



# Family

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# Handbook



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## Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer, Kim Rockers

Dear Milestones Families,

On behalf of our faculty, I would like to welcome all our new and returning Milestones families to the 2026-2027 school year.

Milestones is a community that takes great pride in celebrating the enormous promise and individualized strengths in our students. Our elementary, middle, high school, and post high school students represent nearly 50 districts across the greater Boston area and New Hampshire and are embraced in our setting with small classes of like peers and a comprehensive team of approximately 95 multi-disciplinary faculty. From educators, to clinicians, to administrative support faculty, we are committed to employing talented, dedicated, creative and passionate professionals who are driven to guide students in their journey to become ready learners and to maximize their skills, independence, relationships, and self-confidence inside and outside of the classroom.

Within our program, our students strive daily to model our core values of Safety, Respect and Responsibility. At the same time, our faculty team prioritizes collaboration with students' families, sending districts, outside providers, community partners, and each other to best support our students holistically. As an organization, we believe that students will succeed if they are afforded the appropriate environment, enrichment, and tailored strategies, and this optimism and tenacity is embedded in our culture and practices.

Each year we recognize graduates who successfully transition to college and employment settings, frequently having earned college credit while at Milestones, and we successfully prepare a subset of younger students to return to public school and independent programs. Some recent organizational outcomes include that last year (2025) Milestones was voted as a "Family Favorite" in the area of special education in a contest by Boston Parent Magazine for the fourth time, and we have once again been identified as a finalist in four categories for 2026. Milestones expanded programming with increasing paid work-based opportunities in our Post High School cohort, has offered multi-year opportunities for Seniors to participate in off campus programming in a college setting, and continues to have annual Family Survey data results that consistently fall in the Positive range when analyzed both schoolwide and by grade level. We also successfully completed a Program Review this past school year (2025-2026) and have continued to be in full regulatory compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for 5 review cycles over 15 years. In partnership with our Parent Advisory Group we have continued after school clubs and outside of school social activities for students and families as well as increased the PAG fundraising. We look forward to continuing to partner with families this upcoming school year to best support our students' growth and success.

We remain privileged and grateful that your family has chosen to join or continue with Milestones, and we look forward to getting the new school year started and reflecting on how far our students have come!

Warm regards,

Kim Rockers

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## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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. This manual is available for any student, parent/guardian, 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 about 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 its annual consent form, Milestones includes annual notification to the parents/guardians 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 also readily available on our website (Reference # 9.1, 9.1a, and 9.4).

\* Please note that starting in August, 2026 the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be implementing revised statewide behavior support guidelines, which will include changes to policy 9.1 and 9.4 and the elimination of policy 9.1a. At that time, Milestones will subsequently update these policies on our website and conduct refresher training with faculty during our annual professional development training in August that will include instruction on all required content.

# ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Milestones Day School: 410 Totten Pond Road Waltham, MA 02451

V: 781-895-3200 | F: 781-895-3226 | [AdvancingMilestones.com](http://AdvancingMilestones.com)

Should you have questions, please direct them to your child's case manager. You may contact the front desk to be transferred to your child's case manager's phone or you may send an email. Case Managers are involved with our students throughout the day and connect with parents/guardians via email or phone once a week. If your child will be late or absent, please email us at [Absent@AdvancingMilestones.com](mailto:Absent@AdvancingMilestones.com).

Our school's hours of operation for faculty are 7:30 am – 3 pm Monday – Friday (September-June), and during the summer months of July - August faculty are onsite from 7:30 am – 3pm (Monday – Thursday) and 7:30am – 12pm (Friday). Student hours are 8:30 am – 3 pm Monday – Friday (September-June), and during the summer months of July and August students are onsite from 8:30 am – 3 pm (Monday - Thursday) and 8:30am – 12pm (Friday). Please be advised that Milestones faculty are not expected to check email or voicemail outside of school hours or during vacations. During vacations, if you have a true emergency or urgent update, please contact Alex Smith-Michaels (see contact info below).

Email for all faculty: First Initial Last Name @ [AdvancingMilestones.com](http://AdvancingMilestones.com)

(ex: Martha Smith = [MSmith@AdvancingMilestones.com](mailto:MSmith@AdvancingMilestones.com))

Facebook: @MilestonesDaySchool  
Instagram: @milestonesdayschool  
LinkedIn: Milestones Day School & Transition Program

Name	Position	Email	Ext
Kim Rockers	CEO	KRockers@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-121
Alex Smith-Michaels	COO/Founder	AMichaels@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-124
Deb Abbott	CFO	DAbbott@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-134
Tim Mahoney	Principal	TMahoney@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-323
* Carly Owens	Assistant Principal/ Curriculum Director	<u>COwens@AdvancingMilestones.com</u>  *Please note that Ms. Owens will be transitioning out of Milestones after 7/31/26 and we are anticipating that a new Assistant Principal/Curriculum Director will be hired.	x-325
Abigail Howard	Registered Nurse	MDSNurse@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-137
Gillian Warwick	Special Education Administrator	GWarwick@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-113
Geoffrey Rowe	Administrative Assistant	GRowe@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-110
Heidi Warren	Project Coordinator	HWarren@AdvancingMilestones.com	x-326

Milestones Day School’s Family Handbook is provided annually to students’ families who are enrolled at our school. This handbook will help you become familiar with our culture, policies, and traditions. Along with annual consents, parents/guardians/students (over the age of 18) who have shared or sole guardianship will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that you have read the Family Handbook in its entirety. In this handbook, some policy references are excerpts. All of Milestones’ Policies and Procedures in their entirety can be found at the reception desk and the manual is available upon request for parents/guardians and students (over the age of 18) to review.

## CALENDAR 2026-2027

SPECIAL DAYS					VACATION DAYS - NO SCHOOL					HALF DAYS - 12 NOON DISMISSAL					REGULAR HOURS 8:30AM – 3:00PM				
JULY 2026 (20 days)					AUGUST 2026 (15 days)					SEPTEMBER 2026 (17 days)									
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri					
		1	2	3	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	11					
6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	18					
13	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25					
20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30							
27	28	29	30	31	31														
July 1-3: No school July 10, 17, 24, and 31: Half days-noon dismissal					August 7,14, and 21: Half days-noon dismissal August 24-27: Staff PD days August 28-31: No school					Sept 1-4: - No school Sept 7: Labor Day – No school Sept 23: Half day-noon dismissal-PDP									
OCTOBER 2026 (21 days)					NOVEMBER 2026 (19 days)					DECEMBER 2026 (17 days)									
			1	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11					
5	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18					
12	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25					
19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
26	27	28	29	30	30														
Oct 1: Back to School Night Oct 9: Half day – noon dismissal Oct 12: Indigenous Peoples’ Day - no school Oct 21: Half day – noon dismissal - PDP					Nov 6: End of 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter Nov 11: Veterans Day: Half day – noon dismissal Nov 25: Half day – noon dismissal Nov 26 & 27: Thanksgiving - no school					Dec 9: Half Day – noon dismissal – PDP Dec 23: Half day – noon dismissal Dec 24-31: No school									
JANUARY 2027 (19 days)					FEBRUARY 2027 (15 days)					MARCH 2027 (23 days)									
				1	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12					
11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17	18	19					
18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26					
25	26	27	28	29						29	30	31							
Jan 1: New Year’s Day - no school Jan 13: Half day – noon dismissal – PDP Jan 15: End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter Jan 18: MLK Jr. Day observed: no school					Feb 10: Half day – noon dismissal - PDP Feb 15-19: No school					March 12: Half day – noon dismissal March 26: End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter; Half day – noon dismissal									
APRIL 2027 (17 days)					MAY 2027 (20 days)					JUNE 2027 (13 days) * 6/21-6/25 reserved for snow days (last day = ½ day)									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	11					
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	18*					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25					
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30							
26	27	28	29	30	31														
April 7: Half day – noon dismissal - PDP April 19-23: No school					May 19: Half day – noon dismissal – PDP May 28: Half day – noon dismissal May 31: Memorial Day – No school					June 4: End of 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter June 15: Moving Up Day June 17: Last Day of School June 18-30: No school *June 18: Juneteenth observed – no school									

