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Family Handbook

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Our History

Milestones began in the kitchen of Alex Michaels' home in 1994. Aptly named Educational Consultants of New England (ECN), Alex and her hand picked staff consulted with schools and families to design classrooms that would effectively meet the needs of their students with special needs. ECN quickly gained a reputation with the local community for "thinking outside the box". During this time ECN opened "Camp Good Times" a successful summer program alternative focusing on pragmatics for children on the autism spectrum. Due to an expanding need, ECN next opened a home-based services division providing ABA and Floortime therapies. As the years went on, it was clear that the next logical step was to open a year round day school program for children with special needs. The original name of the program was "The School for Accelerated Learning". In 2010, ECN and School for Accelerated Learning merged to become "Milestones". The day school program became our primary focus, growing from three to almost 80 students over the course of just ten years.

Our Mission, Vision, and Beliefs

While most of our students struggled in traditional school settings, we are inspired by their tremendous potential which is allowed to flourish in a customized and nurturing environment. Each day, our students are building skills to interact, communicate, and learn more effectively. The natural consequence of this practice is evident in their increased self-esteem, and confidence even beyond our school walls. Each member of our extensive multidisciplinary team at Milestones is devoted to joining our students and their families on this very important journey toward fulfillment both educationally and socially. We believe that every student must be provided equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, disability, or homelessness, to obtain an education that meets his or her personal needs and interests, and to develop intellectually, morally, socially, and physically.

Milestones Culture and Core Values:

- Potential, Perseverance, Positivity, Partnerships, and Best Practices
- We model positive universal Core Values for our Milestones' students and community: Safety, Respect, and Responsibility, along with pride in our Bulldog mascot.
- Each student has undeniable potential. We are fierce advocates for highlighting students' strengths and capabilities while celebrating milestones of progress and achievement.
- Our students, their families, and our staff adapt to challenges they may face each day. We embrace their courage, tenacity, humor, and optimism.
- A caring, nurturing, and optimistic environment is the foundation of Milestones. Our

highly qualified, passionate staff promote a culture of respect and positivity. We emphasize our students' strengths, abilities, and gifts through educational and therapeutic programming and interactions with parents and others.

- Students thrive when they are supported by a strong, collaborative partnership between parents, teachers, school districts, therapeutic professionals, and community partners. We work to build connections that provide resources necessary for our students to overcome obstacles and feel supported.
- 21st century classroom technology and research-based educational approaches are proven tools that promote enhanced learning and positive outcomes. Our students benefit from innovative methods, including creative and flexible programming and new and emerging technologies.

Our Student Profile

The primary populations we serve are students diagnosed with neurocognitive disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorders, Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Tourette's Syndrome, Anxiety Disorders, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, sensory integration dysfunction, bipolar/mood disorder, learning disabilities, and other neurocognitive disorders. We also serve students with complex learning profiles/disabilities. Our students' unique profiles of strengths and challenges require more specialized support than public school settings.

Given the challenges our students face, our therapeutic curriculum includes explicit instruction of social skills, coping and regulation skills, and emotional regulation and development in a small group setting, and is embedded throughout the day and across all school settings. In addition to age appropriate therapeutic classes, students participating in Milestones transition services work intensely on increasing their independence, and at the high school and post-high school level explore options for their future through work sites, dual enrollment at a local community college, weekly community exposures, and when appropriate, job shadowing opportunities.

Based on the overarching goal of increasing our students proficiency in learning, and interacting, Milestones has adopted and is influenced by the best practices of many programs created by professionals in the special education community.

School Profile

Milestones serves up to 80 students ranging in ages from 5-22. As a therapeutic day school and transitions program, Milestones is committed to providing our students with a high quality education. Our therapeutic component is designed to help our students access their education. Both the academic and therapeutic programming are interwoven, culminating in a

comprehensive learning experience that enriches academic, intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

Academic Programming

Milestones selects specific programs for academic instruction that best suit our population of learners and are aligned with the Massachusetts Frameworks Curriculum and Common Core. As our students have varying skills, academics are differentiated by our special educators, and students are grouped accordingly. All MDS students may receive reasonable homework (unless otherwise stipulated in their IEP) to help practice independent application of academic instruction and prepare for academic success once students transition from MDS. Specific homework assignments and expectations vary across grade levels. Academic programming is highly technological using Google for Education, Smart Boards, I-pads, and E-textbooks for some middle and most high schoolers.

Academic Honesty: MDS expects that each student will produce and submit his/her own work and to clearly reference any sources or information used in his/her work that was generated by someone else. Cheating, copying, plagiarism, or use of a student's previously submitted materials constitutes a behavior infraction and will result in a zero for the project or assignment.

- **Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS):** Students at Milestones are required by state law to take MCAS. Accommodations will be listed in the student's IEP and these accommodations will be provided throughout the year. There are some accommodations that the student may receive throughout the school year, but may not be eligible for on the MCAS tests based upon state law. In the fall and spring we will notify you of the exact dates of testing. According to Massachusetts regulation students need to pass only the 10th grade exams as a requirement for graduation with a diploma. Students who do not pass their 10th grade MCAS will be given additional opportunities to try to pass. If a student does not pass and is ready to graduate, they will be given a certification of completion instead of a diploma from Milestones.

- **SATS/PSATS:** Milestones offers high school students the option to take the PSATs and SATs each year at our facility. For any student who requires accommodations, Milestones will inform the family of how to apply to the College Board, but it is the parent's obligation to apply. Documentation for accommodations may take up to 6 months and therefore it is important for families to inform Milestones if your child plans to take any of these tests.

Therapeutic Model

Our model is unique in that we start with explicit instruction through small classes, and embed the therapeutic curriculum throughout the day in all classes. This allows for the generalization of skills

through practice and exposure, rather than isolated lessons alone. The below programs are some of the therapeutic models that we use:

- **Social skills ~ Taught by Speech & Language Pathologists Team:** Social Skills classes focus on the concept of social thinking and taking others' perspectives - we think about people when we interact with them. Understanding this underlying concept is critical to students' success with a variety of specific social skills (body language, conversational skills, expected behaviors, etc.). Social Skills classes are taught through instruction, discussion, powerpoint presentation, viewing of movie/tv show clips, group activities, and in the community as well. The SLPs use portions of Michelle Garcia Winner's Social Thinking curriculum to help students gain much needed social skills as well as other "best practices".
- **Coping & Regulation ~ Taught by Occupational Therapist Team:** Occupational Therapy is the therapeutic use of self-care, work, and play activities to increase independent function and enhance development. It includes both skill development and adaptation of task or environment to achieve maximum independence and to enhance the quality of life. Occupational therapists develop specific structured activities to build: fine motor skills, gross motor skills, ocular motor skills, visual perception, visual motor skills, processing skills, sensory processing, and communication/interaction skills. Occupational therapists help people develop independence in their 'everyday activities' including: sensory processing, activities of daily living, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation. The Coping & Regulation Skills curriculum is designed by our Occupational Therapists to enhance the student's ability to fully access and be successful in the learning environment. OT groups and individual sessions focus on processing skills, motor skills, and visual perceptual skills so the student can complete academic assignments. Therapy also focuses on sensory processing and how a student's senses influence the way he or she participates in school. Therapists also work with the teacher and student to modify the classroom and adapt learning materials to facilitate success. Examples of programs the OT's use are called the "Zones of Regulation" and the "1-5 scale".
- **Emotional Regulation & Development ~ Taught by Psychologists:** Emotional Regulation groups provide the students with an opportunity to explore different issues from a psychological perspective as well as practice problem-solving skills, perspective taking and cognitive flexibility. Depending on the grade and the needs of the students, classes have in the past included executive functioning exercises, discussions of mental health and diagnoses, education around issues involved in dating and friendships, a movie making project, discussions regarding transition to adulthood and a moral dilemmas debate group. Milestones uses multiple approaches including Collaborative Problem Solving which is an evidenced-based approach designed to address the needs of children with behavioral and emotional dysregulation. The approach is based on the belief that children struggle not from a lack of motivation or desire to do well, but rather due to a lack of executive functioning and

