization. As you know, the safety and well-being of all students at Cotting School is our top priority. For this reason, we must ask that whenever a student is returning to school following a medical or psychiatric hospitalization, their families must follow the following procedure.

To ensure that Cotting students are receiving the highest quality care possible, parents must notify the school nurse of any upcoming medical procedure or surgery. Before returning to school, parents must call the school nurse at least one full working day in advance of the return date to develop a plan for transition back to school. Please allow enough time so that all necessary services may be arranged prior to the date of return. The school nurse must be notified of any change that may impact the day of the child's return and/or the staff needed.

A **Discharge Order Form** (copies are available through the medical office, and a copy appears in the Appendix) must be completed by the healthcare provider and sent to the school nurse **before the child can return**. A secured, medical fax machine is available to expedite the transfer of this information (781-862-5959). Also, email can be sent to mpassanisi@cotting.org.

Illness Occurring Prior to a Community Trip

If a student becomes ill or experiences a medical event prior to a scheduled community trip, he or she should be referred to the Medical Department for evaluation. Medical events may include, but are not limited to, seizures, acute asthma attacks, vomiting, or any event that would require further evaluation and monitoring by the Medical Department. The school nurse will determine whether the student is medically stable to participate in the community trip.

If there is not sufficient time for the school nurse to ensure medical stability, but the student does not require transfer to Emergency Services, the student will not participate in the community trip and will remain at the school for continued monitoring.

Bathroom Use

It is always a challenge to balance our goal to give students as many opportunities as possible for independence with the need to ensure safety and appropriate supervision. This is especially true for our older students. The following bathroom policies further our efforts to ensure student safety and supervision at all times:

1. The bathrooms across from the auditorium and next to the fish tank will be for staff and visitors only. These are marked as Staff/Visitor bathrooms.
2. During lunch, students should use the single bathroom that is on the left side of the hall past the dining room as you are heading toward the side entrance. This bathroom is handicapped accessible and will be marked as a student bathroom.
3. Teachers are asked to help by having students use the bathroom before/after lunch as much as possible.
4. Staff should only use bathrooms that are for staff. If there are circumstances where a student needs to use a bathroom that is designated for staff/visitors, they should be supervised by an adult.

5. Students should use the bathroom pass and place it on the door when using the bathroom for privacy.
6. If more than one student needs to be sent to the bathroom at a time, an adult should supervise them.
7. Students should be reminded to ask for permission to go to the bathroom when in specials.

Toileting

Students have varied requirements for assistance with their personal care/toileting needs. The building contains boys' and girls' rest rooms with appropriate fixtures and sinks for those students who can attend to their personal needs without assistance. Teacher aides and teachers will attend to the needs of many of the lower school students in their own classroom area. As appropriate for their age and increased independence, students in the Middle and Upper Schools who require any assistance with toileting needs should use the restrooms in the Medical Department. The Medical Department is equipped with adaptive toilets, and changing rooms with electric hospital beds. The medical department provides the following:

- assistance with difficult clothing
- assistance with standing balance
- transferring in and out of wheelchairs
- seating on appropriate adaptive toilet seats
- changing of diapers or personal hygiene protectors
- bladder crede
- catheterizations (either by medical staff or monitoring of self-catheterization)
- management of colostomy or ileal bags

Ongoing instruction and training for independence in personal care is coordinated through active cooperation of our Occupational and Physical Therapy Department, family, community resources and primary health care facilities.

If a student has toileting accident during the school day, the Medical Department will provide a change of clothing. We ask that you please return these clothes to Medical so that we can maintain an adequate supply to assist students as needed.

Toileting Off-Campus

When a student requires specialized assistance (as described above) during an off campus activity, this assistance is provided by the trained staff on duty during the activity.

Supplies required to provide such assistance will be provided by the Medical Department. Necessary equipment may include: gloves, wipes, chucks, sanitary pads, pull-ups, diapers and urinals.

The nurses are available to assist with developing a plan of care to meet the personal care needs of any individual student during off campus activities and can assist in amending a plan for any new setting or activity. Following a consistent healthcare protocol is important for health and safety. The nurses, as necessary, will provide training, and a nurse will be available via the phone to provide support to the staff member while they are off campus.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Lunch is served at either 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 pm. A hot lunch with salad bar is available daily for all students. Each student is assigned to a particular lunch table at the beginning of the school year, and lunch is served family style at each table. Sandwiches and yogurt are always available as an alternative to the main course. Students on special diets or who prefer their own lunch may bring their lunch from home. **If a student brings a lunch from home that needs to be served hot, it must be sent to school already warmed in its own thermal container, as Cotting staff members are not able to heat up lunches before or during the lunch period.**

We hope that all students who are able to will participate in the social and educational process of sharing the same meal together. All students are expected to go to the dining room during lunch whether or not they choose to eat. Students who do not take their nutrition by mouth will also be encouraged to spend all or part of their lunch period in the dining room with their peers as they are able to and as is appropriate.

Our Feeding Team, headed by Occupational Therapy Team Leaders Amy Houghton and Audra Hamilton, supervises lunch. Program assistants and other professional staff are available to assist students in the dining room by feeding those who need physical help, monitoring students at risk for choking, teaching organizational skills and manners, paying attention to portion control, encouraging trying new foods, and stimulating appropriate and pleasurable conversation. Please inform Ms. Houghton or Ms. Hamilton in writing if your child has any needs, issues, or goals in these areas that we should pay attention to, and feel free to contact her with any questions or concerns.

Cotting School provides a nourishing, well-balanced free lunch to all students each day but does not provide breakfast. Cotting School will collaborate with sending school districts to make breakfast available to publicly funded students with disabilities if they would have had access to such meals in their sending school district. If a student is eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, Cotting School will also collaborate with their sending district to make breakfast available.

Time is set-aside in most classrooms for students to have a snack during the morning. Teachers will send home information about snacks in their classrooms at the beginning of the school year. Students are responsible for bringing their own snack food. The time for snack will vary for each classroom depending on the morning schedule, but in general the Lower and Middle School classrooms try to have snack earlier in the morning because they participate in the early lunch, while the Upper School classrooms try schedule their snack time later in the morning because they participate in the later lunch.

General Food Allergy Guidelines

The foods most likely to cause severe allergic reactions are nuts, dairy products, eggs, soy,

wheat, fish and shellfish. Due to the life-threatening nature of many peanut and tree nut allergies, Cotting School is a nut-safe environment and there are no nut-products allowed on campus. The following guidelines are in place to help us maintain a nut-safe environment:

- We request that students do not bring foods containing peanut products or tree nuts in their snacks or lunches. If a staff member discovers such foods in a child's lunch, it will be removed and the parent will be reminded of the nut-safe policy guidelines. The child's hands and lunch area will be immediately cleaned.
- All faculty and staff are prohibited from bringing products containing peanuts and tree nuts on campus.
- A medical professional must document student allergies that require treatment, including the symptoms that indicate a reaction is occurring and instructions for administering medication. Cotting School's Food Allergy Action Plan, available in Medical, must be turned in before the start of school.
- We talk to the children about the importance of keeping the classroom safe and healthy for fellow classmates.
- We encourage frequent hand washing, especially before and after meals.
- We make every effort clean tables and other work surfaces at least twice a day, before school begins and after lunch.
- We make every effort to prohibit the sharing of foods in lunches or snacks.
- Classroom teachers and assistants are required to be familiar with every student's allergies.
- We make every effort to avoid serving foods that contain peanuts or tree nuts or may contain traces of nuts of such foods.
- If children have life-threatening allergies to foods, they must provide an acceptable nonperishable snack to be kept at school and served as an alternative, as needed.
- We ask parents to label, or provide the original packaging label, of the ingredients of all food they provide for communal snacks.
- Every staff member who works in a classroom with a child with severe allergies is required to be trained on the use of an EpiPen.
- While we make every effort to be nut-safe, it is important to recognize that food prepared in parent homes or restaurants may not be coming from a nut-free environment.
- Cotting School's Food Service Department provides food in the dining room that all students may enjoy. In the case of a student with multiple, unusual or severe allergies, however, the student/family may be required to provide lunch and snacks to ensure the student's safety.
- If parents are uncertain about possible exposure to allergy-causing foods, they may provide meals or treats for their students.
- Our guidelines will apply to all functions in the school building in areas where children would be present.

Cotting School will follow these guidelines to the extent possible but we **do not guarantee** that we can keep our environment completely free of food or other allergens that might cause a severe reaction.

EDUCATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMMING AT COTTING

Curriculum

The Cotting School Curriculum follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and is outlined in volumes developed and maintained by faculty and administration. Parents are welcome to review these curriculum materials at any time by contacting Ann Buckley, Curriculum Specialist. Curriculum areas are reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.

The Cotting curriculum is goal-oriented and implemented in conjunction with each student's Individualized Education Program. Curriculum instruction is planned and carried out for each classroom group, and each student is provided with the accommodations specified in his or her IEP to allow access to the curriculum. Those students who have supportive therapies (such as occupational therapy, communication therapy, etc.) specified in their IEPs will receive as much of their therapy time as possible within the classroom in order to minimize fragmentation of instructional time and to aid in carrying those skills over to classroom work. In addition to receiving curriculum instruction in their "home" classroom, students also move as a group to different classrooms during the day to receive instruction in fine arts, music, technology, work skills, industrial arts, health, adapted physical education, and library/media from teachers trained in these areas.

Although the teaching day may be full of disruptions that cannot be avoided, we make every effort to make sure interruptions in instructional time are kept to a minimum. Since it is well established that "time on learning" is the single strongest variable correlating with academic achievement, we must constantly be aware of making every moment count in a time-limited school day.

Professional Development and Training

Faculty and staff are provided training in a number of areas on a regular basis both at orientation sessions prior to the opening of school and throughout the school year. Among the various formal/mandated staff training sessions are: emergency evacuation procedures, safe lifting and transferring of students, feeding safety, reporting abuse and neglect, CPR, behavior management/restraint, runaway policy, transportation safety, and civil rights. In addition to these regularly scheduled training sessions, faculty and staff are provided a variety of sessions dealing with academic and medical issues pertinent to our population.

Cotting professional staff meets each Wednesday from 1:30-3:30 for a variety of professional development activities and learning opportunities.

IEP or Individualized Education Plan

Each student at Cotting School has an Individualized Educational Plan written to meet his or her special education needs, including the accommodations, modifications, and therapies needed to address those needs, and specifying Cotting as the educational placement which will best carry out this plan. The IEP is written for one year only and is reviewed every year to monitor the student's progress and to set the educational goals and objectives for the next year. The

placement at Cotting is also reviewed each year at the IEP meeting.

Parents and students have certain guaranteed rights accorded them by the Special Education laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the federal government. Information regarding your rights or any other aspect of the IEP or special education process is readily available from the Special Education Coordinator at Cotting or through your local school district.

The student's educational team develops IEP goals. These goals are the priority areas for a one year period and do not encompass a student's entire Cotting program. Many activities and experiences beyond the IEP compose a student's education at Cotting. At Cotting the educational team is made up of a representative of the special education department from the student's public school district, the student's parent(s) and any others invited by the parent(s), the Special Education Coordinator at Cotting, the teacher, and any other specialists who provide services to the student. One of the purposes of regular communication between Cotting staff members and the parents of their students is to provide opportunities to discuss progress and recommendations throughout the year, not just at the IEP meeting. If parents have questions about what will be discussed at the IEP meeting, they are encouraged to communicate in advance of the IEP with the staff members who work with their child. Cotting School does not provide drafts of a student's IEP to parents prior to the Team meeting. Drafts will be available at the IEP meeting to parents and school districts.