\*Report cards (for academic instruction) are mailed two weeks after the last day of the marking period. IEP progress reports are sent every three months based upon your child’s IEP date.

# MILESTONES OVERVIEW

## **Our History**

Written by Our Founder, Alex Smith-Michaels

I'm a dreamer as well as an entrepreneur. I saw a problem and created a solution. I'm also a person with a disability that changed the way students with disabilities are educated today. Growing up I experienced the worst of the educational and psychiatric systems and never wanted another child to be treated the way I was. Therefore, when I was 24 years old in 1994, I created an agency dedicated to helping people with disabilities and vowed to change the way they are viewed. Instead of exclusively looking at a student's challenges I saw what was positive and engaging about these students. I saw potential. Milestones, Inc. (AKA Milestones Day School) started in the kitchen in my cramped apartment in Cambridge, MA in 1994. After earning my degree, I consulted to various towns' special education programs to meet their students' needs within their district. This involved designing programs from the ground up starting with planning a budget, finding funding sources, designing the physical classroom space, designing curriculum, hiring and training faculty, writing and monitoring Individual Education Plans, and most of all providing program oversight. All students were treated with respect and dignity. After a short while of consulting with school districts my phone was ringing off the hook. I couldn't keep up with the requests for consultation, so with the support of my family, I decided to hire faculty. Eventually my apartment became too small and unrealistic to run a company from, so I rented approximately 2500 square feet of space to continue and expand the consultations. Consulting alone was still not enough to really help all the students I encountered. Milestones opened several divisions including home-based therapies (ABA/Floortime/DIR) and a summer camp program where we focused on pragmatics for 130 children each year. While these programs were successful, I knew the only way to really make a difference was to establish a year-round, special needs school. In 2005, I opened a school of my own where an intense pragmatic curriculum melded with robust academic programming, and Milestones Day School was born! I rented additional space and employed ideal interventions. The school filled up rather quickly. We started with 1 student and now provide services to up to 92 students and expanded our facility to approximately 60,000 square feet.

## **Mission Statement | Statement of Purpose**

Milestones cultivates the potential of every student and young adult by providing individualized academic and therapeutic support based on their strengths, unique needs, and learning differences.

## **Vision**

Our vision is to ensure that each individual reaches their highest level of success by empowering them to achieve greater independence, self-confidence, and meaningful relationships at school and beyond.

## **Milestones Culture and Core Values**

While most of our students struggled in traditional school settings, we are inspired by their tremendous potential which allows them to flourish in a customized and nurturing environment. The natural consequence of this practice is evident in their increased self-esteem, decreased frustration, friendships, 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.

1. Our 5 P's we bring with us every day: **Potential, Perseverance, Positivity, Partnerships, and Best Practices.**
2. Through our universal implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), our faculty model, and students practice, our core values of **safety, respect, and responsibility.**
3. Milestones believes a key to success is to embrace a strong, collaborative partnership between students/parents/guardians, school districts, and Milestones faculty.
4. We embrace students' courage, tenacity, humor, and optimism. We believe students are always trying their best to behave but, at times, are missing valuable skills which causes distress. Through our integrated model, students learn missing academic and therapeutic skills which help them overcome obstacles and feel supported. Each day, our students are building skills to interact, communicate, and learn more effectively. Each student has undeniable potential. We are fierce advocates for highlighting students' strengths and capabilities while celebrating milestones of progress and achievement.

## **Organizational Structure**

Milestones Day School is overseen by its Board of Directors. The school's daily operations are overseen by Milestones' Chief Executive Officer (Kimberly Rockers), Founder and Chief Operations Officer (Alex Smith-Michaels), and Chief Financial Officer (Deb Abbott). Milestones' academics and IEP's are overseen by the school's Principal (Tim Mahoney), Assistant

Principal/Curriculum Director (Dr. Carly Owens/upcoming new hire).and Special Education Administrator (Gillian Warwick). Our therapeutic curriculum is overseen by Alex Smith-Michaels in conjunction with the two Assistant Clinical Directors, Dr. Bill Salloway and Grace Little.

### **Accreditation and Memberships**

Milestones Day School and Transition Program is licensed and accredited by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Our certification is posted in the Milestones' lobby. Milestones participates in a program review every three years. Results can be found on our website.

Milestones participates in an independent annual financial audit and submits an annual uniform financial report (UFR) as required by the Operational and Services Division for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. [mass.gov/orgs/operational-services-division](http://mass.gov/orgs/operational-services-division).

We are also members of the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools: [MAAPS.org](http://MAAPS.org)

### **Inclusion**

Milestones Day School celebrates diversity, and we teach students to take into consideration others' perspectives by respecting their various beliefs. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability or handicap, age, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or homelessness.

### **Professional Development Philosophy**

Milestones believes strongly in lifelong learners by furthering our faculty's education and honing their craft. Faculty may take courses throughout the year, attend seminars, participate in their trade organization's workshops, and learn from Milestones' therapeutic and educational masters. Milestones schedules several faculty professional development days throughout the year to expand our faculty's knowledge and skills to add to their toolbox.

## **ABOUT OUR SCHOOL**

### **School Profile**

Milestones provides services to up to 92 co-ed students ranging in ages from 5-22. We are a state-of-the-art, year-round (216 days) therapeutic day school focused upon embedded multidisciplinary therapeutic programming (academics, occupational therapy, psychological therapy, speech therapy, and pragmatics). Milestones has a high faculty-to-student ratio to ensure student success. Our older students have the option of attending and earning college credits through either dual enrollment with one of our local college partners and/or taking advanced placement courses in certain years. Older students can also partake in internships

and/or job shadowing, as well as therapeutic community outings. Younger students thrive with our robust elective program. All our programming yields a comprehensive learning experience that enriches academic, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth.

### **Services Provided**

All students receive weekly group Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Therapy, and Psychological Services. Some students, depending upon their profile, may also receive consultation from Board Certified Behavior Analysts and individual or small group reading and/or math services.

### **Facility Description**

Milestones Day School is located on three floors of a 4-story building. All classroom spaces have interior and exterior windows. The colors of the facility were specifically designed to create a calming environment. The facility is primarily carpeted to decrease sound (increasing the student's ability to pay attention and decrease sensory stimuli).