self-regulation skills, specifically those related to problem-solving, flexibility and frustration tolerance. Collaborative Problem Solving avoids the use of control and motivational procedures and focuses instead on building empathic working relationships to solve problems and teach the skills that the students need to be successful.

Milestones' Vocabulary Index

At Milestones, we have designed our own curriculum based upon best practices and a collaboration of ideas from leading experts in the field as well as some of their models. Some terms your student may come home with may not be familiar to you, so we have provided a glossary to assist you (several of these terms come from the work of Michelle Garcia-Winner's Social Thinking).

- Stay on Topic: Students are asked to consider if what they have to say is related to the group's conversation.
- Show that you care: Asking a question using information you know about a person or making empathic statements.
- Bubble Thought: A thought we should keep in our head so that we do not hurt someone's feelings or offend them.
- Equal talking time: Making sure everyone has a chance to talk in a conversation.
- Stuck or "Rock Brain": When a student is constantly thinking or talking about the same topic over and over
- Oops: Something that the student didn't expect to happen ("that's an oops")
- Glitch: Minor problem (i.e, if a student drops his snack, this is a glitch vs. a major disaster)
- Level of the problem: Using a 1-5 scale, we determine the level of the problem and the appropriate reaction based upon that level. Examples of 1-5 problems might be:
 - 1 - dropping your pencil
 - 2 - forgetting your lunch money at home
 - 3 - breaking your arm
 - 4 - car accident with minor injuries
 - 5 - death, hurricane, war
- Whole body listening: Using your whole body to attend to the speaker (i.e., facing forward, eye contact, calm body, good attention)
- Social Fake: Giving a socially acceptable response even when your true reaction is negative ("thanks for the socks for my birthday")
- Social Smarts: Using your brain not just for school smarts (the things we learn/know) but also to think about those around you. How are you making others feel and how can you show you are interested in them?
- Big picture: Getting the "gist" of something, not just focusing on minor details.

- Flexible thinking: Able to consider another’s point of view or way of doing something; doing something even if you don’t want to
- Good Thoughts/Weird Thoughts: All people have thoughts about other people. Most thoughts are good or normal thoughts, but each of us may do things each day which can cause people to have “weird thoughts” about us. Creating a small number of weird thoughts each day in other people is totally acceptable, but when we create too many weird thoughts in others, they start to think we may not be nice or safe to be with, or that we just don’t seem to care about them.
- Expected vs. Unexpected: Every environment has a set of unwritten rules that people expect to be followed, such as talking when it’s your turn, respecting personal space, etc... When people follow these rules, some of which are not always explained to the student, then he/she is considered to be doing “what is expected”. Students who don’t follow the rules are doing what is “unexpected” and people may have “weird thoughts” about them.
- Take a Break: Go into the sensory room or other area to help you get more energy, get rid of your energy, or cope with your emotions.
- Fidget: A small hand-held object that helps keep students regulated

Policies and Procedures Manual

Milestones policies and procedures manual is kept at the front desk and available for parents and the public to view upon request.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Communication with Families

Milestones Day School is committed to parent involvement. We believe that students thrive when the school and family are able to work together as a team. (In the case of a student who is in the legal custody of only one parent or guardian, a copy of the legal agreement must be on file at MDS. Custody agreements may also affect the release of information, such as school reports. Parents should notify the school if this is the case for their child.)

Communication occurs in several ways:

- *Milestones Parent Advisory Group (or PAG)*: Milestones Day School holds a parent meeting open to all interested parents 4 times per year. The goal of the committee is to discuss any issues that arise involving education, health, and safety of the student and for parents to voice their ideas and concerns. In addition, the Milestones PAG has a vital role in supporting our community.

Members may take on specific roles such as helping to identify appropriate speakers and training topics for families, planning for outside of school activities, fundraising etc. We welcome any parents or guardians of Milestones Day School students to attend these meetings. A Milestones' Director is present at the meetings, and frequently other leadership staff are also in attendance. Families are encouraged to participate.

- *Weekly Phone Conferences or Email:* All students are assigned a case manager for ongoing parent communication, and his/her office phone and email contact information is provided to parents upon assignment. Parents have the option of receiving a brief weekly phone call or email with your child's Case Manager to discuss your child's week. This is a good time to touch base with any questions or concerns you have both academically and therapeutically. In addition, You can email any time, but please understand that our staff may not be able to respond back to you right away or may include their response in their weekly planned conference or email.
- *Meetings:* Because we want to focus on the student's therapeutic progress and education, if you have questions or issues you would like to discuss that will take more than 1-2 minutes, please save the question for your weekly phone check-in, send an email, or make an appointment with your student's Case Manager or Principal if appropriate. Should you have an emergency, please call anytime.
- *Parent Conferences:* Parent conferences may be held upon your request. Please contact your child's Case Manager to arrange.
- *Parent Portal:* Parents can visit the "Parent Portal" on the Milestones website and find valuable information about the school. Parents can access Google Classroom with their students' passcode. Google Classroom contains course work assignments, notes, communication, etc. This affords a good opportunity to talk about current curriculum with your student.
- *School-wide Newsletters and Social Media:* Throughout the year, Milestones' administration circulates by email several school-wide newsletters to parents and guardians that offer reminders and updates about school-wide events and highlights certain activities that have taken place in the classroom and community. Milestones also maintains a Facebook page ("Milestones Day School and Transition Services"), Twitter account, and LinkedIn account that members of the community have the option to follow.

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Document Translation

When students first enter Milestones Day School, the parents/guardians fill out an application. This application asks if the primary language spoken in the home is a language other than English and what the language is. If a family's primary language is not English, Milestones Day School, will at the family's request translate all our documents into the family's native language including, but not limited to: the Family Handbook, our application, any consent forms, any school announcements, and/or other documents required. In addition, at the parent's request, interpreters shall be provided for translation.

FACILITY

Hours

Milestones is currently open 216 days per year from 7:30am – 3:00pm. Student hours are 8:30am-3:00pm daily during the school year and during the summer 8:30am-3:00pm Mondays-Thursdays and 8:30am-12:00pm on Fridays.