Department of Education regulations state that students aged 14 and over shall be invited to attend their IEP meetings, and students at Cotting are provided with the preparation and support to participate increasingly in their IEP meetings from age 14 on. In the beginning, students may attend for only a part of the meeting, continuing to work toward the goal of increasing their meaningful participation each year.

The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) includes:

- Parent and student concerns for the next IEP period.
- A profile that describes how the student learns most easily and identifies his/her strengths and areas of need.
- Vision statement.
- Goals and specific objectives that outline the skills and behaviors, which he/she can reasonably gain during the next year. (If the student is 14 years old or older, goals should be guided by the student's vision to assist with adult transition.)
- A specific description of what the student is able to do within each identified area of need.
- Suggested teaching approaches, accommodations and specialized materials.
- Statements spelling out how the student's progress will be measured.
- The types of service that will be provided and the objectives that each service will focus upon.
- The type of setting and the location at which the service will be provided.
- The type of specialist who will provide the services for your child.
- The projected date on which the service will begin.

- The frequency and duration of the service.
- Method of participation in state-wide assessment (MCAS).

Summer

Summer services (extended school year) are also discussed at each IEP meeting. Summer services are indicated when the student's team agrees that the student will experience substantial regression in skills over the summer if services are not provided. A summer program is available for Cotting students in all levels over a 5-week period that typically begins after the 4th of July holiday and continues through the first week in August. The Summer Session has a somewhat shorter school day, typically revolves around a theme, and structures the academic maintenance activities in creative ways. For Upper School students, summer session provides a number of choices for maintaining skills in life-skills and/or vocational settings. Examples of these choices are SALSE (Summer Adaptive Living Skills Experience) a program that provides an opportunity to practice classroom skills in real-life situations, as well as the Horticulture and Community Work Programs that provide the opportunity to practice and retain skills in a variety of vocational environments. **Please note that students are expected to attend all five weeks of the summer program.**

Each annual review of the IEP addresses all of these areas. In addition, every three years a re-evaluation of the student must be completed.

Three Year Re-Evaluations

Three-year re-evaluations are completed for every special education student to determine continued eligibility for special education services. **Parents must provide consent to the sending district before Cotting staff conducts any evaluation for the purposes of re-determination of eligibility for special education services. In order for these assessments to be completed by the date of the IEP meeting, this consent must be signed well in advance.** Each assessment for this evaluation is written in report form, with copies provided for parents. These reports are then presented at the Team meeting and used in setting and prioritizing goals for the IEP. Copies of 3-year re-evaluations will be given to parents upon request at least 2 days in advance of the Team discussion at the meeting.

The Three Year Re-Evaluation may include any of the following components. The assessments are typically completed by Cotting staff but can be completed by public school or other evaluators:

Educational Evaluation

Your child's teacher will carry out and/or coordinate an evaluation of your child's reading, writing, and math skills, and will write a report to be shared with you and your school district which will be presented at the IEP meeting. This assessment will detail your child's present skills in comparison to his or her skills at the last three-year evaluation and will describe where these skills fall in relation to typical development.

Psychological Assessment

The IEP team may choose to include a Psychological Assessment in the 3-year re-evaluation.

This assessment would be carried out by a psychologist outside of Cotting, designated by the student's school district, or suggested by the student's parents and agreed-upon by the team. The psychological testing may take place at Cotting, at a site in the local school district, or at a private office. The Psychological Assessment may be recommended if the team has questions about the student's strengths and challenges in relation to the general population or if an IQ score is needed for any reason. If there are no such questions, the Psychological Assessment may be waived. However, it is important that an updated Psychological Assessment is completed for each student around the time of his or her eighteenth birthday, as an IQ assessment will be needed at that time to provide information necessary for guardianship decisions and eligibility for adult services. Even if it is not time for a 3-year re-evaluation, plans for a Psychological Assessment should be made at the IEP closest to the student's 17th birthday.

Assessment of Progress in the Classroom

Your child's current teacher will carry out an assessment of your child's performance and growth over the last three years in the skills needed to access the curriculum and in curriculum content areas. Both formal and informal assessment materials will be used to determine progress, and most will be carried out in the classroom. The student's records and assessments of former teachers will be consulted to provide further detail regarding the path of progress

Evaluation of Progress in Therapies

If your child receives therapies at Cotting, each therapist will conduct an assessment of his or her progress in those skills. This assessment will track your child's progress in comparison to the norms for typical development, and/or your child's individual progress since the last 3-year evaluation. Evaluation is also completed to determine if your child continues to need the service.

Medical Evaluation

The annual physical examination required by State regulations and by Cotting School is usually acceptable for the three-year re-evaluation. It is not typically requested for re-evaluation purposes unless there have been changes in your child's medical condition.

Home Assessment

The 3-year re-evaluation also brings the opportunity to more formally report on the educational progress, strengths, and needs of the student that are experienced and observed by the family at home and in the community. Although this information is always an important part of the discussion at each annual IEP review, the 3-yr home assessment can provide some structure and detail to information that can be useful for future planning. The Family Support Coordinator, or a school district representative typically carries out home assessments.

Please feel free to call Leah Thibodeau, the Special Education Coordinator at Cotting School, if you have questions concerning your child's Education Program or your rights as the parent of a student with special needs.

SUPPORTS FOR LEARNING

Therapies

Cotting provides a wide variety of therapies and services on-site to support the learning and development of our students. For those students who need adjunctive therapies to access the curriculum or make effective progress, the types of therapies and schedule for services is discussed at the IEP meeting and written into the yearly plan. Cotting maintains a staff of trained and licensed therapists in each area (Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Communication Therapy, Remedial Services, and Psychological Counseling) so that each student can receive the services that they need to meet the goals in their IEPs without major disruption. Since maintaining time on learning is so important, these therapies are delivered during regular classroom activities as much as possible.

Assistive Technology

Cotting maintains an Assistive Technology and Assessment Center (ATAC) to assess and track each student's need for assistance in accessing the curriculum. Recommendations for student use of technology for communicating, moving independently, writing, etc. are shared with the staff members who work with that student and are carried out in all aspects of a student's program and school day. Some of the adaptive devices needed by students are already available in Cotting's classrooms or therapy areas for shared use within the school. Other devices must be ordered especially for the student and paid for through the student's insurance or other funding sources.

Other adaptive equipment, devices, computer peripherals, software, or any other items not normally provided within the general program cannot be purchased or otherwise provided for any individual student unless it has been included within the IEP when a child is first admitted to the school and funded by a non-Cotting School private source obtained by parents, the LEA, or other means.

It must also be understood that the normal maintenance and upkeep of such device or equipment will be the responsibility of the LEA or family except in such cases where there has been obvious neglect or damage by Cotting staff.

Tutorial Services

Language and literacy are the stepping stones of every student's educational journey. We hope, as educators, parents, and caregivers, that every child will learn to read and read to learn. While not every student will follow the same path, it is our job to help them navigate their own route to becoming the best readers they can be.

Cotting School has designed an advanced, tiered system of support for literacy instruction. Language and literacy skills are taught throughout all levels of the program. Our balanced approach to literacy ensures that students of all ages are reading, writing, listening and working

with words throughout their day. Additionally, a daily intervention block and individual remedial services are available to support literacy development, as appropriate.

A majority of students participate in the daily intervention block as part of their regular programming at Cotting. Teachers and therapists use a combination of literacy assessment data, classroom performance levels and expressive and receptive language scores to determine each student's area of need in literacy. Students are then assigned to a specific intervention program, focusing on individual priorities for either comprehension strategies or word identification skills.

When students have needs that are not met by the combination of our balanced literacy approach and targeted daily intervention programs, additional, individual services from our Remedial Department can be provided through the IEP.

Community Inclusion

In addition to the instruction carried out in the school building, Cotting is committed to providing transitional opportunities for students to apply their skills in more natural or "real world" settings. In order to accomplish this, classrooms at the Middle, Upper School, and Capstone levels are involved in regular community trips planned by each teacher to extend and apply their ongoing units of classroom instruction.

Project Bridges

This commitment to "real world" experience extends to vocational instruction as well. Through Project Bridges, Upper School and Capstone students have the opportunity to spend one morning or afternoon a week for several months supported by Cotting staff as they learn to work in various companies and organizations in the community.

DETERMINING AND REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Progress Reports

In addition to regular communication about student progress between Cotting School staff and parents, the system of quarterly progress reports used at Cotting is designed to give parents specific and meaningful information about their child's progress with regard to the goals and objectives in his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP). Progress reports and other IEP correspondence are sent to all parents, including non-custodial parents. In addition, one progress report is sent home for those students in the Summer Program at the end of the session.

Standardized Assessments

In addition to the standardized assessments that are carried out during the 3-year evaluation process for the IEP, students at Cotting are required to take part in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, or MCAS. Students take the MCAS either in the typical computer-based format, employing all accommodations specified in the student's IEP, or by way of a Portfolio Assessment, which contains specific work samples by the student from across the school year, organized by the teacher in a standard structure to demonstrate the student's

progress in the curriculum frameworks. The IEP team determines which format will be most appropriate for each student. In both formats, however, the student must demonstrate competence in each curriculum area to receive a passing grade.

All students in publicly funded schools must take MCAS, either at the scheduled administration times or by way of providing work samples throughout the year to be submitted in the Portfolio Assessment. Only serious medical illness can excuse a student from a scheduled MCAS administration for that school year, and for this the student must submit a Medical Waiver, signed by his or her physician to Cotting School to be maintained in the student's educational record. A copy will be sent to the student's sending district.

Grade Designation

Students typically enter Cotting having been designated a grade level (i.e. first grade, third grade, etc.) in their previous programs. This grade level will be noted on the student's IEP and will increase by one year with each year at Cotting. The program at Cotting is ungraded, however, and employs only the designations of Lower (elementary), Middle, and Upper/Capstone (high school) as levels. Students move from Lower School to Middle School, and from Middle School to Upper School not on the basis of reaching a certain uniform skill level but on the consideration of a variety of factors, including chronological age, readiness for greater independence, appropriate peer group, and social skill development. This can be confusing for students and parents, particularly when relatives or community friends ask the Cotting student what grade he or she is in. Some students keep very close track of what grade they were in when they entered and what grade they "should" be in now. Others may respond that their school is ungraded, and they are in the Middle (or Lower or Upper/Capstone) School. Specific grade designation becomes less meaningful for many of the students in the Upper School who will stay in school until age 22 (in Massachusetts) or 21 (in New Hampshire), several years past the usual graduation year of grade 12. For these students, saying they are still in school working on their goals may be sufficient.

Grading Policy

Students do not receive letter grades at Cotting at the Lower and Middle School levels but may receive letter grades under some circumstances in Upper School/Capstone.

SENIOR STATUS AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Parents are required to complete and submit an "Application for Senior Status" to Laraine Wilson, Director of Upper School and Capstone Services, on or before May 15th of the school year preceding the anticipated graduation date of the student.