All spaces, including floors, ceilings, and walls, are clean, well maintained & ventilated, and free from safety hazards. All classrooms are maintained at a comfortable temperature that is not less than 68 degrees or above 80 degrees; Milestones has central air conditioning. We have two conference rooms for meetings with families and other outside visitors.

All spaces within Milestones are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including the kitchens and their appliances. We have a single stall handicapped bathroom on the second floor and there are handicapped bathrooms on the first and third floors. Milestones values students' privacy and to the best of our ability will 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 a concerning amount of time in the bathroom then 2 faculty members will enter and help the student.

There is an elevator available for use by a person with limited mobility or in a wheelchair.

Milestones Day School has bright and inviting classroom spaces and smaller learning areas to provide individual & small group instruction as well as related services. Milestones Day School has 18 classrooms, a multitude of ancillary spaces, several office spaces designated for faculty usage, four kitchens (1 for faculty and 3 for students), two sensory spaces, a gym, science lab, library, art room, nurse's office, vocational space, a small fitness center, and administrative offices. Students in Middle, High, and Post-High School are assigned a homeroom and academic grouping classroom(s). Elementary students are only assigned a homeroom.

Milestones has 8500 sq feet of outdoor space consisting of a playground, grass area, and black top area including a basketball court. In addition, Milestones abuts Prospect Hill Park where students can partake in hiking and larger field activities.

## **Student Profile**

All our students have complex profiles. Milestones employs over 90 faculty, and our expertise is educating students with disabilities that may affect academic achievement, social communication, executive functioning, sensory regulation, and coping skills. Some common diagnoses students carry include one or a combination of the following diagnoses: autism spectrum disorder, nonverbal learning disabilities, social (pragmatic) communication disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, Tourette syndrome, anxiety disorders, attention deficit disorder, sensory integration dysfunction, bipolar, depression, disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, specific learning disorder, and other neuro-cognitive disorders.

Our students tend to have uneven profiles but fall under the low average to superior range of intelligence. Our students display various deficits in the following domains: language production and processing, social skills, sensory processing, visual spatial and motor skills, executive functioning and organization, theory of mind, and many are also diagnosed with comorbid learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia.

## **School Pride**

Milestones' school colors are blue, white, and gray. Our mascot is a bulldog. Milestones has two ways of supporting our school pride by purchasing custom merchandise designed by students through our student-run school store.

- Gateway Student Store: [gatewaycafe@advancingmilestones.com](mailto:gatewaycafe@advancingmilestones.com)

## **Typical School Week**

There are 6 blocks in each school day / 30 in each week throughout the school year (September – June). Students engage in group academics, therapeutic activities, art/music, health, physical education, and electives. Some students also receive individual therapies and/or reading/math services.

During the summer (July-August), students participate in field trips and/or swimming (generally twice a week) and the rest of their blocks are filled with some academics and therapeutic services as well as electives. To foster generalization of skills, due to the community outings academic and therapeutic services are generally cut in half during the summer.

Throughout the school year and summer, older high school and Post High School students also partake in Community Based Instruction on a weekly basis to address their functional daily living skills and therapeutic generation of skills.

## ADMISSIONS AND ORIENTATION

All students who attend Milestones have engaged in a thorough admissions process which includes a record review, conversations with the student's family, sending district, student, and other applicable people, followed by an intake and visit to the student's proposed classroom.

Once a student is admitted to Milestones Day School, parents/guardians will be sent a welcome packet which includes this Family Handbook, family directory, Parent Advisory Group (PAG) information, your child's Case Manager's name, names of team members, class schedule, and a cheat sheet regarding important information. Additionally, a "meet and greet" is scheduled by your child's Case Manager and occurs within 3 weeks of the student's start date. This informal meeting typically happens before school and is for the purpose of sharing information, feedback, and introducing parents/guardians to their child's multidisciplinary team. At the discretion of parents/guardians, outside providers or team members from the previous school setting can be invited.

When a student is accepted and chooses Milestones as their placement, 5 things occur prior to starting.

(1) Prior to admission, Milestones provides to the parents/guardians and district a written copy of the following information.

1. The school's statement of purpose;
2. The type of services provided;
3. Admission criteria;
4. Parents' rights as described in 18.05(4);
5. Health care policy, including provisions for emergency health care and/or hospitalization as described in 18.05(9);
6. Planning for both foreseen and emergency terminations as described in 18.05(6), (7);

7. Methods of behavior support, violence prevention, discipline, management of harmful behavior by a student to himself/herself or others, and proper use of restraints as described in 18.05(5);
8. Activities related to daily living skills;
9. Contractual obligations with regard to payment for services. The school shall inform in writing any party, other than a local school district, responsible for placement of a student that said party is financially responsible for any costs incurred as a result of any placement not made pursuant to the requirements of 603 CMR 28.00;
10. Clothing requirements;
11. A description of normal daily routines;
12. Any specific treatment strategy employed by the facility;
13. A description of any normally occurring religious practices;
14. Visiting hours and other procedures related to communication with students and the faculty as described in 18.03(9);
15. Name and telephone number of a faculty person whom the parents/guardians may contact on an ongoing basis;
16. A description of a procedure which the parents/guardians or student may use to register complaints regarding the student's education and care at the facility; and,
17. A copy of the approved calendar.

(2) Documents are signed including a contract with the district, placement page which changes the student's school to Milestones, and a new "grid sheet" reflecting the student's services at Milestones (more information about Milestones' grid sheets can be found later in this document).

(3) A "meet and greet" is scheduled where parents/guardians and the district are provided an opportunity to meet the faculty their student will be working with.

(4) Parents/guardians submit the student's last physical (including immunization records, COVID vaccines, if applicable, and dental checkup (within the past 12 months of a start date.)

(5) Consent forms are signed. Parents/guardians will receive this handbook to reference and all signatures are completed electronically via DocuSign. Parents/guardians may contact the Admissions Department with any questions.

# ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

## **Academic Curriculum and Instruction**

Milestones has three academic administrative leaders (Principal, Assistant Principal/Curriculum Director, and Special Education Administrator) who foster best practices in teaching and differentiated instruction. 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 and needs, academics are differentiated by our special educators, and students are grouped accordingly. Milestones has on staff special educators, content teachers who instruct in their licensed academic area, and Reading and Math specialists who work with students whose IEPs require individualized or dyad services with reading, writing, and/or math goals.

## **Grading and Academic Progress Reports**

Students will receive academic progress reports four times per year. Quarter 1 (September-November), quarter 2 (November-January), quarter 3 (January-March), and quarter 4 (April-June). There are no academic reports during the summer as our program works on remedial academics and generalizing therapeutic skills. 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). All non-academic subjects are graded on a pass/fail scale (ex: social skills, occupational therapy, emotional regulation, physical education, electives, etc.)

### *\*Grading Scale for Elementary School (grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>)*

Elementary students use Standards Based Grading. There are 4 different performance levels which your child will be graded on his/her/their academic performance.

- 1=emerging understanding and application
- 2=partial understanding and application
- 3=functional understanding and application
- 4=thorough understanding and application.