Classrooms

Milestones has bright and inviting classrooms with students ranging in age from 5-22 years old. Students are assigned a homeroom and academic grouping. All students are assigned to a Case Manager who will contact you to set up regular phone meetings, or if preferred email check-ins. Any questions regarding the student should be directed toward the student's case manager.

Restrooms

Milestones has multiple bathrooms (gender specific and gender neutral) for students to use. We value students' privacy and to the best of our ability will attempt to stay out of the bathroom while occupied by a student. However, if a student is suspected or confirmed to be exhibiting unsafe or questionable behavior or a student is taking excessive time in the bathroom a staff member may enter the bathroom. It is Milestones' policy that if a staff member needs to enter the bathroom, a minimum of 2 staff members must be present.

Lost and Found

There is a lost and found box on the 1st floor side entrance where students are dropped off and picked up by busses. This box is emptied before the December and June breaks. Any items not claimed at the end of each quarter will be donated to a charitable organization.

Library

Milestones houses a small library, which students are encouraged to use. Students may take out books from this library. Milestones also makes books available in other ways such as downloading e-textbooks on the ipad/computer or using websites that provide the same materials.

Building Café

The building cafeteria is available for students to buy lunch and other food items at their parent's discretion, and based on the cafeteria schedule for their particular class. This cafeteria is also used for students who qualify for free and reduced breakfast and lunch. Milestones has an arranged school breakfast and lunch program, which is consistent with the nutritional guidelines set by the Federal Government for both programs. Due to nutritional guidelines, the school lunch is also available to all students who choose to participate. A menu schedule of the daily entree specials for school lunch is listed on the homepage of Milestones' website and available onsite at the café. There is another a la carte menu for those who wish to purchase a wider variety of breakfast and lunch items. The a la carte menu is generally more expensive than the school lunch program, but offers a wider variety.

When using the café, students will be accompanied by a Milestones adult unless otherwise approved. The café is owned and operated by building management, therefore Milestones cannot control or prevent exposure to food allergies. When not purchasing food from the café, parents are responsible for providing their child with a healthy lunch and snacks (including drinks) each day. Microwaves are available throughout the school if your student has something that needs to be heated. We respectfully request that you limit the preparation involved in your student's lunch/snack as our rigorous curriculum permits limited time for meals (i.e., things with multiple containers, several sauces, lots of preparation for cooking, take valuable teaching time away from student's schedules).

FOOD RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

Soda and candy are not permitted at school.

Bringing Lunch From Home

Students are always welcome to bring lunch from home. Please observe our nut free policy which can be found in this handbook.

Cooking

Milestones students engage in regular cooking activities. Staff do their best to take allergens or food restrictions into account, however, because many of our students have food allergies or restrictions and some are allergy opposed (meaning, the substitute that one child can have may cause allergies for another child), every meal prepared may not be appropriate for every child. Students with allergies or food restrictions, may opt out of cooking for those particular meals.

Allergies & Nut Conscious Environment

Milestones Day School will protect all students from exposure to foods, chemicals, or other materials to which they are allergic. Please note, Milestones Day School is a nut conscious environment. We request that parents and staff do not send to school items that contain peanut and tree nut products.

Prior to intake, a child's parents are required to complete an application for admission which includes a medical information section. Contained in this section is a question related to any known allergies the child may have. A page in the intake form (see intake form) is used to identify the allergens, reactions, remedy, and accommodations as needed. Upon entry to our school for a student with known allergies, the Allergy and Medical Information sheet is updated.

All relevant staff members are required to attend a medical orientation program which will include student-specific information, proactive and reactive, pertaining to allergies as well as the use of emergency interventions (i.e., epi-pen). If a student has allergies, all staff members who have direct service contact with the student will be notified and the student's allergies will be posted in the classroom, by the kitchen, and any other area that might have an allergen. Staff will be trained in the student's specific allergies and emergency procedures should the student accidentally come in contact with an allergen.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Attendance

As an educational institution, Milestones' instructional program time is vital. We respectfully encourage families to take time off for vacations when school is closed, (December, February, April, June and August). A student is expected to attend school when school is in session.

Absences from school are acceptable only when there is illness, or severe illness/death in the family, exposure to contagious disease, religious holidays, extremely inclement weather (even if MDS is open), reasonable family vacations, or school related activities for which participation has been granted by the school. In addition, many districts require advanced notice and approval for extended planned absences and it is the parents' responsibility to proactively communicate with their sending district and Milestones. Absences for other reasons, including out-of-school suspension are considered unexcused absences.

Reporting an Absence or Late Arrival

If your student has a planned absence, is sick, or will be late, please email **ABSENT@AdvancingMilestones.com**

Incomplete Work Due to Absence

If students have more than 5 unexcused absences in a semester, the student will be required to make up missed work in each subject in order to receive credit. If the work is not completed by the end of the semester, the student will receive an incomplete for the term. If missed work is not made up within 6 months, the student will receive an "F" for the grading period. The teachers of each individual subject will determine what an appropriate amount of work would be to satisfy what has been missed and will also determine what type of work will fulfill the requirements of the course. Because therapeutic classes cannot be made up, students who attend less than 60% of their classes will receive an "F" for that marking period.

Weather Related Policies

Emergency Midday Closing:

In the event of unavoidable incidents, school will remain open as long as safety permits. The closing of the school is at the sole discretion of one of Milestones' Directors or their designee. In the event of an unavoidable circumstance that requires us to close our doors, every effort will be made to contact parents to come and get their student. Such circumstances may include: fire, natural disaster, loss of heat/air conditioning, loss of power, or loss of water. If we are required to evacuate, all students will walk to the Hilton Garden hotel accessible via the Milestones parking lot. Should Waltham be evacuated, all students will be transported to a designated location by local authorities. In the event that the parents / guardian cannot be reached, we will refer to the student's emergency contact sheet. All students are required to have a minimum of two current, local emergency contacts on file. Should we be unable to reach the family/guardian or emergency contact, the student will remain with a staff member until the family or emergency contact can be reached at.

School Closing or Delay:

Milestones' delays and closures due to weather will be in line with the decision made by Waltham Public Schools. Should Milestones close or have a delayed opening, families will receive an automated message to let you know. If you do not receive a phone call you can assume school is open and running on a regular schedule, although all families are encouraged to stay abreast of Waltham's decision which is announced on local radio and tv stations and posted on the website for Waltham Public Schools. If Milestones cancels school, even if your town is open, there will be no school. There may be times that Milestones is open, but your town is closed. If this occurs, most transportation companies will not transport your child to school. In this case you are welcome to drive your child to school. If there is a snow delay in your town, generally the transportation companies will also delay picking up your child. Please check with your child's individual transportation company for their specific policies. It's important to check ahead of time, because on a snow day they might be very busy and not be able to answer the phone in a timely manner.

Milestones Snow Cancellations/Delay Policy:

Milestones aligns our decision regarding whether to stay open, close or delay the start time of school due to snow with the decision made by Waltham Public Schools. The Waltham superintendent makes decisions surrounding school closings in collaboration with several safety offices and other superintendents in the area, and Waltham's cancellation and delay information is broadcast on WBZ TV Channel 4, WCVB TV Channel 5, WHDH TV Channel 7, WFXT TV Channel 25, WBZ Radio AM 1030, and Waltham's WE-TV. The Waltham district's school website is later updated as soon as possible. Milestones will use our emergency call system to notify families of closings or delays once a decision has been confirmed by Waltham public schools, but families will be able to anticipate reliably Milestones' decision at the earliest opportunity by following Waltham's plans.