In order to submit the application, the following two requirements MUST be met:

- A student must be in Grade 12 or 12+.
- A student must have completed $\frac{3}{4}$ of their required credits (see section on Credit Requirements) by the end of the school year prior to their senior year.

One of the following MUST also be met:

- A student must be turning 22 before May 16th of the year following their graduation/senior year OR
- The student has met the MCAS Competency Determination Requirements and plans to exit public education. OR
- The student has a clear plan for exiting Cotting that includes a new placement and an agreement with the student's district for the following school year.

The graduation/senior status of a student is granted at the sole discretion of Cotting School. It is not an entitlement and is not a part of the IEP process.

High School Diplomas & Certificates of Attendance

Cotting School awards students either a high school diploma or a certificate that recognizes achievement, attendance, course completion or participation in accordance with 603 CMR 28.09(9)(d). 4 69, s.1D.

At least one year in advance of a probable graduation date for a student, Cotting School, in collaboration with the student's sending school district, will hold a TEAM meeting including the parent and the student to discuss the likelihood of graduation. The discussion, at a minimum, will include the successful completion of the state competency determination through MCAS Grade 10 testing program in English Language, Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering and according to standards of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

All students whose placement is funded by a Massachusetts-sending school district participate in the MCAS testing program (or alternative assessment according to federal special education law and MCAS administration guidelines published by the Department).

Cotting School will issue a certificate to a publicly funded student. The certificate may recognize achievement, attendance, course completion or participation. A student who receives a certificate from Cotting School but who has not received a high school diploma or its equivalent is entitled to continue receiving publicly funded special education services until he/she turns twenty-two or attains a high school diploma or its equivalent, whichever comes first.

Cotting School will issue a diploma to a student whose placement is funded by a Massachusetts-sending school district if the student has met the state MCAS competency determination standard. In these circumstances, either the sending district or Cotting School, or both jointly, may award a high school diploma to the student. If the high school diploma is awarded by Cotting School, the diploma will indicate that the student has met state standards for high school graduation and that the diploma is awarded "by Cotting School according to the Standards of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts". A student who earns a high school diploma from Cotting School is also entitled, upon request, to receive a diploma from the sending school district indicating that the student met state and local graduation standards under the auspices of the

school district.

Credit Requirements for a Diploma

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education allows individual school districts within the Commonwealth to determine their own high school graduation requirements. It is important that you know your district's requirements if you would like to be eligible to earn a diploma from them. Cotting School has its own credit requirements, which are similar to (but not exactly the same as) most public school districts. They are as follows:

Content Area	Minimum Years	Credits
English	4	20
Mathematics	4	16
Science	3	10
History/Social Science	3	12
Physical Education	4	4
Arts	1	1
Additional Core Courses*	3	25
Total Credits:		88
¾ Credits (needed for Application for Senior Status):		66

Additional Core Courses include Career Education, Health, Technology, Community Based Instruction or more of any of the above listed subjects.

In addition to the above credit requirements, students must meet MCAS Competency Determination in Science, English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

1) A minimum score of 220 (Needs Improvement level) on ONE of the Grade 10 Science, Technology and Engineering (STEM) tests or retests. Tests are in ONE of the following subcategories: Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics and Technology/Engineering.

AND

2a.) A minimum score of 240 (Proficient level) on the Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) and Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS test or retest.

OR

2b.) A minimum score of 220 (Needs Improvement level) on the Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) and Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS test or retest AND a completed Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP*).

*An EPP is a plan that schools develop to help individual students make progress towards proficiency in ELA or MATH.

Credits for courses are generally determined by the number of class meetings held per week over the school year. Classes that meet five (5) times a week yield five (5) credits for the year.

Classes that meet three (3) times a week yield three (3) credits, etc.

Credits transferred from other schools will be translated into the Cotting School credit structure.

Credit may be granted at the discretion of the Chief Academic Officer for any extended experience gained in addition to the Cotting Upper School Program or temporarily replacing it. To receive credit, arrangements for such a program should be made in advance.

All students are required to take Adaptive Physical Education unless excused by a medical doctor for a specific period of time or requested by a parent for a temporary physical problem. Permanent or extended medical excuses must be renewed annually by the student's doctor through the Cotting School Medical Department.

Cotting School Certificate Requirements

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education allows individual school districts within the Commonwealth to determine their own high school graduation requirements. It is important that you know your district's requirements if you would like to be eligible to earn a diploma from them. Cotting School has its own credit requirements, which are similar to (but not exactly the same as) most public school districts. They are as follows:

Content Area	Minimum Years	Credits
English	4	20
Mathematics	4	16
Science	3	10
History/Social Science	3	12
Physical Education	4	4
Arts	1	1
Additional Core Courses*	3	25
Total Credits:		88
¾ Credits (needed for Application for Senior Status):		66

TRANSITION

Changes at the Age of Majority

At age 18 (the age of majority) all young people, regardless of disability or student status, are considered to be legal adults before the law and thus responsible to provide their own consent in cases where it is required. As Cotting students approach age 18, the question of legal guardianship will be discussed at the IEP. To help parents prepare for these discussions, the Family Support Coordinator has put together a Handbook for Parents providing information about guardianship and the alternatives that are available for families to guide and protect their children in entering legal adulthood. This Handbook is distributed to the families of Upper School students, but is available to any parent who is interested through the Family Support Coordinator.

Although students who continue to be their own guardians after age 18 must sign their own IEPs

and other legal documents, many of these young adults continue to want their parents involved in making decisions and their parents may continue to be involved in decision making as their child wishes. This is called “shared decision making”, which may be indicated on the IEP.

Some families may choose to petition for guardianship of their adult children at age 18, legally transferring the capacity to give consent from their children to themselves. This process requires an evaluation by a clinical team composed of a physician, licensed clinical psychologist, and licensed independent social worker to determine if there are areas of decision-making in which the young adult needs help. If so, the clinical team makes a recommendation to the probate court that a guardian be appointed to help the adult make decisions in these areas. Guardians must then report back to the court about the progress of the adult and the continuing need for their involvement.

At the age of majority, students with disabilities also experience a change of status with regard to the system of public benefits. Those who have received benefits through the SSI program or MassHealth as children will need to be re-evaluated for those programs as adults. Those students who have not applied for or received SSI benefits as children because family income was too high are now eligible to receive benefits based on their own independent income, which in almost all cases is not high enough to support them. Cotting’s Family Support Coordinator is available to provide information to parents as their children approach age 18 to help them with information and support in negotiating the public benefits system.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

A variety of after-school activities and classes are planned each year and coordinated by Dan Cuddy. There is a separate charge for these activities, which are organized into three periods: Fall, Winter, and Spring Term Supplemental Services Activities. Fall term runs from shortly after the beginning of school until late November, Winter term runs from just after school resumes after the Holiday break until late March or so, and Spring term runs from April until just before the end of school in June. There are several weeks with no activities between each term. Before each term, the schedule will be sent home so students can choose where and when they might like to participate. A registration and parental consent form are also included.

Circle of Friends is an after school activity that provides our students with an opportunity to engage in off-campus social activities. Trips to restaurants, the movies, sporting events, and the like are arranged and transportation is provided. A registration and parental consent form will be provided prior to each session of Circle of Friends. Please note that students who do not attend Cotting’s summer program are not permitted to participate in the summer session of Circle of Friends activities.

It is important to us that no student should be excluded from the activities of their choice because of inability to pay. Cotting provides scholarship funding for all activities, available by contacting the Family Support Coordinator.

Please be aware that staffing is more limited during after school activities than it is during the regular school day. If a student may need assistance with his or her personal care during an after school activity, staff members will provide that assistance as they are available. In order

not to have to take time away from the activity, many students who participate after school plan to take care of their personal care needs in the Medical Department at the end of school if they need assistance. During after school activities, the lifts in the Medical Department are available for student use with the assistance of trained staff. A nurse is also available during this time but must remain free in case of emergency. The policy for the administration of prescribed medications is the same as it is followed for field trips.

Policies for Student Participation in After-School Activities and Events

1. Students must stay in specified areas within the building.
2. Students may not stay after school without specific written permission from parents.
3. Students who do stay after school may not leave the building without specific written permission from parents.
4. No student may leave the building and return without staff supervision or permission.
5. Students, alumni or guests who bring cars may not stay in their cars.
6. Neither drinking nor smoking will be allowed at school functions.
7. Guests are welcome at school functions, i.e., dances, but they must abide by all school rules while here. Students should ask permission from the Activities Director (Mr. Moran) before inviting guests.
8. Regular bus drivers should be informed in advance if a student will not be going home after school.
9. With some exceptions, if a student does not attend school on the day of a social function or dance, the student may not attend the function that evening. If there are extenuating circumstances, please contact the Chief Academic Officer for special permission to attend a school event.
10. Parents and/or drivers should plan on picking up students as soon as the event is over. Please be certain that you are aware of the correct time to pick up your son/daughter.
11. Siblings, friends and family members of students may be included in some school events. **Please note that parents are responsible for directly supervising the friends and other family members they have brought to any Cotting event.**

Permission forms will be sent home one week prior to each event. Please be sure to note the correct times for the event and describe the transportation arrangements. Students must return this form if they are planning to attend a dance or other social function.

Expectations for Conduct at School Functions

School functions provide an opportunity for students to practice and expand their social skills in somewhat less structured situations. During dances, basketball games, and other activities, students are expected to carry out the core values of our community. We also expect, however, that these will be learning opportunities where student efforts to generalize their skills may not always result in complete success. We hope these will be opportunities for students to reflect and learn from their experiences in an atmosphere of honesty and support.

STUDENT SAFETY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our students and monitor who is coming into the school building, all entrances to Cotting remain locked throughout the day. Doorbells are located at the main school entrance, and at the entrances at the east (near the kitchen) and west (near Industrial Arts and Work Skills) sides of the building. When you arrive at Cotting, just ring the bell and one of the receptionists will answer. Identify yourself as a parent and they will be happy to buzz you in.

All parents and other visitors are asked to check in at the main reception desk upon entering the school. Once there, we ask you to sign in, indicating who you will be meeting with in case we need to reach you, and get a visitor badge to wear while in the school.

Parents are welcome to wait or gather in the front lobby or reception area during drop-off times in the morning, pick-up times in the afternoon, or during after-school activities. If any parents wish to meet with other parents at the school during other times, please contact Pam Varrin, Family Support Coordinator. To minimize distraction and respect the confidentiality of all, we ask parents to limit their walking through the building to those times when they are traveling to and from scheduled meetings. If you are bringing your child to school late, or picking up early, please wait in the reception area for your child to come down from the classroom.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

Consistent with its mission and philosophy, Cotting School maintains a policy of zero tolerance for any kind of mistreatment of children. Consistent with this policy and the requirement that teachers and others who work with children serve as “mandated reporters” of suspected abuse, the School will investigate and report any cases of suspected abuse of children. The reporting requirements that would be necessary under conditions of suspected abuse are as follows:

Massachusetts’s law requires an individual who is a mandated reporter to immediately report any allegation of serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect of children under 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 and is available from the Chief Academic Officer. 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 from the Chief Academic Officer.