### *\*Grading Scale for Middle (6-8<sup>th</sup>) & High School (9-12<sup>th</sup>)*

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
100	94-99	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	67-69	64-66	60-63	<59

### *\*Post High School (Age 18-22)*

Post High School does not have academic report cards or grading. They do continue to receive IEP progress reports. Students who participate in dual enrollment college courses will receive grades as assigned by our partnering community college.

### **Homework**

Students in our high school program 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. Students should expect two homework assignments per week per academic class. Students have two academic support blocks per week to receive support in completing homework or other classwork. Any homework not completed during academic support will be to be completed outside of school.

Students in our middle school and elementary programs do not receive daily homework. In lieu of homework, students participate in two additional blocks of instruction based upon their academic needs and IEPs. If families wish for additional at-home enrichment, students are able to access our online resources (IXL, iReady, and Lexia).

### **Incomplete Work Due to Absences**

Please see the “Attendance Policy” within the “General School Policies” section of this Family Handbook for information regarding work completion and credits.

### **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.

Students are allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT) on assignments or tasks when directed by a staff member. Unless given permission to use those tools, each student is expected to complete each assignment using their own work and without the assistance of automated tools.

## **State and District Wide Assessments | Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)**

All publicly funded students, which include students at Milestones, are required by state law to take the MCAS assessment. Students may take the traditional MCAS or the Alternative MCAS (MCAS-ALT) to demonstrate their depth and breadth of learned academic content. How the student takes MCAS will be determined at a team or IEP meeting.

Every student at Milestones has accommodations which will be listed in the student's IEP under PLEP A. Accommodations that are provided throughout the year (ex: a scribe, computer, etc.) are generally transferable to the MCAS assessment (except as excluded by state law). All Milestones academic and therapeutic faculty receive training on how to implement a student's accommodations.

### **Granting High School Diplomas**

Milestones coordinates with the student's district to determine which courses the student is required to take in order to receive a high school diploma from both the student's district and Milestones Day School. Milestones ensures all its course offerings align with public school districts. In order to receive a diploma students must both pass their coursework and meet the Competency Determination (CD) standards set forth by their public school districts. Should a student not meet state mandated requirements for graduation, the student will receive a Certification of Completion from the student's school district.

In accordance with MGL c.71B, s.1, "...any student with a disability who requires special education is entitled to receive publicly funded special education until s/he/[they] turns 22 or attains a high school diploma or its equivalent."

## THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMMING

Milestones' therapeutic model starts with explicit instruction through small classes and embeds 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. All Milestones students benefit from our therapeutic curriculum including Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology (pragmatics), and Psychological Services. All students access these services each week as part of our therapeutic programming. Our Clinicians provide weekly lessons as well as join the classroom instruction of other professionals. Clinicians' lessons are presented in multi-modalities such as discussion, PowerPoint presentations, viewing movie/TV/Internet clips, group activities, and lectures. Below is a glimpse of what content is taught.

**Speech-Language Pathologists** (social skills/pragmatics): Our speech language pathologists have two main roles. The first is providing social-pragmatic and community-based instruction groups. These groups focus on topics such as understanding what is expected in different social situations, how our behavior should change based on the situation, using clues to figure out how people are feeling and what they are thinking, perspective taking, problem-solving, self-advocacy, and conversation skills. The second is providing services for specific speech, language, and social needs (only some of our students require this service). These services may be delivered within the classroom or in one of our therapy rooms. Many skills may be targeted during these sessions. Examples include comprehension, note-taking strategies, inferencing, grammar, story-telling, articulation, and speech fluency. In addition, the SLPs are available to meet with students when they need support in a class or with a social situation. One example of a program the SLPs use is Social Thinking.

**Occupational Therapists** (coping & regulation, motor, daily living skills): 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. Areas of focus for both group and individual services include Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), community traveling and participation, fine and gross motor skill development, endurance, sensory processing and regulation, attention, organizational skills, ocular motor skills, visual perception and motor skills, and technology support. Outside of the classroom, the OTs utilize a student kitchen and laundry area to teach functional skills. Finally, Milestones offers two large sensory rooms where students learn to embed the use of sensory breaks for optimal regulation throughout the day. 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."

**Psychologists:** Our psychologists provide a range of clinical services supporting emotional and behavioral regulation and cognitive flexibility. These services include psychologically-informed therapy groups, individual psychotherapy counseling, consultation to parents/guardians and school faculty, neuropsychological testing, and crisis management. Groups cover a range of topics promoting healthy emotional growth and are crafted considering the specific developmental needs of the population. Topics range from how do you convey friendship to understanding your diagnosis and what it means to you. Psychologists are also available on an as-needed basis for students who are experiencing heightened emotions, having difficulty solving an emotional or interpersonal problem, or need support managing a specific situation. This support might be done in a one-on-one meeting or might take the form of pushing into the classroom to provide additional support to that student. Some discussions include mental health and diagnoses, education around issues involved in dating and friendships, 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.

**Board Certified Behavior Analysts:** Our BCBA's focus on the social and emotional development of the students with relation to their behaviors. They collect data and track student progress; write comprehensive functional behavioral assessments; create behavior intervention plans; train faculty on behavioral protocols and implementation; attend IEP meetings and develop behavioral goals; offer consultation to faculty on best practices and proactive strategies including PBIS; collaborate with parents/guardians and outside providers; and participate in behavior support protocol training.

### **Milestones' Vocabulary**

At Milestones, we have designed our own curriculum based upon best practices and a collaboration of ideas from our own experts and leading experts in the field. 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). To help your child generalize these concepts we strongly encourage you to use similar language at home.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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
- **I statements:** When a person feels that they are being blamed—whether rightly or wrongly—it's common that they respond with defensiveness. "I" statements are a simple way of speaking that will help students avoid this trap by reducing feelings of

blame. An “I” statement takes responsibility for one’s own feelings, while tactfully describing a problem.

- **Emotion Exploration Scale:** We use this scale to describe a particular emotion, its warning signs, and how it progresses from low to high intensity. Students begin by choosing an emotion, such as sadness, anger, or anxiety. Next, they will describe the thoughts, behaviors, and symptoms they experience as the emotion progresses along a scale from 1 (low intensity) to 10 (high intensity). This scale is helpful for thoroughly exploring an emotion, or more specifically to learn about warning signs.
- **Grounding Techniques:** Grounding techniques work by focusing attention on the present moment, and bringing attention back to reality.
- **The Anger Iceberg:** Represents the idea that, although anger is displayed outwardly, other emotions may be hidden beneath the surface. These other feelings—such as sadness, fear, or guilt—might cause a person to feel vulnerable, or they may not have the skills to manage them effectively.
- **Deep Breathing:** Deep breathing is a popular relaxation technique that helps to control the symptoms of stress, anxiety, and anger.
- **The 3 F’s:** When a person perceives the threat of harm—whether emotionally or physically—their body will automatically initiate a survival response. Heart rate elevates, palms begin to sweat, breathing becomes rapid, and thoughts race. These changes are all part of the fight-or-flight response, which prepares the person to either confront, freeze, or flee from the threat.
- **Emotion Thermometer:** The Emotion Thermometers handout is a tool for helping children put a name to their feelings and rating their intensity. The colorfully-illustrated faces help children recognize each emotion, and the simple rating scales allow them to indicate how intensely they feel each one. Children may color thermometers to their desired level or make a single mark.
- **Mindfulness:** Teaching mindfulness to students can help shape three critical skills developed in early childhood: paying attention and remembering information, shifting back and forth between tasks, and behaving appropriately with others. These abilities are known as executive functions and they are essential for more advanced tasks like planning, reasoning, problem-solving, and positive social relationships.
- **Stress Tolerance:** Stress tolerance is the threshold at which an individual can effectively and consistently deal with and manage stressful situations. This is typically taught in high school emotional regulation classes.

# INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) AND PLACEMENT

All students at Milestones come with an Individualized Education Program generally from their current placement. Upon admission, your child's IEP Service Delivery Page (aka "grid sheet") will be updated to reflect his/her/their new service delivery. Once Milestones faculty have an opportunity to evaluate your child (formally and/or informally over a 6-8 week period), an IEP meeting will be held to revise the document. Prior to that meeting, Milestones' Special Education Administrator will send parents/guardians a document to fill out which outlines the student's history as well as your current concerns. This document is vital, so we don't miss an area of concern. Once you complete this document, please send it back to Milestones' Special Education Administrator via email.

## **Testing/Evaluations**

To prepare for an upcoming reevaluation meeting, Milestones completes various assessments based upon your child's needs and parent/guardian and/or district concerns. Testing may occur in the areas of occupational therapy, speech-language pathology/language, psychology, behavior (if applicable), independent living skills (age dependent), and/or academic skills. If outside testing was completed less than a year ago, testing the student again could be considered invalid. Therefore, the clinician will determine what assessment, if any, would be administered while considering past assessments. All assessments also include informal observations. The consent for this testing comes from your child's district, not Milestones.

All Milestones' clinicians are highly qualified and experienced with our population. Testing/evaluations at any given time are determined by a clinician's caseload. The person assessing your child may not necessarily be the clinician who provides therapeutic services to your child. The clinician will review your child's records, speak with your child's Milestones providers, and observe your child to gather valuable information.

## **Outside Evaluations**

Milestones welcomes collaboration of outside clinicians. Once the evaluation is shared, the Team will meet to review the testing and recommendations.

## **IEP Meeting**

Milestones in coordination with your child's school district holds IEP meetings once per year. Per state guidelines, every three years we will have a reevaluation meeting by law to determine if your child continues to meet disability criteria and continues to require an IEP. Milestones

always conducts testing prior to a 3-year reevaluation meeting, but, in general, does not test students before an annual IEP.

At the age of fourteen, students are invited to attend their team meeting. Prior to the meeting, the student's case manager will meet individually to discuss the student's input including concerns, vision statement, benchmarks, IEP, etc. Massachusetts law establishes age eighteen as the age of majority. One year prior to the student turning 18, the Team discusses the transfer of rights. This means the student is a legal adult and competent to make their own decisions including those regarding their special education services unless it has been deemed by a court of law that guardianship falls to a designated adult. On their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (or close to it), we will meet with the student and review the Age of Majority paperwork (shared decision, delegate decision, or acting on their own behalf).

The student's team including Milestones, the district, parents/guardians, and the child, if 14 or older, create the IEP together, but the actual IEP document is generated by your child's district. Milestones is a 12-month program and operates year-round. During the summer months, Milestones provides both academic programming and field trips to provide further opportunities for generalization of learned skills. For the convenience of participants, our IEP and Team meetings are generally scheduled as virtual meetings; however, if the district or family would prefer an in-person meeting we are happy to accommodate.

### **IEP Progress Reports**

Parents/guardians and districts will receive quarterly reports on their child's progress towards reaching IEP goals and benchmarks. A student's progress report quarter deadlines are determined when a student starts at Milestones. Progress reports are generally sent electronically, but paper copies are provided if they are requested by parents/guardians.

### **Therapeutic Grid Services**

The profile of students that Milestones services all generally require our therapeutic programming that is part of, and embedded into, our general curriculum (ex: OT, SLP, and Psychological Services). In an effort to provide the highest level of communication and generalization of skills, Milestones provides additional quarterly informational letters to all families regarding what therapeutic information students were exposed to including goals, vocabulary words, and general information and a quick preview of what they will be exposed to for the following quarter.

### **Placement – 12<sup>th</sup> grade and Post-High School**

To assist with our scheduling for students' programming, beginning in the 2025-2026 school Milestones Day School intends to send out a notification to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and post-high school families in the late winter/early spring to let us know if their child will be graduating, returning for the upcoming school year (July), or moving on to a different placement. All notifications will be kindly requested back by April 15th. If we do not hear from your family, an administrator may outreach to you and your child's district to confirm if you are intending for your student to move on to another school so that we can plan accordingly for our student enrollment and potential vacancies for new Admissions starting in July of the upcoming school year. If you would like to speak with someone about your child's current placement, please contact your child's case manager, Gillian Warwick (Special Education Administrator), or Alex Smith-Michaels (Founder/COO).

## **TRANSITION PLANNING**

Planning for life after high school is an important part of every student's educational experience. At Milestones Day School, transition planning is embedded throughout our educational and therapeutic programming to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed for adult life. Through individualized instruction, community-based experiences, therapeutic supports, and collaboration with families, students work toward goals related to postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community participation.

In accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requirements, transition planning begins no later than age 14 and is reviewed annually through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Planning is guided by each student's strengths, interests, preferences, vision for the future, disability-related needs, and postsecondary goals.

Families play an important role in the transition planning process. Parents and caregivers can support planning at home by encouraging students to discuss their interests, strengths, future goals, and growing independence. Everyday experiences such as making choices, participating in community activities, completing household responsibilities, exploring career interests, and practicing self-advocacy skills can help reinforce the skills students are developing at school. Ongoing communication and collaboration between families and the school help ensure that transition planning reflects each student's evolving needs, interests, and goals for adulthood.

## **Middle School**

During the middle school years, students begin to develop a greater understanding of themselves as learners and individuals. Early transition discussions focus on helping students identify their strengths, interests, preferences, and areas where they may need support. Students are encouraged to participate in conversations about their learning and begin building self-awareness, self-advocacy, and self-determination skills.

As appropriate, students are introduced to the IEP process and supported in understanding the accommodations, supports, and strategies that help them be successful in school and other settings. Families and school staff work together to begin thinking about future goals and opportunities while continuing to build the academic, social, communication, and functional skills that support long-term success.

## **Formal Transition Planning (Age 14+)**

Beginning no later than age 14, transition planning becomes a formal component of the IEP process. Students are invited to participate in discussions about their goals and plans and are encouraged to take an active role in the planning process.

Through ongoing age-appropriate transition assessments, instruction, therapeutic programming, and real-world experiences, students explore opportunities related to education and training, employment, independent living, and community participation. Transition planning is reviewed annually through the IEP process and evolves as students grow and their goals become more clearly defined.