- School Cancellation: If Waltham Public Schools closes due to snow, Milestones will close for the day.
- One Hour Delayed Opening: If Waltham Public Schools announces a 1 hour delay, Milestones will open to students at 9:30AM.

- Two Hour Delayed Opening: If Waltham Public Schools announces a 2 hour delay, Milestones will open to students at 10:30AM.

* Please note that if there were ever to be a circumstance when Waltham and Milestones decide to remain open but conditions worsen once the school day has started, Milestones would separately evaluate our plan for the remainder of the day. We recognize the great difficulty parents and transportation companies face when schools close unexpectedly early, so we would reserve our own discretion in such circumstances. In the event that Milestones were to determine for safety reasons that an early dismissal is warranted, we would contact all families to notify you about our need to close early and to ensure appropriate transportation and coverage for each student.

* A note about transportation: Milestones recommends that families contact their local districts to determine if district transportation will be provided or delayed on dates when Milestones is open but a student's local district is closed or delayed. In addition, Milestones requests that parents please notify our main office if students will be absent or have late arrivals. *Our main office phone number is: 781-895-3200 and our email address for reporting absences is: absent@advancingmilestones.com.*

Transportation

Pick Up / Drop Off: MDS has a designated bus line at the side/private entrance to our facility; students are dropped off one at a time and only when a MDS staff member is present. If you are driving your student to and from school, we request that you please drop him/her off at 8:30am and pick up your student at 3:00pm each day by joining the bus line. Please do not leave your child unattended before or after school. Dropping off/picking up in the bus line is important both to increase students' time on learning and to limit walkie talkie usage that can be distracting to students. However, if your child needs to arrive late after the school day has begun or needs to be picked up early from school for an appointment, please go to the reception area and sign your child in/out. We also ask that if your student is going to need to be picked up early from school due to an appointment, that you please notify your case manager in advance.

Milestones does not provide transportation to and from school. This is the responsibility of the sending school district or family. If your student is transported by the town's bus/ van and you have a problem with transportation, please contact your town or the bus company directly, as

Milestones is not contracted to oversee transportation issues. If bus companies or families drop off a student after 8:30am, the person dropping off the student is responsible for escorting them to the upstairs main lobby.

Late Dismissal

If a student's bus has not arrived by 3:10pm, a Milestones staff will contact the transportation company to get information regarding an estimated time of arrival and reason for tardiness. A staff member will contact a parent on their preferred contact phone number to inform them of the late departure from school.

Bus Safety and Emergency Contacts for Dismissal

Milestones' staff reserves the right to determine whether for any reason, riding the bus home is not safe for your child -- this will occur between 2:30 and 3:00pm. Should this occur, the student's parents will be called to pick up his/her child. We expect that pick ups occur no later than 4pm. If a Milestones staff has not received confirmation by 3:10pm that a parent is picking the student up, the emergency contacts will be called.

****For this and other reasons, it is imperative that families keep their emergency contact information up to date. All families are required to provide at least 2 local emergency contacts.****

If your student leaves MDS throughout the day (for a field trip, community outings, etc.) s/he will be transported in a Milestones approved vehicle or a contracted bus. All drivers of Milestones' vehicles are expressly approved to drive students. School vans or charter buses are operated or hired by Milestones Day School to enhance learning opportunities such as field trips.

Student expectations:

Students are to keep hands, head and all other parts of the body inside the bus/van (do not hang out the window), and stay seated while the vehicle is moving. If riding on the van, all students must wear seat belts while the van is moving, and keep feet out of the aisles. Additional rules include: do not lean into the aisles, do not bring food or drink onto the bus/van, do not throw anything out of the bus or in the bus/van, screaming or other disruptive behavior that distracts the driver is not permitted, and do not place any items in the front of the bus that will block the doorway. All items brought on the bus must be taken to a student's seat. Any items left on the bus after final departure may not be retrievable.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are held at regular intervals, are required by regulations, and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone promptly clears the building by the prescribed route in an orderly fashion or remains in their classroom as directed. The teachers in each classroom will give the exact directions. Milestones also conducts additional emergency drills throughout the year.

Visitors

Milestones has many visitors throughout the year to observe the general program; we offer tours throughout the year for parents, professionals, and community members. Of course, identifying information is always kept confidential. Students will only be specifically observed if your school district is paying for the program and they want to send a representative to observe the student or you have signed consent for a person you request to observe your student. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may come from time to time and observe students whose district is funding the placement. Parents are welcome to visit and observe, but we request that case managers are contacted in advance to coordinate a time. For many students having their parent observe them can make them feel anxious or causes them to be disruptive. Should this be the case we will make alternative arrangements for you to gain information about your student's programming.

Volunteers and Interns

Milestones Day School may utilize student interns and members of the community to augment existing staff members and to further its mission and endeavors. Their support and assistance helps to create a broader network and provides greater opportunities for those serviced. Student interns and volunteers will all be required to consent to and have a criminal record check and fingerprinting. Any student interns or volunteers who have been convicted of a crime against children will not be permitted to work, volunteer, or intern at Milestones Day School. CORI checks are repeated every three years for all staff, volunteers, and interns. Interns and volunteers are not given any direct care responsibilities nor are they left alone with students at any time.

What to Bring to School

Students have a locker where they can keep their personal belongings. Students should keep a sweatshirt in their locker and bring a pair of sneakers, if the student wears other types of shoes. Please be advised, that students should not bring in clothing that is special as Milestones cannot be responsible for it; every year some clothing is lost.

What Not to Bring to School

Milestones cannot be held liable for lost items. From time to time we do accidentally lose a sock, or sweatshirt, so please do not permit your student to bring anything with emotional attachment or monetary value to school. This includes, but is not limited to: expensive equipment / toys, money, jewelry, etc. Many students use video games or MP3 players/iPods on the bus or as a coping skill. Milestones permits use of this equipment, however we cannot be responsible if something happens. We respectfully request that any game or materials that contains inappropriate content (i.e., violent, sexually explicit, or inappropriate language remain at home) should be left at home; parents should monitor what items their child is taking to school.

Birthdays/Holiday Celebrations

Milestones Day School celebrates diversity and we teach students to take others' perspectives by respecting their various beliefs. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, disability, handicap or homelessness. For this reason, we celebrate various holidays and birthdays, but our school does not subscribe to any religious practices. Should your student have a birthday during the year we welcome you to bring in alternates to food to share (such as a special pencil, etc.). We request that you limit extraneous paraphernalia that can be over stimulating for the kids; in this way all students can be included and celebrate.