COMMUNITY CONDUCT: CORE VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for student behavior at Cotting reflect the core values of our community:

Respect, Honesty, and Diversity

To honor these core values, each member of our community is held responsible to treat every other member of our community with courtesy, kindness, understanding, and justice. The specific expectations that flow from these responsibilities are as follows:

1. For safety reasons students are expected to be reasonably quiet when passing in the halls and not engage in running or speeding in the corridors or on stairways and ramps.
2. Students may not leave classrooms without the permission of the teacher.
3. Students may not leave the building without permission.
4. Inappropriate and foul language, whether spoken or written, will not be tolerated.
5. We expect students to dress in a neat, clean, and age-appropriate fashion that reflects the positive image of the School and its students. **Hats** may not be worn in school, except for those students who receive permission to do so after treatments or surgery. Any clothing that depicts **obscenities or violence, or is overly revealing**, is not considered appropriate dress.
6. The use and possession of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco of any kind is strictly prohibited.
7. Personal CD players, video games, or cell phones that may be used by students during the bus ride to or from school may not be used in school during the school day.
8. **Weapons of any kind/knives, guns (toy or otherwise)** are not allowed.

All responses to violations of these behavioral expectations or any behavior that is dangerous, threatening or harmful will be handled in a manner the administration believes is best for all people involved. The Cotting School Code of Discipline (located in the Appendices of this manual) will serve as a guide for possible consequences for various behaviors.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Cotting School is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The *Cotting 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.

Cotting's complete Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan can be found on our website at www.cotting.org and in the Appendices of this Handbook.

Anti-Hazing

Cotting School does not have any student-organized or run groups, teams, or organizations. All groups are organized and supervised by adults at all times and students are never left unattended. However, Cotting School strictly prohibits any acts of hazing associated with student groups, teams, or organizations. Cotting's complete Anti-Hazing Policy can be found in the Appendices of this Handbook.

Policy of Non-Discrimination

Cotting School admits students of any race, color, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability and residence status to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School and does not discriminate against any students who qualify under the criteria of the School's admission policies in administration of its educational and therapeutic programs, admissions policies, scholarship programs, recreational or other school-administered programs. Students may be admitted at any time depending upon their appropriateness for the program and available space.

WORKING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Due to the goals of the program and the number of medically involved students in the building, Cotting School does not knowingly accept students who display severe acting out or aggressive behaviors. However, any student has the potential to display some form of acting out or aggressive behavior under certain circumstances. Students experiencing frustration are more likely to need re-direction or a time and space to regroup. All staff work cooperatively to provide these options to students as needed.

Prevention

Our most often used, and most effective means of managing difficult, disruptive, or dangerous behaviors is to prevent them from happening in the first place. The following are some ways Cotting School prevents the occurrence and escalation of challenging behavior:

- Provide a structured, predictable, and consistent learning environment to help decrease student anxiety.
- Develop a deep understanding of the student including their history, diagnosis, and environmental triggers and signals associated with challenging behavior.
- Foster students' self-esteem and provide ample opportunities for success.
- Make sure students clearly understand what is expected of them.
- Never create or contribute to a situation that causes a student to feel demoralized,

embarrassed, or humiliated.

- Monitor one's own frustration level. Make sure that students are responded to in a calm manner and that the intervention does not escalate a difficult situation.
- Provide students with some opportunities during their day when they can exercise choice and control.
- Maintain good communication with parents and caregivers. Find out if there are circumstances at home that may be contributing to the student's behavior at school.
- Maintain good communication between staff around the school. Share relevant information that increases the likelihood of success across the student's school day.
- Help students develop the skills to identify and label their emotions effectively, and thus communicate effectively about their wants and needs.

Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation curriculum was developed by an occupational therapist and is an emotional regulation framework to teach students to identify and manage feelings. Incorporating social perspective taking, concepts associated with cognitive-behavioral therapy, self-regulation, executive functioning, and sensory processing, this curriculum teaches students to categorize emotional states and express emotions in ways that fit social expectations. Students develop an individualized toolbox to cope with and manage the expression of emotions in each zone. All Cotting direct care staff receive training in understanding the Zones of Regulation and identifying ways to incorporate this framework into daily work with students. The curriculum has been introduced to students through health, speech/language and occupational therapy groups. Additionally, a set of mini-lessons was developed to aide teachers at various levels in implementing this framework within the classroom setting. Parent workshops on the Zones of Regulation program are also offered.

Differential Reinforcement

At Cotting School, staff are trained the use of differential reinforcement as a means to increase the likelihood of the recurrence of positive behavior and decrease the likelihood of challenging behavior. Cotting uses the model presented by *Safety Care Behavioral Safety Training Program*, a comprehensive behavior safety training system that emphasizes prevention and minimization of crisis behavior. The *Safety Care* model of differential reinforcement includes three types:

- Continuous (or 1:1) reinforcement or when the student receives reinforcement whenever the challenging behavior stops for even a few seconds.
- Random reinforcement or when the student receives reinforcement at various times when the challenging behavior does not occur
- Structured reinforcement or when there a specific reinforcement schedule and method is predetermined in response to clearly defined expectations

All staff is trained in all three types of reinforcement as a method of increasing positive behavior and preventing difficult or disruptive behavior.

De-escalation Techniques

Safety Care also provides a model for de-escalation of challenging student behaviors. The goals of de-escalation are to:

1. Maintain the safety of the student and everyone else.
2. Avoid making the situation any worse or making the student any more agitated.
3. Help the student to decrease the intensity of crisis behaviors.
4. Avoid reinforcing crisis behaviors, so that they do not become more likely in the future.

Three main strategies are outlined in the *Safety Care* model:

1. The “Help Strategy” is used when a student may be using a challenging behavior to get something they want and/or need.
2. The “Prompt Strategy” is used to redirect the student to a behavior that is incompatible with the challenging behavior they are displaying (e.g. prompting a student who is pacing to sit down).
3. The “Wait Strategy” is used to give the student some extra time for calming.

All staff work cooperatively to flexibly use these strategies with students depending on the particular situation.

Support

Cotting has a variety of faculty supports available to support students and the staff who work with them.

- The Mental Health Team includes the Family Support Coordinator, School Psychologist, Guidance Counselor, Director of Upper School Services, the Director of Nursing, and mental health interns. The Mental Health Team offers student counseling, crisis intervention, individual consultations for staff, leads student case reviews to address behaviors, and provide behavioral observations and feedback.
- The Response Team are faculty who received intensive training in physical restraint procedures and includes the Chief Academic Officer, Family Support Coordinator, School Psychologist, Director of Upper School Services, Special Education Coordinator, two teachers and a physical therapist. This group meets quarterly to review student behavioral incidents, identify any trends or patterns in behavior, and review behavioral support procedures including practicing methods of physical restraint.

Appropriate Consequences

Although students accepted to Cotting do not have emotional or behavioral issues as their primary challenge, every student at Cotting may need structure or guidance regarding the management of their behavior over their time here. Behavior management and guidance will be considered with and based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of the

student and his/her individual education plan. Any plan to assist a student with their behavior will be carried out with the goals of maximizing the growth and development of the student, teaching appropriate decision-making skills, and protecting the students both as a group and as individuals. To this end, Cotting School utilizes the principles of positive reinforcement and does not engage in punishment in response to any behaviors. Specifically:

1. No student shall be subjected to any type of physical hitting or pain on the body.
2. No student shall be subjected to corporal punishment.
3. No student shall be subjected to punishments which involve verbal abuse, ridicule, or humiliation.
4. No student shall be required or forced to take an uncomfortable position such as squatting or bending or requiring or forcing the student to repeat physical movements when used as punishment.
5. No student shall be denied shelter, food, bedding, or bathroom facilities as a form of punishment.
6. No student shall be denied visitation or communication privileges with family.
7. No student shall be denied opportunities for daily physical exercise or recreational activity for an extended period of time, as appropriate to the age and interests of the student
8. No student shall be denied access to water and bathroom facilities.
9. No student shall be denied sufficient sleep.

As appropriate, the Cotting Code of Discipline will be used as a guide to consider consequences for various student behaviors.

Physical Restraint

As stated previously, physical restraint is not a normal or usual part of the school's behavior management but will be used if a student presents a danger to themselves or others. All staff members are trained in the proper use of calming and de-escalating strategies. A small Response Team, comprised of representative staff and faculty members, is provided with more specialized training.

Cotting School uses and administers physical restraint as an emergency procedure of last resort in accordance with the requirements of 603 CMR 46.00. Only members of the Response Team will apply physical intervention and restraint. Members of this team receive a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training in the *Safety Care Behavioral Safety Training Program*, with quarterly review of skills and techniques as well as annual refresher courses.

If a child should, for any unexpected reason, demonstrate severe acting out or aggressive behavior the safest and mildest form of physical restraint will be used to protect the child or others from injury or harm. Trained staff and members of the Response Team who will be called immediately to assist will apply such restraint. In order to minimize any danger to a student or staff, two persons will participate in any necessary restraint. All occurrences of restraint are reported to the parents of the student and are recorded and logged in accordance with state regulations.

Suspension or Termination of Placement

When a student's behavior endangers the health and safety of him or herself or others, or causes a substantial disruption of the school's program, the School may suspend or dismiss the student from the total program. Such suspension will have the following limits and requirements:

1. Whenever a student is suspended, the School will notify the parent(s) and the LEA at the time of suspension. Within 24 hours a written statement explaining the reason(s) for suspension will follow this notification to both the LEA and the parent(s) and the designated Department of Education official.
2. No student will be suspended and sent home unless a responsible adult is available to receive the child.
3. If a student is suspended for more than three (3) consecutive school days or five (5) non-consecutive school days in a school year, a Cotting administrator will meet with the LEA liaison and the parent within five (5) school days of the final suspension. At this meeting the parties should consider alternative measures plus possible resolutions to those issues concerning the student, as well as the possibility of alternative placement. The student, if 14 years of age or over, shall be notified by the School of his/her right to be present and participate in such a meeting.

If assurance cannot be made that behaviors endangering the health and safety of the student or others will not recur, Cotting School will seek an immediate emergency discharge from the program. Parents must agree that return to and continued placement at Cotting School is contingent upon a behavior plan developed and accepted by parents, the LEA and Cotting School.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

An important goal of Cotting's program is to provide support and involvement not only for the student but for the entire family. All families need support in raising children in our complex, changing society. Family support provides the necessary perspective, balance, direction, and comfort to modulate the stress of childrearing and to promote strong family functioning. The link between strong families and strong students is well known. Families raising children with disabilities have all the same needs for support as other families in our culture, as well as the need for support particular to the experience of raising children with complicated cognitive, medical, and communication challenges in a culture that can at times be quite isolating. Family Support Program at Cotting seeks to combine learning skills and acquiring information with the experience of belonging and community.

Parent Advisory Committee

All parents are invited to attend meetings of the Cotting Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). Cotting PAC meetings are dedicated times for Cotting administrators and parents to meet together, share information and experience, collaborate on school-wide issues of policy, programming, and planning, engage in mutual problem-solving, and, most importantly, get to

know and work with each other as part of a team. Parents who attend PAC meetings play an important role in representing the parent experience at Cotting and in sharing the experience of collaboration and teamwork with other parents.

The topics of discussion at PAC meetings are varied, and include time for updates about school changes and initiatives, planning and feedback for school events and special projects, program learning presentations on Cotting curriculum, therapies, and other initiatives, and brainstorming new ideas to improve the learning and experience at Cotting. All Cotting parents are invited and welcome to attend PAC meetings and to suggest items for meeting agendas. A schedule of PAC meetings is sent out to parents each school year.