## **High School Years**

During the high school years, transition planning becomes increasingly focused on helping students understand themselves, identify future goals, and develop the skills needed for adult life. Transition-related learning is embedded throughout students' educational and therapeutic programming and may occur through classroom instruction, therapeutic groups, community-based instruction, community experiences, and individualized activities aligned with each student's IEP goals.

Depending on a student's age, interests, strengths, and individual needs, learning experiences may include:

- Career awareness and exploration

- Community-based instruction (CBI)
- Volunteer and service-learning opportunities
- Work-based learning experiences
- Independent living and daily living skills instruction
- Travel training and community navigation
- Postsecondary education and college exploration
- Self-advocacy and disability awareness
- Executive functioning and organizational skill development
- Community participation and recreation

At Milestones, transition planning is not a separate class or a set of isolated activities. It is integrated across academic instruction, therapeutic groups, and community-based learning experiences. Skills related to independence, self-advocacy, communication, executive functioning, employment readiness, and community participation are developed over time and across settings.

The IEP Team, including the student and family, regularly reviews progress toward postsecondary goals and identifies supports, services, and experiences that help students move toward their plans.

### **Planning for Adulthood (Ages 17–18)**

As students approach adulthood, transition planning includes preparation for important life changes and decisions that may affect their future after high school. Students and families work with the IEP Team to explore next steps and identify supports that may be needed in adulthood.

Topics may include:

- Age of Majority and transfer of educational decision-making rights at age 18
- Supported decision-making, healthcare proxies, guardianship, and other options for adult decision-making support, when appropriate
- Chapter 688 planning and referral for students who may be eligible for adult services
- Postsecondary education, vocational training, and employment pathways
- Adult service agencies and eligibility requirements
- Independent living and community participation goals
- Self-advocacy, disability awareness, and disability disclosure

Students are encouraged to take an increasingly active role in understanding their strengths, support needs, accommodations, and goals as they prepare for adult life.

## **Continued Transition Services (Through Age 22, if Eligible)**

Students who remain eligible for special education services may continue to receive transition-focused programming after high school. Through collaboration with students, families, school districts, colleges, employers, community organizations, and adult service agencies, planning continues to support movement into adult life.

Transition services may include:

- Employment preparation and work experiences
- Postsecondary education and training opportunities
- Independent living instruction
- Community participation and recreation
- Self-advocacy and self-determination development
- Coordination with adult service providers and community resources
- Individualized planning for life after special education services

Students may continue to receive transition services until they earn a regular high school diploma or reach the end of eligibility under Massachusetts special education regulations.

## **Milestones Postsecondary Transition Program (Ages 18–22)**

Milestones offers a dedicated Postsecondary Transition Program for eligible students ages 18–22. Within this program, transition services are provided in a more intensive, community-based, and adult-focused setting. Instruction and learning experiences are individualized and designed to support students in applying skills across real-world environments.

Students participate in learning experiences aligned with their IEP goals, which may include community-based instruction, employment and career development experiences, independent living skill development, therapeutic supports, and executive functioning instruction. All instruction is focused on helping students build independence and apply skills in meaningful community and adult settings.

Depending on individual goals, students may also participate in postsecondary educational experiences, including courses and programming at MassBay Community College. Students also have opportunities to pursue certificates, digital badges, and other skill-based credentials through online learning platforms and career-focused coursework, based on their individual interests and goals.

A key component of the program is work-based learning, which may include on-campus and/or community-based internships, job shadowing, and other career exploration experiences. Through these opportunities, students apply classroom learning in real-world settings while developing employment skills, independence, and confidence.

Through individualized instruction, community-based learning, therapeutic supports, and collaboration with families, colleges, employers, and adult service agencies, Milestones supports students in developing the skills needed for greater independence and meaningful participation in adult life.

### **Communication at Postsecondary Transition Program (PHS)**

Parents/guardians are important and valued members of a student's Team. Working together ensures a positive school experience for students. PHS faculty communicate regularly with parents/guardians to share student-specific information. These updates may occur through a variety of formal and informal ways including meetings, emails, and phone calls.

Parents/guardians will receive a minimum of two contacts per month from a member of the student's Team. Parents/guardians will also receive newsletters of program highlights as well as a weekly email update from their student. We encourage parents/guardians to contact faculty with any relevant information.

### **Mass Bay Community College Participation and Reimbursement Policy**

When participation is supported by a student's IEP team, some students in Post-High School and/or during the spring semester of their Senior year in high school have the opportunity to participate in college coursework at Mass Bay Community College that is sponsored by Milestones. Milestones will reimburse parents/guardians for the following maximum fees for one class per semester. The total amount that is reimbursable is based upon Mass Bay's tuition fees but generally includes the following fees for one course:

- All College Fee - Day Rate
- Technology Fee
- Tuition Day Rate Resident
- Lab Fee (if applicable)

Note: in order to be reimbursed for the cost of a MassBay class, the class must take place during the school day and be facilitated by PHS staff. Classes taken during non-school hours are considered personal and not eligible for reimbursement. Parents/guardians or students must submit proof of payment prior to being reimbursed.

Parents/guardians are responsible for purchasing textbooks and any other materials required

for instruction and participation.

Please note: If a student drops or withdraws from a class after the add/drop period, parents/guardians may be responsible for reimbursing Milestones for 50% of the total cost of the course.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

### **Parent/Guardian Rights**

Milestones has a Parent Advisory Group that advises the school on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of the students in the program (see PAG for more details).

### **Communication with Families**

Milestones Day School is committed to teaming with parents/guardians and districts to help our students thrive. 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/guardians should notify the school if this is the case for their child.

Communication occurs in several ways:

- **Overall Communication:** All students are assigned a Case Manager upon admission for ongoing parent/guardian communication, and you will receive your child's Case Manager's name, email, and phone number for ongoing contact. The Case Manager's responsibility is to keep abreast of your child's academic and therapeutic highlights. You may call or email anytime, but please note that our Case Managers spend much of the day in classrooms and therapeutic meetings, so we ask that you are patient in hearing back from them. If you have a true emergency, please call the front desk and our Administrative Assistant, Dillon, will direct you to the correct person. Case Managers may change from time to time (ex: when a student moves from middle to high school, etc.), and families will be notified if there is a change in your student's assignment. **2<sup>nd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades** - Weekly Phone Conferences or Email with Case Managers (called "weeklies"): Parents/guardians may request either a weekly email or brief phone call to hear about your child's highlights for the week. This is a good time to discuss any concerns you may have. **Post High School** – Communication: families receive a weekly newsletter, a bi-weekly email or phone call with their student's case manager, and a weekly communication from their student about highlights from their week.

- **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.
- **Parent/Guardian Conferences:** Milestones' faculty look forward to meeting at your child's yearly IEP and/or 3-year reevaluation. Outside of these meetings, parent/guardian conferences may be held upon your request. Please contact your child's Case Manager to arrange.

### **Parent Advisory Group (PAG)**

The PAG is a group of parents/guardians who work collaboratively to help guide and advise Milestones' programming. All families/guardians are invited to join the PAG. Members have input into relevant program matters that pertain to the students' education, health, and safety. Notice of meetings including the PAG training agenda topics are sent home prior to the scheduled meeting, and dates for each school year's meetings are communicated with all families each fall. Each meeting involves programmatic discussions as well as mini workshops with topics generated by the Milestones' parent/guardian community in an annual feedback survey.