Cell Phones and Portable Devices

Many students have cell phones or portable gaming/computer devices. When entering school these devices must be turned off and kept in the student's pocket or locker for the entire school day (students may opt to put a lock on their locker). Text messaging is never permitted. If a student is unable to keep the item in his/her pocket or locker, the administrative staff will need to collect it each day upon arrival and return it upon dismissal or might ask the student not to bring the item at all. Students who wish to call their parents in the middle of the day, may use Milestones' main telephone. Students who are allowed to use their devices during certain activity times during the day will be permitted to get them from their locker.

Dress and Hygiene Code

Students are expected to engage in regular hygiene such as showering, washing hair, hands, and face, and brushing teeth. Students are also expected to dress appropriately; they may not wear extreme or ostentatious apparel to school. If there is doubt about a particular item of apparel, the student should contact a Director for a decision prior to wearing the clothing to school. If a student comes to school wearing inappropriate clothing s/he will be asked to change. If the student does not have an alternative article of clothing with them, a Director or

designee will call the student's family and have them bring an appropriate article of clothing or the student will be sent home for the day. All clothing must be clean. Students must wear appropriate and safe footwear; students are not permitted to wear high heeled or open toed shoes including flip flops to gym/sports/fitness. Clothing which overexposes the body (including male or female anatomy, stomachs, underwear, or other sexually explicit body parts) is unacceptable. If Milestones goes swimming, all bathing suits must be one-piece (for girls) and must be properly fitting. Students may not wear lewd or suggestive attire or apparel that advertises, glorifies, or symbolizes: gangs, obscene words, sexual acts, illegal items/substances, racial epithets, sexual preference, or harmful action.

Smoking

The Education Act of 1993, Section 49, Subsection 37H, expressly prohibits the use of any tobacco products within school buildings, school facilities, school grounds, and school buses by any individual, including school personnel. No student shall use or possess any tobacco related products on school grounds, school related business, field trips or other school sponsored events. Parents, staff and other adults may not smoke on any school related premises including anywhere in the building which we are located, the parking lot, vehicles, field trips, or other school sponsored events.

Contractual Obligations and Funding

Milestones Day School is funded by local school districts, state agencies, and private families. Our tuition is inclusive of all services that we provide. Should an individual situation arise and a Team has determined that an individual service is needed that goes above and beyond what Milestones provides and is not covered under our tuition (i.e., parent training in the home, physical therapy, etc) Milestones Day School shall inform, in writing, any person or agency responsible for the associated costs incurred as a result of any placement not made pursuant to the requirements of 603 CMR 28.00.

Student Records and Confidentiality

Parents/Legal Guardians or students over the age of eighteen (18) are permitted to have access to the student's record if a request is made in writing. The student record includes, but is not limited to, all official records, files, data, test scores, psychological or auxiliary service records, any record transferred to us from another facility/individual, and internet communications.

Student records will be released without consent of the parent/guardian or student only if s/he is over the age of eighteen (18), if requested by the Sending school district/ agency (if the student's education is funded by your local town/school and/or another agency), Department of

Education, independent or state Auditors, or other official government personnel. To comply with Massachusetts state regulations, Milestones Day School participates in program reviews and/or audits as required by the Department of Education, Operations and Services Division, as well as other governmental agencies.

No student's personal or family information will be shared with anyone other than their required team. Milestones will not share information with any outside party without express written consent from the student's family.

Work Relationships With Milestones Staff

Unless otherwise pre-approved by the CEO, Milestones generally does not permit employees to participate privately in outside of work hours activities including, but not limited to babysitting, tutoring, behavioral, clinical or transition services with any current or former families due to potential conflicts of interest. (Please note, however, that Milestones may hire staff to conduct after school tutoring or programming when specified in students' IEPs or may support unique arrangements that are agreed upon in a team meeting).

Consent

Families are asked to sign yearly consent for various aspects of this handbook and other Milestones' policies. Some examples include, but are not limited to, consent for website/media, videotaping or photographing students, swimming, parent directory, health education, movies, etc. Consent will have NO effect on student admission or standing. Parents may elect these consents without any repercussions.

If families elect not to sign field trip/transportation consent, students will be permitted to attend school, but the student will not be permitted to attend field trips or be transported for any reason except medical emergency. Students will be monitored by office personnel on days when there is a scheduled field trip. Students will be kept safe, but will not receive academic programming during the field trip duration.

If a parent or guardian withdraws consent at any time for participation/liability, coordination and collaboration with public schools (only if your district is paying for the placement is this consent state mandated), and research (again, state mandated), the student will be automatically terminated from Milestones. In addition, our policies surrounding Behavior Support, Physical Restraint, Student Separation from a Group Resulting from Physical Restraint, Anti-Bullying and Anti-Hazing are notifications only (as consent is not permitted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education).

ACADEMICS

Individualized Education Plans and Progress Reports

Students will receive IEP progress reports four times per year based upon the student's IEP date. These progress reports comment specifically on IEP goals/benchmarks. If the student has academic benchmarks for remedial instruction, these will be commented on as well, otherwise all academic reports are commented on in the student's traditional report cards which are distributed 4 times per year (see below for further details).

Grading and Report Cards

All students receive 4 reports cards per year. Grades are based upon acquisition of knowledge (assessed by oral, written, and hands on projects and more traditional tests/ quizzes), class participation, effort, and homework (if applicable).

The grading periods generally fall under:

- Quarter 1 - September-November
- Quarter 2 - November- January
- Quarter 3 - January-March
- Quarter 4 - April-June

**Grading Scale for Middle & High School*

A+	A	A--	B+	B	B--	C+	C	C--	D+	D	F
97--100	94--96	90--93	87--89	84--86	80--83	77--79	74--76	70--73	67--69	65--66	0--64
4.0	3.66	3.33	3.0	2.66	2.33	2.0	1.66	1.33	1.0	.66	0

There may be a Pass/Fail or Incomplete grade issued when appropriate for the class, subject or circumstance, for example social skills class.

Field Trips

Students at Milestones Day School take various field trips during the year. Field trips during the year tend to be academic in nature as well as therapeutic to practice social and life skills. During the summer, students at Milestones Day School take many field trips to practice socialization. In June of each year, families will receive a calendar of summer events. Milestones pays for admission for field trips, however we occasionally may ask families to contribute to a field trip fund.

Prior to going on the field trip – make sure:

- Please review the field trip with your student.
- Please dress your student appropriately for the weather. Even if it is an indoor field trip, we might be outside for part of the time.
- Please make sure to pack your student snacks and a lunch that doesn't need to be heated or require preparation.
- Please DO NOT send your student with money unless otherwise specified by staff. Students are not permitted to purchase items at the gift shop.

Community Trips/Activities of Daily Living

Students in the upper high school and post high school program enjoy community trips as part of their regular curriculum. These trips are designed to help them learn functional independent living skills and to navigate their world in a small group supported setting. Trips may include a variety of tasks including, but not limited to shopping for groceries, taking public transportation, and visiting a bank. Additional activities of daily living instruction are provided during occupational therapy groups to students of all grade levels (e.g., age appropriate units that may include but are not limited to cooking and nutrition, hygiene, laundry, budgeting, organizational skills, etc).

School Supplies

Milestones provides the basic school supplies for all students. For students who participate in higher-level math, we may ask your family to purchase a scientific calculator or other related items. During the first week of school, your child will receive a list of any school supplies required. Please do not send your student in with other organizational items, as Milestones has a school wide system to help students with executive issues.