Components of Family Support

To support their children effectively, Cotting families must continue to develop competence in a variety of areas as they negotiate the unique challenges of maintaining family life and raising children with a range of complicated needs. Support activities at Cotting are designed to assist families in the following domains:

- Developing a reliable community: The experience of a reliable and understanding community is the necessary basis for optimal family functioning and for the success of any family support services. The need to develop a community is even more crucial for Cotting families because the out of district placement leaves them without the connection to a local school community.
- Managing emotions: For parents of children with disabilities, childrearing includes an intense emotional component, requiring the experience and management of a wide range of feelings as development unfolds. Grief and disappointment are always intertwined with hope and pride for our families, as typical developmental milestones may be missed but individual developmental goals are accomplished. Adding to this emotional intensity is the constant anxiety about how to accomplish all that needs to be done for children with complex needs within the very real limits on time, attention, and energy that all parents face.
- Accessing and understanding information: Effective parenting of children with disabilities requires gathering and organizing a vast amount of information from a variety of sources. From finding recreational opportunities in their home communities to preparing for the transition to adulthood, our parents must find and understand the resources that will support the best developmental outcomes for their children throughout their life spans.
- Working effectively as part of a team: Parents of children with disabilities need to be able to function as effective members of the educational and related services teams that work with their children. To do this, they must develop the capacity to speak knowledgeably about the needs of their children and to manage a number of complicated and overlapping relationships with providers in a variety of settings.

Family Support Activities

A variety of support activities are organized and carried out by the Coordinator of Family Support as part of the educational program at Cotting. Support activities begin with the

admissions interview. The Family Support Coordinator is an active participant in admissions interviews, providing information and a first connection for families to the Cotting community in the application process. From this first connection, Cotting families have the option to participate in a variety of family support activities:

- **Parent support groups** are organized in response to parent interest and needs. These groups provide opportunities for parents to feel more connected to each other and to the school, to share information, and to have a safe place to express and receive support for the range of feelings in their experience.
- **Informational meetings** are held for parents to provide ongoing education about a variety of subjects including how Cotting works and preparing for transition.
- At **Parent Coffees**, a speaker is invited from the Cotting staff or from the larger community to present information about a topic of interest to parents in understanding and planning for the development of their children.
- **Special Evening Presentations** are scheduled throughout the school year to provide an opportunity for mothers and fathers to participate together in learning about resources in a workshop format.
- The Family Support Coordinator chairs the **Parent Advisory Committee**, which meets on a monthly basis. The Committee is a working group of parents and administrators in which parents can raise issues of concern and provide advice and feedback to the school administration with regard to programming and issues of interest.
- The Family Support Coordinator sends out a **Weekly Update** to parents via email with a weekly calendar and information sharing of events at Cotting and in the community.

In addition to group support activities, the Family Support Coordinator also provides consultation to Cotting families and staff to support effective teamwork. Individual families may request consultation on an as-needed basis to help determine an appropriate plan when issues of concern arise. These plans may include facilitating communication within the school team, direct support around developmental transitions, information about community resources, and referrals for outside support or treatment. Consultation and support may also be provided to Cotting staff regarding the experience and challenges of working in partnership with the parents of our students. This includes participation in the Cotting Mental Health Department, an interdisciplinary group that meets weekly and is composed of staff involved in supporting the mental health of our students.

Financial Aid for After-School Activities

We know that even under the best of circumstances, making sure that children are able to participate fully in school and after school activities can get expensive for families. For that reason, we maintain a scholarship fund that is open to any family who needs help at any time to meet the out of pocket costs of Cotting activities. There is no paperwork to fill out -- just call or email the Family Support Coordinator with the request and we will be happy to work something out.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Cotting's Parent Teacher Organization is a parent organization developed and run by Cotting parents with the support from the Family Support Coordinator. Its purpose is to provide support

for activities that increase the experience of community for Cotting parents and families. The goals of the group are: to implement more social activities for families, to foster parent-to-parent connections, and to support effective parent-teacher communication and collaboration. The PTO also sponsors and supports a variety of Committees that work on specific projects, including the Fall Family BBQ, New Parent Social, Holiday Shopping Fair for students, Cultural and Enrichment Events, Scholarships for graduating seniors, and Fundraising. Parents may join a Committee at any time. PTO general meetings are open to all parents and are held monthly.

Sibling Groups

We know that the siblings of our students at Cotting may need support of their own at various times in their development. We hope that Cotting will feel like a welcoming community to the brothers and sisters of our students as well and that they will look forward to attending our family events. We seek to know the siblings of our students and respond to their needs. Starting in the 2008-2009 school year, Cotting began to run Sibling Groups based on the “Sibshops” model, and we plan to offer ongoing Sibling Groups once or twice during the school year. The groups are facilitated by our Mental Health Interns under the supervision of the Family Support Coordinator.

Outside Work and Consulting Policy

We want to support participation of all parents at informational events and meetings at Cotting. If problems with child care or transportation may keep you from attending an event when you would like to, please contact the Family Support Coordinator for assistance.

In order to meet scheduling demands and the needs of their children, some Cotting families employ individuals to provide child care or personal care services in their homes. Families of Cotting students may wish to ask a staff member to provide separate, private duty services to the student/family on a part-time basis off school premises and outside of school hours. If a family does engage a staff member of the Cotting School to provide such services, this employment must be directly between the staff member and the family, with the School neither the employer of the staff member nor the contractor of the family. In such event, the work could not interfere with the Cotting School employee’s working time or requirements. All staff and parents that wish to engage in such an employment relationship are required to provide written acceptance of Cotting’s policy on Outside Work and Consulting. This form (p. 48) must be signed by both family and staff member and must be submitted to the Chief Operating Officer.

All staff and parents are required to provide written acceptance of this policy.

APPENDIX A - BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

Cotting School, a Chapter 766 approved private day school, provides comprehensive programs for students from ages 3 to 22, with physical, medical, cognitive, communication and other challenges to learning. All of the students enrolled at Cotting have documented disabilities and an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Cotting School offers individualized academic, prevocational, and social experiences to strengthen skills, build confidence and enhance self-image. Instruction is carried out in small classes, small groups, and on an individual basis in a manner most supportive of each student's learning style. The curriculum is geared to offer each student a range of attainable goals for future educational, vocational, and living experiences upon completion of the program. Each Cotting School staff member shares the comprehensive responsibility for conveying to each student academic knowledge, social values, and appropriate behavior within an appropriately structured milieu. The School is committed to providing each student with the requisite cognitive and social skills for success in their communities and in the future.

Cotting students present with a wide range of needs and abilities, and as such, each student's educational program is individualized to the greatest extent possible. Students' IEP goals and objectives outline target academic and therapeutic areas and form the basis for their educational program. Most students are working towards improving social interaction skills and their ability to communicate in socially acceptable and age appropriate ways. For many students, this includes the ability to initiate conversation, take conversational turns, maintain eye contact, improve topic maintenance, and switch topics appropriately. Other students need support to learn to recognize and interpret non-verbal aspects of social interaction such as body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, and personal space. Social problem-solving skills, such as negotiating an activity with peers or making compromises, are also addressed so that students learn to have successful and positive interactions and develop friendships. Students are provided with specific skills sets that enable them to participate in a variety of social situations at school, at home, and in the community.

Cotting School is unable to meet the needs of children who present with severe behavioral or emotional difficulties. However, we recognize that all students may require emotional and/or behavioral support at different times during their development. To meet these needs, Cotting has a Mental Health Team (MHT) consisting of a school psychologist, guidance counselors, medical department team leader, Director of Upper School Services and the Family Support Coordinator. The Mental Health Team provides support to students and staff and ensures that emotional needs of students are being monitored and met. Counseling is provided individually or in small groups and focuses on issues of self-esteem and/or social skills training. These are areas that are vital to adjustment of students with disabilities. Individuals and/or small groups also meet regarding issues of coping with disabilities, chronic illness, death and dying, and other issues that affect the emotional adjustment of children with serious physical or medical challenges.

The *Cotting School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* was designed in keeping with the particular needs and challenges of our specific student population. As with all aspects of our program, it should be considered within the context of the students and community it was

designed to serve.

Position Statement

Cotting School is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The *Cotting School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* affords protection to all students, regardless of their legal status. We expect all members of our community to follow the Guiding Principles outlined below:

Guiding Principles:

- All students have the right to a safe school environment that is free from bullying or harassment.
- We are committed to teaching our students pro-social behaviors that serve to prevent them from exhibiting aggressive behaviors and protect them from unwanted behaviors that are directed toward them.
- When a situation of bullying or suspected bullying occurs, we will seek out and use our internal and external resources to develop peaceful and useful solutions.
- Each member of our community is deserving of and has the right to be treated with respect.
- We seek to encourage the best from one another and build bridges instead of walls.
- We are all teachers, models, and mentors for our students in our ability to problem solve, compromise, and deal with conflict productively and positively.
- We believe that honest and open communication is essential for the success of our students. This can only happen in an environment where it is safe to share ideas and perspectives.

These principles set a standard for behavior and interaction in our community and are an integral part of our goal to provide a safe learning environment and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying by students or staff members, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

Cotting School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Cotting is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence and promote a safe, respectful learning environment. The Chief Academic Officer or her designee is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a

reported bullying incident involves the CAO or her designee as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Executive Director or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. If the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor, the Board of Trustees, or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

Definitions:

Acts of **bullying**, which include **cyber-bullying**, are prohibited:

- i. on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- ii. at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Aggressor is a student or school staff member 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
- iv. Infringes on the rights of the target at school
- v. 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.

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 and is also prohibited.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

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

Reporting Process:

The following steps outline the process for reporting bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation for both student and staff aggressors:

Reporting

1. Reports can 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. A school staff member is required to report immediately to the Chief Academic Officer or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. When the CAO or her designee is the alleged aggressor, reports can be made to the Executive Director or designee, or to the Board of Trustees or designee when the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor.
2. Reports should be made to the Chief Academic Officer. In the absence of the Chief Academic Officer, reports can be made to the Director of Upper School, Middle School Supervisor, or the Special Education Coordinator. When the CAO or her designee is the alleged aggressor, reports can be made to the Executive Director or designee or to the Board of Trustees or designee when the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor.
3. Faculty, staff, and others who are reporting the instance of bullying should fill out the *Harassment/Bullying Incident Report Form*, however completion of the form is not a requirement for making a report. Alternately, the reporter can request to speak directly with the Chief Academic Officer or designee, who will then complete the form with the information provided. When the CAO or her designee is the alleged aggressor, reports can be made to the Executive Director or designee or to the Board of Trustees or designee when the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor.
4. Parents can contact the Chief Academic Officer or another administrator to report an incident of bullying. When the CAO or her designee is the alleged aggressor, parents can contact the Executive Director or designee, or to the Board of Trustees or designee when the Executive Director is the alleged aggressor.
5. Parents will have access to the reporting form on the school's website and in the Parent Handbook.
6. Students will be encouraged to make reports of bullying to a teacher, therapist, administrator or other trusted adult at school. They may also report to their parents who would then make a report to the school. Many of our students would not be able to fill out the incident report form. In this case, the administrator taking the report would complete the form.