The Chief Executive Officer, Kim Rockers, and our Project Coordinator, Heidi Warren, are designated as the PAG liaisons.. They host and attend the quarterly meetings (*typically held in November, January, March and June*), which are open to all parents/guardians of our school, and we welcome participants to attend as often as they are able.

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, organizing faculty appreciation activities, contributing to school surveys, and identifying potential partnerships (ex: clubs for students). There are PAG Leader/Co-Leader roles, a Boxtops for Education Coordinator, and opportunities for parent/guardian representatives to volunteer to lead or collaborate on social planning and initiatives.

The job of the PAG liaison (and designated Milestones collaborators) includes, but is not limited to:

- Notification of meetings and development of written agendas. PAG leaders/co-leaders also contribute to the development of meeting agendas and approve all meeting minutes.
- Facilitation of PAG meetings
- Providing members with resources and materials, as needed
- Providing ongoing training during PAG meetings
- Maintaining a list of parents/guardians in attendance and following up on various generated ideas and/or concerns generated at the meeting
- Communicating issues, needs, and recommendations to appropriate program administrators
- Messages from the CEO, Principal and designees: Kim Rockers (CEO), Tim Mahoney (Principal) and other administrators send various communications about happenings in the school periodically to parents/guardians that offer reminders and updates about school-wide events and highlights certain activities that have taken place in the classroom and community.

### **School-Wide Newsletters**

Milestones produces a quarterly newsletter highlighting big events that occurred. This newsletter is sent out via Constant Contact and is also posted online. Our students are proud to share their work!

### **Social Media**

Milestones maintains a Facebook page (“Milestones Day School and Transition Program”), Instagram, and LinkedIn account that members of the community have the option to follow.

### **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 request of parents/guardians, interpreters shall be provided for translation. Parents/guardians may also opt to request translation through the completion of their annual consent form.

### **A Collaborative Approach: Expectations For Families**

Milestones’ core values of Safety, Respect, and Responsibility extend to all team members, including faculty and parents/guardians. We can do our best work when working collaboratively

with our families. Parents/guardians are expected to engage in therapeutic and academic intervention efforts by supporting attendance, following community guidelines, and participating in respectful communication.

Please promptly lift any concerns to your Case Manager. When discussing your concerns with any of the Milestones faculty, we expect all forms of communication to be respectful. Yelling, threatening, degrading, using inappropriate language, verbal aggression, violent behavior, or intentional interruptions will not be tolerated. Failure to follow Milestones' code of conduct will result in the termination of a meeting, phone conversation, or email communication.

Should a family exhibit a pattern of behavior that undermines the team's ability to serve your student or is in any way abusive to team members, a Team meeting with the district will commence as soon as possible to discuss the appropriateness of continued interactions with Milestones.

## **WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSURES**

### **Snow Cancellations and Delays**

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 school district's website is later updated as soon as possible. Milestones will use our emergency automated call system and email to notify families of closings or delays once a decision has been confirmed by Waltham Public Schools, but families will be able to reliably anticipate Milestones' decision at the earliest opportunity by following Waltham's plans.

- *School Cancellation:* If Waltham Public Schools close due to snow, Milestones will close for the day.
- *One Hour Delayed Opening:* If Waltham Public Schools announce a 1 hour delay, Milestones will open to students at 9:30AM.
- *Two Hour Delayed Opening:* If Waltham Public Schools announce a 2 hour delay, Milestones will open to students at 10:30AM.

Please note that if there is 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 families 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/guardians 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](mailto:absent@advancingmilestones.com).*

### **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/guardians 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 Building 400 within our office park or 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. If the parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians or emergency contact, the student will remain with a faculty member until the family or emergency contact can be reached.

### **Additional Information Regarding School Closing or Delay**

*(see the section on snow cancellation and delays above for weather-related changes)*

At times, Milestones may close or delay for non-weather-related emergencies (ex: flood, no heat, etc.). Milestones will use our automatic call system and email to notify families if scheduling changes need to occur. If Milestones cancels school, even if your town is open for weather or other related reasons, 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 may be very busy and not be able to answer the phone in a timely manner.

## **MEDICAL & HEALTH CARE**

Milestones employs a full-time registered nurse to address any medical needs that may arise on a day-to-day basis with students. Should the nurse be absent, Milestones will reach out to substitutes who can fill in. Should a substitute be unavailable, a select few of Milestones' faculty are trained to administer medication according to the doctor's orders. Milestones also has a consulting pediatrician, Dr. Hackett, who is located in Waltham, MA and our school nurse also consults with the Waltham Board of Health, DESE, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for ongoing issues (ex: COVID).

### **Training**

All faculty members receive training in first aid, CPR, and AED, on a regular basis as stipulated by the American Red Cross. In addition, annual training also includes diabetes management, seizures, and antipsychotic medications.

### **Annual Medical Consent Forms**

All parents/guardians will receive annual consent forms, which include permitting Milestones to treat your child in case of an emergency (please see our emergency consent forms for additional details). These forms are sent out every spring and are required to be returned in June prior to the start of the next school year.

### **DESE Mandated Physical and Dental Evaluations**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that your child has both an annual physical and a dental exam. When a student first enrolls at Milestones and does not have a physical within the past year, Milestones will make provisions for the student to have a physical within 30 days of enrollment. Thereafter, each student is required to have an annual physical and dental exam, which must be submitted to Milestones Day School. If an appointment is not able to be scheduled until after the last physical or dental exam expires, parents/guardians are responsible for providing Milestones with the date of the upcoming appointment in writing by sending an email to our school nurse. Families may not opt out of

providing Milestones documentation of an annual physical and dental exam for their student(s). If documentation is not provided prior to the start of each school year (before July 1st), families will be provided a monthly reminder. This process is monitored by the School Nurse and an overseeing Administrator to conduct monthly checks and issue communications.

### **Annual Screenings**

Each year, Milestones will conduct annual hearing, postural, body mass index (BMI), 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/their pediatrician.

### **Immunizations**

The Massachusetts Department of Public 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. We strongly recommend all students receive COVID vaccines and boosters as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Milestones requires that all students be immunized 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. The 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.

### **Epidemic/Pandemic Plan**

Should there be an outbreak of infectious disease deemed an epidemic or pandemic by the World Health Organization, Milestones will follow guidance from the WHO, State and Federal agencies (ex: Board of Health), our consulting physician, DESE, and legal counsel. Milestones' Board of Directors along with the Milestones Task Force will be responsible for making decisions to keep our students and faculty safe.

## **Mask Policy**

As of May 2022, Milestones is a mask-optional school. It is up to a family's decision or student if over the age of 18 to determine what works best for their family, and all choices will be supported and respected. Milestones reserves the right to change our requirements and re-implement mask use at any time (schoolwide or in specific areas of the school) if State guidance for schools were to change based on updated public health information. (Please note that DESE has put forth that students with special needs may not be able to mask due to their disability. If a mask policy were to be reinstated in the future, Milestones would treat each student as an individual and would decide with his/her/their team in accordance with DESE guidelines).