Depending upon the student's grade s/he may be issued "e-textbooks" or hard copy textbooks both of which can be accessed from home for homework. Students will be responsible for these books and will be required to pay for the cost of replacement in the event one is misplaced or lost. Should you wish, you may purchase duplicate textbooks (please contact Milestones' Administrative Assistant to place an order).

Students will also have access to a laptop computer and/or IPAD which will be loaded with appropriate software. It is important for students to understand that these computers are the property of Milestones, and Milestones is permitted to review students' usage of these computers, as appropriate. Students may be permitted to take home a laptop computer to work on homework assignments with Principal approval. Should the need for a student to borrow a computer arise, a request should be submitted to the principal and approval given before this will be permitted. In addition, bringing home laptops is a privilege and we expect that students will respect school property. This privilege may be revoked at any time. Students may not load or download programs or games on school computers. Anything that needs to be loaded must be done by our IT department.

When the student no longer attends Milestones Day School or at the request of school personnel, all materials shall be returned in good working condition. Should materials, except textbooks, be returned in subpar condition or in need of repair, the student's family is responsible for the cost of repairing or replacing the equipment.

Internet Access and Social Media

Access to the internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards and to communicate with individuals throughout the world.

Milestones has an internet content filter to help block web sites that educators believe are inappropriate for students. Internet resources are intended to further educational goals and objectives, but students may find ways to access materials that contain illegal, defamatory, pornographic, inaccurate, or potentially offensive information. Students who use any technology in an inappropriate manner and/or not as directed by the school are in violation of school policy and subject to discipline, up to and including the loss of the right to use the technology.

The use of our technology is a privilege, not a right and may be revoked at any time. All students are provided with a "Technology Acceptable Use Policy". Students are expected to review and sign on an annual basis for their student file.

Consequences for violating such policies will be based around the specific circumstances of the event. The Principal, CEO, and School Operations Manager will discuss and determine the appropriate course of action.

MEDICAL

Health Care

Milestones employs a full time nurse to address any medical needs that may arise on a day-to-day basis with students. In addition, all staff members receive training in first aid, CPR, and AED on a regular basis as stipulated by the American Red Cross. All parents will receive annual consent forms permitting Milestones to treat your child in case of an emergency (please see our emergency consent forms for additional details). If our Nurse is absent for the day, MDS will do its best to find a replacement. However, sometimes this is not possible. In these situations, MDS trained administrators will provide any first aid necessary and will distribute medication, if needed, according to doctor's orders.

If your child has a medical or psychiatric emergency we will immediately inform the child's parent(s) or legal guardians (or DCF, if appropriate). If we are not able to reach you, we will call your emergency contact number, which is listed on our emergency forms that you will fill out annually. It is very important that you provide updated contact information. If your numbers or emergency contact changed during the school year, please let us know immediately.

Should an emergency arise, students are generally transported by our vans or ambulance to the nearest emergency room. In general, if the student is being transported from our facility, the nearest emergency room is Newton-Wellesley Hospital located at 2014 Washington Street, Newton, MA 02462 / 617-243-6000. Parents/guardians will be called immediately should the need for emergency transport occur.

Each student is required to have an annual physical and dental exam, which must be submitted to Milestones Day School. Students will not be permitted to attend school without a copy of a current physical. If an appointment is not able to be scheduled until after the last physical or dental exam expires, parents are responsible for providing Milestones with the date of the upcoming appointment in writing. While Milestones strongly encourages all families to seek regular dental care for their child, we will accept notification in writing that a family has opted out of a dental exam. Physicals may not be opted out of.

Each year, Milestones will conduct annual hearing, postural, and vision screenings per the Department of Public Health's schedule. If you have any concerns about your child's health, please speak directly with his/her pediatrician. If your child is unable to see the dentist, please simply write a note stating so and submit it to our school nurse.

Medication

Any student requiring medication (prescription or over-the-counter) to be administered at school must have the following:

- A written order from the physician, dentist, or practitioner-stating his/her name, address, phone number, student's name, reason for the medication, medication, time, duration, and dosage to be given by the school is required, along with the parent/guardian signature.
- Medication must be in a pharmacy-labeled container with the most current prescription date. Any over the counter medication must be in the original box and sealed when we receive it (we cannot administer over-the-counter medication that has previously been open. Obviously, once we open it we can re-administer as needed). Any prescription that does not match the physician's order will not be administered.
- Medications must be delivered to the school by a responsible adult in a container labeled by the physician or pharmacist. Parents must either provide medication in person or call Milestones Administrative Assistant in the morning to let him/her know that a responsible adult will be delivering medication. If a parent/guardian is calling, please leave the following information: Name of student, name of medication, medication amount [i.e., # of pills], and consent form (which includes quantity of medication). Consent forms can be downloaded from Milestones' website. Parents are responsible for the medication until we are in receipt of it. All medication will be counted at the time of receiving and signed off by the Executive Director (or designee), or Nurse and you will receive an email that we are in receipt of it. If there is a discrepancy in any information, we will call immediately. Milestones reserves the right to opt not to administer a specific medication to a student if we feel the medication is dangerous or harmful in anyway, regardless of physician orders.

General Illness

Students participate in a rigorous curriculum throughout the day and are expected to be in good health. Students who have vomited, had diarrhea, or a fever (over 100 degrees) need to refrain from attending school for 24 hours after the last episode. Any student with a contagious or communicable disease will need to stay home until s/he is no longer contagious and/or has been on antibiotics for 24 hours. If your student has a severe cough, excessive nasal discharge, or green mucus, s/he must remain home until the infection has cleared up. If your student has a contagious or communicable disease, please contact our main office as soon as possible so we can inform other families of potential exposure. If your student becomes ill at school, we will contact you immediately. Any student with a communicable disease will be required to have a doctor's note stating s/he is able to return to school.

Immunizations

The Massachusetts Department of Health has established guidelines regarding immunizations to protect the health of all young students. All students are required to have up to date immunizations and we must have your student's updated health record prior to school starting each fall. Any student who does not have an updated health record will not be permitted to attend school until their record is complete.

Milestones requires that all students be immunized in order to be admitted to school; There are two situations in which children who are not appropriately immunized may be admitted to school:

- 1) a medical exemption is allowed if a physician submits documentation attesting that an immunization is medically contraindicated;
- 2) a religious exemption is allowed if a parent or guardian submits a written statement that immunizations conflict with their sincere religious beliefs.

Medical and religious exemptions must be presented in writing at the beginning of each school year. Law in Massachusetts does not allow philosophical exemptions, even if signed by a physician.

Should your student not be vaccinated due to religious or medical objections, you must sign a statement of your preferences and release of liability prior to, or during,

registration. If there is an outbreak of chickenpox, all students who are not vaccinated or without laboratory evidence of immunity shall be excluded from our program from the 10th to the 21st days after their last exposure.

RIGHTS AND PROHIBITED ACTIONS

Students who attend Milestones Day School have not had optimum experiences in other educational settings. At Milestones Day School, the student is a part of our community and as such is expected to follow, cooperate, and fully participate in the rules of our school. These regulations were created to keep students safe, happy, and healthy.