7. All reports of bullying can be made anonymously. It should be noted that no disciplinary action would be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Confidentiality will be respected in the reporting process to the greatest extent possible.

Investigation

1. An investigation will be conducted immediately, or within one school day, after any report of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.
2. An immediate determination of safety will be made for the reported target.
3. All relevant parties, including parents or guardians of both student aggressors and targets will be notified.
4. Sending school districts will also be notified.
5. All relevant parties will be interviewed directly and immediately.
6. Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.
7. Written documentation will be kept of the investigation, interviews, and all findings.
8. Results of findings from an investigation will be reported back to all relevant parties, keeping in mind relevant privacy laws and regulations.

Investigative Findings

1. False Accusations: Disciplinary action will be taken against any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.
2. Negative Findings: If the findings of the investigation are “negative,” meaning that no evidence of bullying has occurred, results will be communicated to all relevant parties. The investigation and its outcome will be documented.
3. Positive Findings: If the findings of the investigation are "positive", meaning that it is found that bullying has occurred, we will provide consequences and supports for the aggressor and supports for the target. Consequences/actions will be proportional to the behavior exhibited.

Taking Appropriate Action

The following actions may be taken in response to an incident of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation:

1. Emergency convening of the IEP teams (separately) of the relevant students to determine what adjustments, supports, or accommodations need to be made, if any, to their IEPs to support the student. The impact of the student’s disability on the incident will be carefully considered.
2. Individual support/counseling will be provided for both the student aggressor and target utilizing Cotting’s School Psychologist and Guidance Counselors where appropriate. For student aggressors, emphasis will be placed on increasing

appropriate behavior and increasing awareness of the impact of behaviors on others. For targets, 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.

3. Referrals may also be made to outside therapists as needed. Cotten make recommend more comprehensive evaluation from other mental health professionals. The Family Support Coordinator will be a resource in these instances. Family counseling may also be recommended depending on the circumstances.
4. A student aggressor may be removed from extra-curricular 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 aggression. If a student needs 1:1 supervision, additional staffing supports will be discussed with the sending school district as appropriate and via a Team meeting.
6. Disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment will be taken against any staff member found to be an aggressor in a report of bullying.
7. Law enforcement will be notified immediately if in the course of our investigation we discover a crime has been committed.

Intervention

When we determine bullying has occurred we will begin:

1. Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's anti-bullying curricula
2. Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel
3. Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
4. Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
5. Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills
6. Making a referral for evaluation as needed.

Suspension and Termination

In some situations, it may be appropriate to suspend a student from school because of an act of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation. All Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations will be followed with regard to suspension as follows:

1. *3-5 Day Suspensions*

When a student's behavior endangers the health and safety of him/herself or others, or causes a substantial disruption of the School's program, the School may suspend or dismiss the student from the total program. Such suspension will have the following limits and requirements.

- Whenever a student is suspended, the School will notify the parent(s) and the public school and/or the human service agency responsible for placement. Within 24 hours a written statement explaining the reason(s) for suspension will follow this notification to both the public school and the parent(s). The Chief Academic Officer and the Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with all appropriate parties.
- No student will be suspended and sent home unless a responsible adult is available to receive the child.
- If a student is suspended for more than three (3) consecutive school days or five (5) non-consecutive school days in a school year, the Special Education Coordinator will meet with the public school district liaison and the parents within five (5) school days of the final suspension. At this meeting the parties will consider alternative measures plus possible resolutions to those issues concerning the student, as well as the possibility of alternative placement.
- Sending a student home "early" or an "in-school suspension" of a student who is not receiving instruction from either a licensed teacher or a paraprofessional who is being supervised by a licensed teacher is considered a suspension
- The student, if 14 years of age or over, shall be notified by the School of his/her right to be present and participate in such a meeting.
- Cotting School considers suspension a disciplinary action for severe infractions that require careful assessment. If suspension is to be considered, a meeting will be held with the Chief Academic Officer or Special Education Coordinator to determine if suspension is warranted and if so, if the action is in the best interest of the student. Cotting School may decide not to suspend a student if such a step has no value as a learning tool or if the action would, in the long run, create an adverse effect.
- Suspensions will be recorded and the number and duration of suspensions, including suspensions from any part of the student's IEP program (including transportation) will be tracked. Records will be maintained and monitored in the Student Services Office by the Chief Academic Officer.

2. *10+ Day Suspensions*

Cotting School implements the following procedures when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10

cumulative days.

Cotting School will make a request of the student's responsible school district to convene an IEP Team meeting, which includes representation from Cotting School, prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities.

Cotting School will participate in the Team meeting:

- To develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior and to develop or modify a behavior intervention plan
- To identify appropriate alternative educational setting(s)
- To conduct a manifestation determination (i.e. to determine the relationship between the disability and the behavior). To do this, the Team asks questions including: *Is the IEP appropriate? Is the placement appropriate? If there was a behavior plan, was it implemented? Does the student understand the impact and consequences of his/her behavior? Can the student control his/her behavior?*

If the team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, the school may suspend or terminate the student consistent with policies applied to any other student in the program. The responsible school district must, however, offer an appropriate education program to the student with disabilities that may be in some other setting.

If the Team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, the placing district, in coordination with the private school, takes steps (with consent of the parent) to modify the IEP, the behavior intervention plan and/or the placement.

Suspensions will be recorded and the number and duration of suspensions, including suspensions from any part of the student's IEP program (including transportation) will be tracked. Records will be maintained and monitored in the Student Services Office by the Chief Academic Officer. When suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days Cotting School will request a Team meeting to discuss a change in placement. The Chief Academic Officer and the Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with all appropriate parties.

Upon admission of a student, Cotting School provides a written policy on suspensions to the parents and to the school district and/or human service agency that placed the student.

3. *Emergency Termination*

If assurance cannot be made that behaviors endangering the health and safety of the student or others will not recur, Cotting School will seek an immediate emergency discharge of the student from the program. Parents of the student must agree that return to and continued placement at Cotting School is contingent upon a behavior plan developed and accepted by the parents, the LEA and Cotting School.

It is the policy of Cotting School to approach a student's termination in a consistent and deliberate fashion. Given the overall needs of the population served by Cotting, planning and predictability are essential in order to maximize a student's potential for success.

- a. For planned terminations, Cotting School will notify the public school district of the need for an IEP review meeting and provide notice of this meeting to all appropriate parties ten (10) days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to develop a clear and specific termination plan for the student that shall be implemented in no less than thirty (30) days unless all parties agree to an earlier termination date.
- b. The plan for termination will include recommendation and provisions for appropriate services in the student's new environment. The person responsible for providing these services will be identified.
- c. Following a student's termination, a written discharge summary will be developed specifying the factors leading to discharge, identifying specific needs and recommending appropriate services.

If Cotting School determines that emergency circumstances exist which warrant an unplanned termination of the student, the school will take the following steps to ensure that the termination process is consistent with the procedures under 603 CMR 28.09(12)(b). "Emergency Circumstances" are defined as circumstances in which the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of himself/herself or others. In the case of an unplanned termination, Cotting School will:

- Immediately notify the parents, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the local administrator of Special Education and officials of all appropriate human service agencies responsible for the placement of the emergency circumstances that the school believes warrant an unplanned termination of the student
- With the public school system, arrange for a TEAM meeting to be conducted in accordance with 603 CMR 28.09(12)(b)
- If feasible, at the request of the public school district, the program may delay termination of the student for up to two (2) calendar weeks to allow the public school district the opportunity to assume responsibility for the student and to convene an emergency TEAM meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination. Cotting School will not terminate the enrollment of any student, even in emergency circumstances, until the enrolling public school district is informed and assumes responsibility for the student.
- With mutual agreement between the public/private special education and the placing public school district, termination may be delayed for longer than two (2) calendar weeks

- The Cotting School will provide information and assistance necessary for public school officials to implement their responsibilities under 603 CMR 28.09(12)(b) Regulation in terminating the student's placement
- The school will participate in meetings and provide information, as appropriate, relative to the student's needs and recommendation for future placement
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Incident Report form (Form 2) will be completed and a written summary attached for distribution to parents, DESE, the SPED administrator of the public school and other involved agencies.

Supports for the Target

To ensure that any students who are targets in an incident of bullying, harassment or retaliation return to a sense of safety and security within the school environment, the following steps will be taken:

1. The School Psychologist or Guidance Counselor will provide individual counseling, as appropriate. These mental health professionals, in consultation with the student's teachers, parents/guardians, and outside therapists as appropriate, will determine what supports would be beneficial to the target. This assessment will occur immediately following the incident, and then at regular intervals as appropriate to ensure there are no latent effects of the incident.
2. The student's IEP will be amended if needed, to include regular and ongoing counseling services or other support services. If the student requires services not available at Cotting, we will work with the sending school district to determine the best way to meet the student's needs.
3. Referrals for outside therapy and/or evaluation will be provided when needed and appropriate.
4. The Chief Academic Officer or designee will meet with the student's parents/guardians to develop a consistent plan for supporting the student at school and carryover at home. In addition, a plan for regular communication about the student's emotional state at school and home will be established.
5. Members of the student's Cotting team will be notified and updated about ways to support the student at school. These could include strategies such as using social stories, providing extra time for relaxation or breaks, using calming strategies such as sensory activities, or helping the student to monitor their level of anxiety or stress.
6. Close supervision will be provided in any setting where the aggressor and target are engaged in common activities.
7. Parents of the target will be notified if the target and aggressor sign up for the same after school events or activities.
8. The appropriate administrators will follow up with teachers and therapists during supervision to ensure that the target is receiving the designated supports throughout the program and across settings.

Protection for Reporters/Witnesses

Confidentiality will be protected to the greatest extent possible for all reporters and witnesses of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Chief Academic Officer or her designee will be responsible for ongoing follow up and supervision regarding the status of witnesses and/or reporters. Any act of retaliation against a witness or reporter, will result in a full investigation following the procedures outlined above. Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken immediately.

Communication

Collaboration with Families: Cotting has and will continue to include families in our developing our response to bullying. We will communicate about the curricula we are using, how parents can support our efforts at home, and dynamics of bullying, and online safety. Parents and guardians will be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

A. Parent education and resources: Cotting 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. These may include:

- Parent coffees
- Parent Advisory Committee presentations and meetings
- Annual letter from Health class instructors
- Back to School Night presentation
- Distribution of the Parent Handbook
- Access to the *Cotting School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* on the school website
- Annual Internet Safety policy distribution

B. Notification requirements: Each year Cotting 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. Cotting will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's Internet safety policy.

C. Notification of incidents: The Chief Academic Officer or her designee will notify parents/guardians of both targets and student aggressors immediately following a report of an incident of bullying. Parents/guardians will also be notified, orally and in writing, of the outcome of any investigation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, within the limits of student privacy laws. Included in notification to the parents/guardians of student aggressors will be the disciplinary actions taken, actions to prevent further incidents, supports provided for the aggressor, and a plan for communication between the parents/guardians and the school. Notification to parents of targets will include actions to prevent further incidents, supports provided for the target, and a plan for communication between the parents/guardians and the school. Parents/guardians of both student aggressors and targets will also be notified of any reports to law enforcement.

Professional Development

Cotting will include specific, ongoing training at Orientation, Winter Session, Professional Development Day, and during designated Wednesday afternoon professional development times throughout the year. The goal of the professional development activities is to build the skills of all staff members including teachers, administrators, therapists, nurses, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, custodians, and all other staff. *Cotting School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* will be available to all staff in the Policies and Procedures Handbook.

Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Chief Academic Officer or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all program levels. Cotting will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in the Policies and Procedures Manual

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of the professional development activities 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. Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying
- iv. Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment
- v. Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying
- vi. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified for professional development include:

- Social skill development in students with complex disabilities
- Self-advocacy skills for student with cognitive and developmental challenges
- Safety in the community for student with multiple disabilities
- 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
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.
- Engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors

Strategies for Intervention:

A. Specific bullying prevention approaches.

Bullying prevention curricula, including the Circles Curriculum, will be used with our students. The Circles Program teaches social distance and levels of intimacy through the use of six color-coded concentric circles.

Starting from the center Purple Private circle, which is the self, each new colored circle represents behaviors, feelings, and actions appropriate to the distance from the center, or self.

The Circles Program assists students in discriminating different degrees of intimacy and to adapt their behaviors accordingly. The program teaches students how relationships can be formed and maintained according to acceptable social norms. Thus, the Circles Program lays the foundation for people with social deficits due to their disabilities to manage the amount of personal responsibility and social integration in their lives.

The program consists of video programs, discussion, activities and role-plays designed to teach social distance. It explores the level of intimacy between people in the way that they TOUCH, TALK to and TRUST each other. Students will learn "relationship boundaries" and relationship-specific behaviors.

An advanced class is offered and designed for students who have already completed Circles, Part I. This class discusses relationship transitions, and how relationships can and do change over time. Understanding what is unwanted behavior to and by others is helpful in preventing behavior that may lead to taunting, mocking or bullying.

The Cotting Middle School also uses the QUEST program from the book "A QUEST for Social Skills for Students with Autism or Aspergers (Cumpata & Fell, 2010). QUEST (Questioning, Understanding, and Exploring Social Skills and Pragmatic Language Together) is a social skills program created to help middle school students with ASD who struggle with pragmatic language and social skills. A school social worker and speech language pathologist developed this program. It uses an intensive, proactive approach to teaching social skills, combining written instruction with games, activities, and student interaction. Students have a great time learning-

by-doing, through role-play and real-world experience.

Because a specific research and evidence-based bullying curriculum for students with severe cognitive impairments does not exist, we will use our current curriculum to emphasize:

- Using scripts and role plays to develop skills
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance
- Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance
- Emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies
- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications
- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

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, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students
- Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline
- Using positive behavioral supports
- Encouraging adults to develop 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 behavioral 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.

Cotting School Harassment/Bullying Incident Report Form

Aggressor Name (s):

Classroom:

Target Name (s):

Classroom:

Room/Location:

Type of Harassment alleged:

Racial: _____ Religious: _____ Gender/Sexual Orientation _____ Disability _____

Other: _____

Check all spaces below that apply:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name calling | <input type="checkbox"/> Stalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate gesturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staring/leering | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/graffiti | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taunting/ridiculing | <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate touching | <input type="checkbox"/> Spitting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demeaning Words | <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing | <input type="checkbox"/> Damaging property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoving/pushing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting/kicking | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashing a weapon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation/extortion | | |

Other _____

Describe the incident:

Names of Witnesses present (if any):

Physical evidence:

Graffiti _____ Notes _____ E-mail _____ Web sites _____ Video/audio tape _____

Other _____

Reporter(s) Name and Signature: _____

Name of Parent(s) contacted:

Date _____

Time _____

Name (s) of Administrative Investigator (s)

Response taken (including supports and or consequences):

APPENDIX B - COTTING SCHOOL ANTI-HAZING POLICY

Cotting School does not have any student-organized or run groups, teams, or organizations. All groups are organized and supervised by adults at all times and students are never left unattended. However, Cotting School strictly prohibits any acts of hazing associated with student groups, teams, or organizations.

The CAO or her designee will investigate any reports of hazing within 24 hours. If it is determined that a student participated in an act of hazing the following disciplinary actions may be taken in conjunction with consequences outlined in the Cotting School Discipline Code:

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 utilizing Cotting's School Psychologist and Guidance Counselors where appropriate. 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 reinforcing 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 extra-curricular 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 our investigation we discover a crime has been committed.

All students will be provided with a copy of the School's 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.

Cotting School will file, at least annually, 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

APPENDIX C- DISCHARGE ORDERS

To the Physician: In order to assure Cotting students are receiving the highest care possible, we must ask that you complete this discharge order form and indicate any changes, limitations or precautions which should be incorporated in the child's school program services.

_____ has been hospitalized with a diagnosis of: _____

Student's Name

_____, and is able to return to school as of _____
Date

Medical/Nursing Services

- ___ This student has a medication change. A signed, medication order is attached.
- ___ This student requires treatment(s) or dressing changes in school. A signed order is attached.
- ___ This student is now on a special diet, or has the following modifications or restrictions related to feeding: _____

- ___ This student has the following modifications or restrictions related to toileting: _____

- ___ This student has other modifications or restrictions, which consist of: _____

- ___ This student may return without any modifications or restrictions.

Physical/Occupational Therapy Services

- ___ This student may return with the following modifications or restrictions: _____

- ___ The following limits on mobility should be set for this student: (feeding, walking, standing, running, stretching, strengthening, lifting, exercise, adapted physical education etc.) _____

- ___ This student may fully weight bear
- ___ This student may partially weight bear: _____
- ___ This student should be non-weight bearing until: _____
- ___ The following precautions shall be taken when transferring this student: _____

- ___ This student may return without any modifications or restrictions.

Other Considerations for School Program: _____

This student ___ is ___ is not fit to work at his or her in house job or off-campus job.

Physician's Signature

Phone Number

Physician's Name Printed

Date

I give my permission for Cotting School's Nurses to contact the Physician with any questions related to this Discharge Summary.

Parent's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D - COTTING SCHOOL Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) BY-LAWS

BY-LAWS OF COTTING SCHOOL PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

Article I. NAME

The name of this committee is **Cotting School Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)**.

Article II. MISSION

The mission of the **Cotting School Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)** is to provide regular, organized, and open meetings of Cotting parents and staff for the purpose of sharing different perspectives in the service of improving the school and school culture.

Article III. GOALS

- 1) To provide an opportunity for Cotting parents and administration to share experiences, communicate information, make suggestions and recommendations, and share concerns in a respectful and supportive atmosphere.
- 2) To communicate the content, tone, and recommendations from PAC discussions to the larger Cotting community
- 3) To actively work to improve the inclusivity, accessibility, and experience of belonging for parents and families in the Cotting community.
- 4) To support a forum for Cotting parents to contribute knowledge, resources and feedback for the betterment of the school and school programs
- 5) To seek ways to include all Cotting parents who wish to participate in the PAC and its activities

Article IV. MEMBERSHIP

Along with all members of Cotting administration, all Cotting parents are considered members of the PAC and are welcome to attend all meetings and participate in PAC activities.

Article V. MEETINGS

- 1) Each school year, the Family Support Coordinator will propose dates and times for PAC meetings, with input from Senior Administration and the parent community.
- 2) The schedule for PAC meetings will be provided to the parent community in advance.
- 3) Each PAC meeting will follow an agenda that will be determined and circulated to all parents in advance. Items may be included on the agenda by submitting them in advance of the meeting to the Family Support Coordinator. Any staff member or parent can suggest an item for the agenda.
- 4) Minutes will be taken at each meeting and distributed via email to all Cotting parents in a timely manner.

Article VI. SUBCOMMITTEES

Subcommittees will be determined as needed by the consensus of the PAC.

Article VII. PROCEDURE RULES

If the PAC is faced with a decision requiring a vote, notice of that vote would appear on the agenda for the next available meeting. A quorum of 5 parents and 2 members of the Administration would be needed to vote on any decision arising. If there is a tie in the voting process, e-mails will be allowed to let other voting members of the PAC break that tie. A Simple Majority vote is needed for a decision.

Article VIII. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws were accepted at the January 27, 2017 meeting of the Cotting Parent Advisory Committee. They may be amended at any regular meeting of the PAC, provided that the amendment has been submitted, in writing, at the previous regular monthly meeting and circulated to the Membership. A simple majority vote will be needed to pass the Amendment. By-Laws will be reviewed as needed.

PHV 1-27-17

APPENDIX E - COTTING SCHOOL – Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) BY-LAWS

BY-LAWS

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Article I.

The name of this group is **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

Article II.

MISSION AND GOALS

The **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)** is a parent-run organization established to provide activities that support the experience of community for students and families at Cotting School. The goals of the PTO are to implement social activities for families, to foster parent-to-parent connections, and to enhance, enrich, and encourage communication and collaboration between parents and Cotting faculty. The PTO seeks to accomplish these goals through open discussions at scheduled meetings, regular communication with those parents who are not able to attend these meetings, and making suggestions for community activities at Cotting School. The PTO seeks the advice of, and seeks to work closely with, all other groups at Cotting. Through this parent-driven network, the PTO works to improve connections in our school community and to respond to each family and student fairly at all times.

Article III.

MEMBERSHIP

- (1) All Cotting parents are considered members of the PTO and are welcome to attend meetings or respond to questions or proposals via note, phone, or email.
- (2) The Cotting Family Support Coordinator shall attend each meeting and provide support in facilitating communication, planning, meetings, and activities.
- (3) The Chief Academic Officer shall provide administrative support to the PTO.

Article IV.

OFFICERS

- (1) The officers of the PTO shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary and shall be referred to as a group as “the PTO Officer Team”.
- (2) The duties of the officers shall be as follows: The Chairperson shall be responsible for chairing each PTO meeting, and with the input of the officer team, collecting suggestions for determining each meeting’s agenda. The Vice Chairperson shall work alongside the Chairperson in his or

her duties, and shall chair meetings in the Chairperson's absence. The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping and reporting the financial records of the PTO, and the Recording Secretary shall be responsible for taking and writing up the minutes of each PTO meeting (or designating someone else to take minutes in his/her absence).

- (3) The Family Support Coordinator shall be responsible for sending out the agenda for each meeting to all parents, as well as distributing the minutes of each meeting.
- (4) The PTO Officer Team shall be elected each school year for a one-year term, with no limit on the number of terms an individual may serve.
- (5) Elections shall take place yearly.
- (6) Nominations will be solicited for this election. Parents may nominate themselves or another parent to run for one of the offices. If a candidate for an officer position is nominated by another parent, that candidate will be asked for his or her permission before appearing on the ballot.
- (7) A ballot of candidates will be put together from these nominations and sent out to all parents. All votes should be sent to the Family Support Office by a date designated on the ballot. Votes may be sent on a paper ballot or via an email ballot.
- (8) The votes shall be tabulated and announced to the parent community during the school week after the voting has closed and the ballots counted. The term of the new officers shall begin on this date.

Article V.

MEETINGS

- (1) The PTO shall hold regular meetings during the school calendar year. The schedule of meeting dates shall be determined by the PTO Officer Team and shall be made available to all Cotting parents.
- (2) An agenda for each meeting shall be determined by the Officers with input from Cotting parents and distributed to the parent community in advance of each meeting.
- (3) A quorum consisting of at least one officer of the PTO, two other Cotting parents, and a Cotting administrator must be present for a scheduled meeting to take place and for voting purposes. Those attending the meeting in person or via conference call shall be considered present.
- (4) Requests for special meetings may be made by any parent but must be approved by the officers.