Sexual Harassment

Milestones Day School is committed to maintaining an environment in which all employees and students are free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. We will not tolerate sexual harassment that is directed towards employees or students. If students feel they are being sexually harassed they should report the allegation to any staff member in which they feel comfortable

disclosing the information, however it is always preferable that they go directly to their Principal, or a Director immediately.

Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct, which undermines the sense of safety and ability to learn. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments. It refers to behavior that is not welcomed and is personally offensive. That behavior debilitates morale and, therefore, interferes with the work effectiveness of students. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome touching and other inappropriate oral, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to or toleration of such conduct is made a term or condition of receiving preferential treatment
- Submission to or toleration of such conduct is made a term or condition to avoid an unpleasant or threatening situation
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for academic decisions affecting that individual

Transgender Students' Rights

When a student or parent notifies Milestones of a student's gender identity, the school will begin treating the student consistent with the student's gender identity and using pronouns and names consistent with the student's gender identity. Additionally, Milestones will:

- Address harassment based on gender identity through our harassment and discrimination procedures
- Ensure that transgender students will be able to access the restrooms consistent with their gender identity, or have the option of using individual-user facilities
- Not disclose a student's transgender status, including their birth name or sex assigned at birth, without the consent of the student's parents of the student (if of age)

Aggressive/Assaultive Behavior (verbal or physical)

Aggressive or assaultive behavior in threat, jest, or action will not be tolerated at Milestones Day School. We expect students will utilize learned coping skills or ask for help if they are unable to remain calm. Any student who engages in aggressive/ assaultive behavior, be it verbal or in action, shall be subject to ramifications up to, and including, detention, suspension or expulsion. See behavior section for more details.

Threatening Behavior (bomb, intent to harm, etc.)

No student shall be permitted to engage in any threatening behavior regarding any relation to the school both on and off school premises. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Anything related to a bomb, fire, offense, catastrophe, or other emergency knowing that the report is false or baseless.
- Anything related to a weapon (physical or chemical).
- Anything related to injuring or assaulting another person. See behavior section for more details.

Items Not Permitted on School Premises or Events

Weapons:

It is our position that all weapons (real or simulated) are prohibited at Milestones Day School or any school sponsored event. A weapon in a student's vehicle is considered to be in his possession. The following items are examples, but not exclusive examples of what constitutes a weapon: knife (including pocket knives), razor, box cutter, ice pick, gun, ammunition, explosive/firecracker, mace, pepper spray, hand held laser pointers, chemicals, switchblades, screwdrivers, chains, bricks, rocks, ropes, water guns, incendiary devices, lasers, wallet chains, or any other object that reasonably can be considered a weapon or dangerous instrument by the school, on school grounds, on school buses or vans, or at any school-sponsored event, during or after regular school hours. The penalty for possession is an automatic suspension and a recommendation for expulsion. As a parent it is imperative that you be sure that your student does not bring anything that could be considered a weapon to school.

Alcohol or Drugs:

In an effort to create a healthy environment for students and staff members, Milestones Day School prohibits the possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs and/or alcohol on school property or as a part of any school activity. Prohibited substances shall include any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or other controlled substance, or beverage containing alcohol or intoxicant of any kind. Students are not permitted to carry medication (prescription or over the counter) with them at any time. This policy applies to any student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school or at a school sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or in any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operation of the school. Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Any person found of the following shall be subject to disciplinary action:

- To sell, supply, or give, or attempt to sell, supply, or give to any person any illegal or prohibited substances or medication.
- To possess, procure, or purchase, to attempt to possess, procure, or purchase, to be under the influence of (legal intoxication not required), or to use or consume or attempt to use or consume, the substances listed in this policy.
- Controlled substances may be possessed and used by a student who has a prescription for the substance, provided the substance remains in the container in which it was obtained from the pharmacist. Any medication, controlled or not controlled, shall not be shared and shall only be used as directed by the prescribing physician.

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROTOCOLS, **ANTI-HAZING, AND ANTI-BULLYING** **POLICIES**

Behavior Support Policy

To review our full policy and procedure for behavior support, which is approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the “family portal” on Milestones’ website. This policy also contains our procedures for time out.

Student Separation Resulting From Behavior Support

To review our full policy and procedure for a student separation resulting from behavior support, which is approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the “family portal” on Milestones’ website.

Physical Restraint Policy

To review our full policy and procedure for physical restraint, which is approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the “family portal” on Milestones’ website.

Anti-Hazing

To review our full policy and procedure for anti-hazing, which is approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the “family portal” on Milestones’ website.

Anti-Bullying

To review our full policy and procedure for anti-bullying, which is approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the “family portal” on Milestones’ website.

* Please note that hard copies of all of the aforementioned protocols outlined in this section are also available by request. Please contact the CEO, Human Resources Administrator, or your case manager if you would like to be provided a paper copy.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES AND RESPONSE

Complaints Surrounding Behavior Support or Restraint Procedures

If any family has concerns surrounding behavior support or restraint procedures, please visit our approved behavior support policy and restraint policy on our website. Both are posted on the website, and each contains specific instructions regarding filing related complaints and grievances as well as Milestones' required follow-up procedures. Hard copies of these policies are also available, by request, and any questions may be directed to the CEO or School Operations Manager.

Other Complaints/Grievances (Not Related to Behavior Support or Restraint Procedures)

Milestones strives to alleviate parents' concerns at our first opportunity. Parents are encouraged to notify their case manager and/or principal if you have general concerns regarding your student's programming.

At times, parents or guardians may identify that they have a concern that warrants a higher level of attention. Additionally, if any of our employees, students, or families believes that he or she has a general complaint that warrants the attention of the CEO or believes s/he has been subjected to sexual harassment or any other harassment, the employee, student, or family has a right to file a formal complaint with Milestones. All complaints are taken seriously and given equal regard.

COMPLAINTS:

Milestones does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, homelessness, disability, or veteran status.

Reporting Complaints

If any of our students or families/guardians believes that the person has been subjected to sexual harassment, any other harassment, or has a general complaint (including educational complaints), the student or family/guardian has a right to file a complaint with Milestones Day School. All complaints are taken seriously and given equal regard.

If you wish to file a complaint, you may do so by putting your complaint in writing within 10 school days of the incident's occurrence and sending to:

Kimberly Rockers, Chief Executive Officer
Milestones Day School
410 Totten Pond Road
Waltham, MA 02451

Complaint Investigation:

When Milestones Day School receives a complaint, we will investigate within 20 school days in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Our investigation will include an interview with the person filing the complaint and also may include interview(s) with witnesses or other individuals who we believe would be useful to obtain information such as the investigation such as the alleged accused and potential witnesses.

These persons listed above are available to provide information about this policy and about our complaint process, which is: All interviews and reports will be documented and an open investigation file created and maintained by Kimberly Rockers (CEO) Alex Smith-Michaels (COO) for the duration of the investigation.