Article VII.

PROCEDURE RULES

- (1) A quorum of at least two parents is needed at each meeting to vote on any proposal.
- (2) All votes will be carried by a simple majority.
- (3) If a vote results in a tie, the question will be put on the next month's meeting agenda and will be voted on then.
- (4) If a question is too time-sensitive to wait until the next meeting, the officers may opt to send the question out to Cotting parents for a vote via email.
- (5) Suggestions for events or activities shall be put on the agenda for the next PTO meeting and

voted on according to the bylaws. The information about the event and the vote of the PTO shall be entered into the minutes.

- (6) All money that is raised at a PTO event or activity shall be deposited into the PTO account via the Treasurer.
- (7) Requests for the withdrawal of funds from the PTO treasury must be voted on at a monthly meeting according to the bylaws. Such requests may be presented in person or in writing and will appear on the agenda.
- (8) In the event that the PTO or one of its committees takes on the task of raising funds for a more expensive event or project, one that would require more than one fundraiser and the holding of funds in the treasury over time, these funds will be held in escrow in the Treasury until the financial goal is reached for the event, or until the event can be scheduled. A proposal form should be sent to the officer team if disbursement of monies for these long-term projects is needed between scheduled PTO meetings.

Article VII

COMMITTEES

- (1) Any interested parents may establish a subcommittee within the PTO to work on a specific project or activity to benefit the Cotting community.
- (2) Such a committee shall be established by putting a proposal for the committee on a PTO meeting agenda, presenting the proposal at the meeting (either in person, via conference call, or in writing), and voting on the proposal according to the PTO Procedure Rules.
- (2) All PTO committees and their members shall be posted to the general parent community. Any Cotting parent shall be free to join a PTO committee.
- (3) These committees may meet and communicate according to their own schedule and needs.
- (4) Each committee shall maintain communication with the PTO by reporting on their activities and needs at each monthly PTO meeting. These reports may be delivered in person, in written form, or via email.

Article VIII.

AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

Bylaws will be reviewed as needed. They may also be amended at any regular meeting of the PTO provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular monthly meeting. A simple majority vote will pass the amendment.

PHV 3-1-17

APPENDIX F - COTTING SCHOOL COMMUNITY CODE OF RESPECT

At Cotting, we strive to create and maintain a respectful and professional learning environment. Both parents and Cotting staff members alike should expect to be treated in a respectful and professional manner in any interaction. During the 2008-9 school year, through the work of the Cotting Parent Advisory Committee, Cotting administrators and parents set out to write a set of guidelines for communication that would encompass the strengths, values, and challenges of our community. The result was the following code, which is put forth to serve as both reminder and guide for respectful and effective communication.

Statement

Cotting School values diversity and community and is committed to a culture that fosters free and open communication. Cotting believes that a professional environment of mutual respect and civil conduct between and among students, staff, parents, volunteers, and school districts is critical to the achievement of students and staff. Cotting is committed to maintaining a culture that recognizes the worth and dignity of each individual in our community. Our common purpose is the growth and development of our students.

Principles

This Code of Respect was created to help us adopt the following guiding principles into our culture and community:

- Each member of our community is deserving of and has the right to be treated with respect.
- We are all teachers, models, and mentors for our students in our ability to solve problems, compromise, and deal with conflict productively and positively.
- We share the responsibility to work together to create an environment that fosters acceptance of the unique qualities and abilities of all community members so that we can learn from and teach each other.
- We seek to encourage the best from one another and build bridges instead of walls.
- We believe that honest and open communication is essential for the success of our students. This can only happen in an environment where it is safe to share ideas and perspectives.

Standards

In following the Community Code of Respect, community members are expected to maintain the following standards of behavior on campus as well as at school-sponsored events and activities:

- Courtesy in actions, language, and demeanor
- Moderate tone and volume of voice
- Active and respectful listening
- Respectful acknowledgement of cultural differences
- Respect for the personal, civil, and property rights of others
- Appropriate and courteous communication, including telephone calls, notes, letters, email and text messages
- Taking care to direct communication to appropriate or relevant individuals
- Choosing the appropriate time and location to address a concern
- Willingness to continue to engage in conversation to resolve issues

The following behaviors are held to be unacceptable in our community:

- Rude, threatening, insulting or demeaning language and/or actions
- Harassment and intimidation
- Use of profanity and/or vulgar and offensive language
- Violations of privacy of boundaries

Incidents of behavior that violate our community standards shall be resolved cooperatively between or among the individual(s) most directly involved.

Cooperation

In order to maintain the standards of our community, we resolve that:

- All members of the Cotting community are expected to comply with this policy.
- It is the responsibility of each individual to behave in a respectful manner and to participate in resolving situations in which behavior has been experienced as disrespectful.

Relationship of this Policy to other School Policies

- The Executive Director (or his designee) is responsible for determining whether a situation or incident further violates an existing school policy and for responding appropriately according to that policy.
- The Executive Director (or his designee) will provide for annual notification of this policy to students, staff, parents, and community members.

Our Commitment

The Cotting School community makes a commitment to:

- **Believe in the best intentions of all students, faculty, administrators and parents**
- Give the benefit of the doubt
- Be welcoming and inclusive
- Be open to compromise in our interactions
- Respect boundaries
- Be open-minded
- Refrain from making assumptions or jumping to conclusions
- Avoid generalizations or exaggerations
- Avoid placing blame

APPENDIX G – COTTING SCHOOL CODE OF DISCIPLINE

COTTING SCHOOL CODE OF DISCIPLINE

Discipline Information

Cotting School expects our students to follow the rules for appropriate conduct outlined in the Student Handbook. It is the responsibility of each student to behave in a way that shows respect for the rights and property of all members of our community. **Cotting School does not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any members of its community, including that based upon race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.**

Cotting School Administration reserves the right to modify the Student Code of Discipline as needed. All responses to violations of the Code of Conduct outlined in the Student Handbook will be considered in the context of the student's disability. This Code of Discipline is meant to serve as a guide for possible consequences for various behaviors.

Any behavior considered to be inappropriate and disruptive to the learning environment that may not be specifically mentioned in this code will be handled in a manner the administration believes is best for all people involved.

The Cotting School Code of Discipline is in effect in the following places and during the following times:

- On school property at any time
- At any school-sponsored event
- On school vans (community trips, worksites etc.)
- Any time or place where the student's conduct has a direct and immediate effect on the school or its students

Disciplinary Action

Prevention:

Our most often used, and most effective means of managing difficult, disruptive, or dangerous behaviors is to prevent them from happening in the first place. We use a variety of strategies to support appropriate conduct in school including:

- Providing a structured, predictable and consistent learning environment to help decrease student anxiety.
- Develop a deep understanding of the student including their history, diagnosis and environmental triggers and signals associated with challenging behavior.
- Foster students' self-esteem and provide ample opportunities for success.
- Make sure students clearly understand what is expected of them.
- Provide students with some opportunities during their day when they can exercise choice and control.

- Help students develop the skills to identify and label their emotions effectively, and thus communicate effectively about their wants and needs.

It is our hope that our students are able to learn to be as independent as possible in managing their emotions, impulses and sensory needs. By doing this, they will improve their ability to solve problems and make positive behavioral choices.

Intervention:

When an exception arises and a student does not comply with school rules and expectations, staff may appeal to the Chief Academic Officer (or designee) if efforts to support positive behavior and conduct have failed. The levels of disciplinary action which shall be enforced by school administration with students who are in violation of school rules include:

Level I: Cheating, swearing, plagiarism, falsifying records, defiance, disruption, inappropriate use of electronics

- Student Conference/Verbal Warning(s)
- Notification of Parents

Level II: Repeat offenses of cheating, swearing, plagiarism, defiance, disruption, inappropriate use of electronics

- Conference with students, parents and/or teacher and/or administrator – this will result in a follow-up/action plan that will be put into place by the parties present.

Level III: Verbal abuse, fighting with or without injuries, assault, battery, serious injury, pulling fire alarm, gambling, hazing, sexual harassment, other harassment, bullying (emotional, physical, ethnic, racial, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, cyberbullying)

- Emergency Team Meeting, conference with students, parents and/or teacher and/or administrator – this will result in a follow-up/action plan that will be put into place by the parties present.
- Reporting to home district
- Possible Out-of-School Suspension
- Reporting to other applicable agencies (DESE, DCF, DPPC)

Level IV: Repeated incidences of verbal abuse, fighting with or without injuries, assault, battery, serious injury, pulling fire alarm, gambling, hazing, sexual harassment, other harassment, bullying (emotional, physical, ethnic, racial, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, cyberbullying). **Any instance of arson, vandalism, possession/sale of controlled substances, any possession of weapons or explosives**

- Emergency Team Meeting, conference with students, parents and/or teacher and/or administrator – this will result in a follow-up/action plan that will be put into place by the parties present.
- Reporting to home district

- Out-of-School Suspension
- Possible Police Report
- Possible Expulsion
- Reporting to other applicable agencies (DESE, DCF, DPPC)

Given that all Cotting School students present with documented disabilities, Cotting School will follow all Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations regarding suspension pursuant to state and federal regulations, specifically, 34 CFR 300.530-537. In addition, any action towards expulsion will occur in conjunction with Cotting's Planned Termination and Emergency Termination policies in accordance with CMR 28.09(12).

Suspended or expelled students shall be denied the privilege of participation in all extracurricular and co-curricular activities (e.g. athletic practice, after-school activities) during the period of suspension or expulsion.

Filing a Complaint or Grievance

If the parents and/or students have complaints regarding any disciplinary interventions, the parents or student should contact the following administrators through phone call, email, written correspondence or scheduled meeting:

Krista Macari: Lower School
Ann Buckley: Middle School
Laraine Wilson: Upper School/Capstone
Leah Thibodeau: IEP related concerns

The designated administrator will respond within one (1) business day to discuss the concern, conduct an investigation as appropriate, and schedule a follow-up meeting with the parent(s) or student and relevant personnel as necessary. If the concern or problem has not been resolved, the complaint or concern will be reported to the CAO (Krista Macari) or the Executive Director (David Manzo).

APPENDIX H - OUTSIDE WORK AND CONSULTING POLICY

As a condition of my/our child’s enrollment at the School, I/we accept the School’s policy on Outside Work and Consulting. I/we agree that if I/we engage a School staff member to provide separate, private duty services to my child/family on a part-time basis off School premises and outside of School hours, the employment or contractual relationship is solely between me/us and the staff member, and that the School is not the staff member’s employer or contractor, or my/or contractor, with respect to such work.

Accordingly, the School will have no liability to me/us or to my child in any way in connection with any private duty services that I/we may provide to students/families, and will not be responsible for the quality of care provided, or for any liabilities to the staff member or third parties, in connection with that private duty work. We understand that private duty personnel also will not be covered under the School’s insurance policies, and that I/we and the staff member must obtain our own appropriate insurances. I/we recognize and agree that I/we are solely responsible for any financial obligations to private duty personnel, and the School has no financial obligations.

Employee Name

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Student Receiving Private Duty Services