When we have conducted our investigation, we will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and/or the person alleged to have committed the misconduct (if applicable) of the results of the investigation within five day in both person and writing. The person filing the complaint will have the opportunity to discuss options for proceeding forward and recommendations for resolution.

Disciplinary Action in Cases of Harassment or Misconduct

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of our employees, Milestones executive administrative staff will take action as is appropriate under the circumstances.

Action may range from a written warning to counseling to termination of employment.

Recourse and Appeals

Parents/guardians, wishing to challenge Milestones Day School's decision or course of action as it pertains to addressing their complaint shall notify Kimberly Rockers (CEO) in writing within 5 school days of receiving the complaint investigation findings.

Kimberly Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels will consider any additional steps that may be applicable and appropriate to the situation. Milestones Day School will issue its final resolution to the complaint in writing and via meeting, should the person filing a complaint desire.

Within 10 school days the appeal will be reviewed by Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels and a resolve will be issued. The appeals process will include: reviewing documents provided,

interviewing or re-interviewing (if necessary) any additional materials or people noted in the complaint.

GRIEVANCES:

Should a student or family/guardian have a grievance or feel discriminated against (including, but not limited to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, homelessness, disability, or veteran status they can file a written complaint to Kim Rockers. The grievance will be investigated immediately and written notification regarding the grievance will be generated within 20 school days from the time of grievance filed.

Recourse and Appeals

Parents/guardians, wishing to challenge Milestones Day School's decision or course of action as it pertains to addressing their complaint shall notify Kimberly Rockers (CEO) in writing within 5 school days of receiving the complaint investigation findings.

Kimberly Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels will consider any additional steps that may be applicable and appropriate to the situation. Milestones Day School will issue its final resolution to the complaint in writing and via meeting, should the person filing a complaint desire.

Within 10 school days the appeal will be reviewed by Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels and a resolve will be issued. The appeals process will include: reviewing documents provided, interviewing or re-interviewing (if necessary) any additional materials or people noted in the complaint.

Suspension Policy & Termination of Enrollment

Milestones prioritizes utilizing therapeutic approaches to teach skills during learning opportunities. By regulation, Milestones is required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to have in place procedures for the provision of suspensions (when necessary) as well as processes for terminating enrollment in exceptional circumstances.

3-5 Day Suspension

Milestones Day School works with students to provide behavior prevention through antecedent control and therapeutic processing. Should a student exhibit highly unsafe or destructive behavior to staff, peers, or property (such as punching, using a sharp object, bringing a weapon to school, running away, using technology in an unsafe manner, etc.) Milestones will consider a 3-5 day suspension, depending upon the incident.

When a student is suspended Milestones Day School shall immediately notify the parents and the public school or human service agency responsible for the placement. Within 24 hours, Milestones

Day School shall send a written statement and/or incident report explaining the reasons for the suspension to the parents and public school district. Within 48 hours we will also speak with the parents and district to create an action plan for re-entreaty.

Students shall not be suspended unless a responsible adult is available to receive the student.

Once a student has been suspended for three consecutive school days or five non-consecutive school days in a school year, Milestones Day School, parents, and public school district, consistent with federal requirements, shall explore together all possible program modifications within the school in an attempt to prevent more lengthy suspension of the student from our program.

Milestones Day School has procedures in place to record and track the number and duration of suspensions, including suspensions from any part of the student's IEP program (including transportation). We have and keep incident forms and meeting notes with the family and district should an incident arise.

**Sending a student home "early" or an in-school suspension of a student who is not receiving instruction from either a licensed teacher is considered a suspension if the student's IEP does not allow for the modification of learning time requirements of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

10+ Day Suspension

Milestones Day School implements the following procedures when suspension exceeds ten (10) consecutive school days or it is one of a series of suspensions that constitute a pattern under 34 CFR 300.536. Students who are sent home early or receive in-school suspensions where the student is not receiving instruction from either a licensed teacher or a paraprofessional who is being supervised by a licensed teacher is considered a suspension if the student's IEP does not allow for the modification of learning time requirements of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

A suspension is a change of placement when: 1) it exceeds 10 consecutive school days or 2) it is one of a series of suspensions that constitute a pattern under 34 CFR 300.536. Should this occur, a request is made of the student's responsible school district to convene an IEP Team meeting prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities.

The program participates 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), and to conduct a manifestation determination (i.e., to determine the relationship between the disability and the 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 that may be in some other setting.
- If the team determines that the behavior ***is*** a manifestation of the disability, the TEAM takes steps to modify the IEP, the behavior intervention plan, and/or the placement.

Should a 10-day suspension occur, request is made of the student's responsible school district to convene an IEP team meeting, which includes representation from Milestones Day School prior to a suspension that constitute a change in placement of a student with disabilities.

Milestones Day School will work with the sending district and family to:

- Help to develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior and to develop or modify a behavior intervention plan
- Identify appropriate alternative educational settings(s)
- Conduct a manifestation determination (i.e., to determine the relationship between 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, Milestones Day 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 Milestones Day School, takes steps (with the consent of the parent) to modify the IEP, the behavior interaction plan, and/or the placement.

Using the school suspension log, Milestones Day School will track the number and duration of student suspensions that constitute a change in placement. Should suspensions leading to a change in placement occur, Milestones Day School will reconvene the Team including sending school district and family/guardian to notify them in writing which will contain a request that the students responsible school district convenes an IEP Team meeting prior to suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with a disability.

Upon admission of the student, a written policy on suspension is provided to the parent and the school district or human service agency that placed the student.

Termination

Milestones Day School approaches students' termination in a consistent and deliberate fashion. Given the overall needs of the population served by Milestones Day School, planning and predictability are essential in order to maximize a student's potential for success.

When a student is unable to stay at Milestones (planned termination): Milestones Day School shall notify the public school district of the need for an IEP review meeting and provides 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.

When a student is unable to stay at Milestones (emergency termination): In circumstances where the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/herself or others, Milestones Day School shall follow the procedures required under 603 CMR 28.09(12)(b) and immediately notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Milestones Day School shall 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. At the request of the public school district, Milestones Day School shall delay termination of the student for up to two calendar weeks to allow the public school district the opportunity to convene an emergency Team meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination from the special education school program. With the mutual agreement of Milestones Day School and the public school district, termination of enrollment may be delayed for longer than two calendar weeks.

Admissions Information

A copy of Milestones Day School's policies and procedures manual that contains all mandated policies (including our regulatory admission criteria and procedures) is maintained on site at the front desk in the main lobby and is available for any student, parents, and placing public school district, to view prior to admission or any time thereafter. When a student is first accepted into our program the parents/guardians are notified in writing of our policies and procedures manual, and they receive a copy of our family handbook which is also readily available online on our website. As part of an annual consent form, Milestones sends out annual notification to the parents of all enrolled students that copies of our policies and procedures are available upon request and that the family handbook is readily available on our website. Milestones also sends out annual notification of our Behavior Support and Physical Restraint Policies and Procedures, which are ready available on our website (Reference # 9.1, 9.1a, and 9.4).

Acknowledgement

Milestones appreciates the opportunity to work with a community of amazing students, collaborative families, and talented staff. Thank you for your partnership with us to best support your students' success!