## **General Illness**

Faculty and students are expected to be in good health. Faculty or students who have vomited, had diarrhea, or a fever over 100 degrees, should refrain from attending for 24 hours after the last episode. In the case of fever, faculty and students should not return until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medications. If one is fever-free and well enough to be onsite but still exhibiting airborne/respiratory symptoms, a mask is recommended to prevent transmission to others. If community members have questions or concerns regarding illness and school clearance guidelines, please contact our School Nurse.

## **Contagious or Communicable Diseases Excluding COVID-19**

Any person with a contagious or communicable disease will need to stay home until he or she is no longer contagious and/or has been on antibiotics for 24 hours. Any person with a severe cough, excessive nasal discharge, or green mucus should remain home until symptoms have improved and they have been cleared by the School Nurse to be onsite. If a student is diagnosed with a communicable disease such as mono, chicken pox, strep throat, conjunctivitis, head lice, flu, RSV, or a skin infection, please contact the School Nurse for clearance instructions.

## **COVID-19 Protocols**

In March of 2024 both the CDC and Massachusetts Department of Public Health revised public health guidance regarding COVID-19 protocols. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education notified schools about these changes and Milestones updated our policy accordingly. Our current practice is as follows:

- If a student is feeling sick and is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, it is still best

practice to test for COVID-19.

- If a student is feeling sick, it is still best practice to wear a mask to prevent the spread of any illness.
- If one tests positive for COVID-19 or any other respiratory illness, they are required to stay home from school until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of antipyretics (ex: Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen).
- If one tests positive for COVID-19, they are required to stay home until their symptoms are greatly improving.
- If one tests positive for COVID-19, they are no longer required to isolate out of school for at least 5 days, but they are instructed to wear a mask for at least 5 days. As stated above, clearance to return to school is also contingent on symptom improvement and being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of antipyretic medications.

Families are encouraged to contact our School Nurse (Abigail Howard) with any illness-related questions or updates: [MDSNurse@AdvancingMilestones.com](mailto:MDSNurse@AdvancingMilestones.com).

For further information, the full updated Massachusetts guidance is available at this Link:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/staying-home-to-prevent-the-spread-of-respiratory-viruses>

Health and Safety Mitigation Protocols: Guidance encourages hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and providing adequate ventilation to decrease the contaminants spreading through air and on surfaces. Milestones receives ongoing daily cleaning during and after school hours from a third party. Contactless sinks and ample hand sanitizer are readily available. Our building utilizes MERV-13 filters for ventilation, which are maintained in accordance with recommended guidelines. Since the 2023-2024 school year, Milestones no longer issues notifications for all individual cases of COVID-19. However, if Milestones were to experience a high volume of cases schoolwide or clustered in a specific area of the school, we will collaborate with the Waltham Board of Health and update faculty and families.

### **Medical and/or Psychiatric Emergency**

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.

### **Taking Prescribed Medication While at School**

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. However, 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/guardians 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/guardians 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 School Nurse or the COO (or designee) 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 any way, regardless of physician orders.

### **Medical Records After Graduation or Transition from Milestones**

Milestones safely maintains medical records onsite for all current students. Medical records will be safely discarded and no longer maintained by Milestones after a student graduates or transitions out of Milestones. If a family would prefer to have their student's medical record returned to the family, please contact our School Nurse (Abigail Howard):

[ahoward@advancingmilestones.com](mailto:ahoward@advancingmilestones.com) prior to your student's last day of school at Milestones to coordinate your receipt of records.

## **FOOD-RELATED POLICIES**

### **Free and Reduced Breakfast/Lunch Program**

Milestones participates in the free and reduced meal program should a family financially qualify, or their district provides free meals to all students. For more information, please contact your home school district. Applications are available for those who qualify for free or reduced lunch and need to be filled out annually upon enrollment or by September 30<sup>th</sup> of the current year. Free and reduced breakfasts/lunches are offered to families who qualify financially according to the National School Lunch Program standards. Students who are on the free/reduced breakfast/lunch program do not need to set up an account at MySchoolBucks.com. For breakfast, Milestones offers a variety of cereals, oatmeal, and milk.

### **Lunch/Snacks from Home**

Milestones encourages families to send their students into school with healthy meals, snacks, and drinks. When sending food from home, please observe our nut free-nut conscious policy which can be found in this section of the handbook. At times our students experience periods of dysregulation that are related to hunger.

Please be aware that Milestones does not have the capacity to provide snacks to students, so we ask families to send their students in with enough snacks to sustain them throughout the day. As you pack your child's snacks and lunch for school, keep in mind that there are times when students eat their packed items during bus transportation before arriving at school, and some students choose not to eat non-preferred food items. Families may be contacted by their student's case manager to discuss plans to support your student if we observe that your student(s) frequently forgets to pack food items or frequently requests additional snacks. While we do have access to microwaves, our ability to heat up food for lunches is limited. When considering what to pack for a student lunch, we encourage families to pack food that can be consumed at room temperature.

In addition, food being sent in with students should not require the use of a knife. If a student brings a knife to school, it will be confiscated and remain in the possession of a school administrator until a time can be arranged for a parent/guardian to come to the school to pick it

up. In addition, the knife may be deemed a weapon and the student's actions would then be evaluated to determine if it met the criteria for a suspension.

### **Purchasing Lunch at School**

Milestones works in collaboration with the Waltham Public Schools to provide a healthy lunch (according to the Department of Agriculture) to all students who wish to purchase lunch. These lunches are consistent with the nutritional guidelines set by the Federal Government.

Parents/guardians can sign up for a school lunch account by going to the website [MySchoolBucks.com](http://MySchoolBucks.com). From there, parents/guardians can create an account using Milestones Day School for the district and their child's name. Parents/guardians can load money via the website and the student's account will be debited when they purchase lunch. Each week during homeroom students who wish to purchase lunch will be asked to fill out a lunch form. Monthly, Milestones posts our school's lunch options on the website (at the bottom of the page under Find it Fast). Students fill out a weekly menu with the lunch options. Students are welcome to bring their own lunch and snacks, including drinks, from home.

### **Cooking at School**

Milestones' students engage in regular cooking activities which help them to learn and generalize daily living skills, math, and executive functioning. Faculty 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 and 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/guardians and faculty do not send to school items that contain peanuts and/or tree nut products.

Prior to intake, a child's parents/guardians 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 is used to identify the allergens, reactions, remedy, and accommodations as needed. Upon entry to our school for a student with known allergies, the school-wide Allergy and Medical Information sheet is updated.

All relevant faculty 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 faculty 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 areas that might have an allergen. Faculty will be trained in the student's specific allergies and emergency procedures should the student accidentally come in contact with an allergen.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY OUTINGS**

### **Pick Up / Drop Off**

Milestones 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 Milestones faculty member is present. If you are driving your student to and from school, we request that you please drop your student off at 8:30 am and pick up at 3:00 pm each day by joining the bus line. Please do not leave your child unattended before or after school.

### **Drop Off Late/Pick Up Early**

If your child arrives after the school day has begun or needs to be picked up early from school, please go to the reception area (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) and sign your child in/out. We respectfully request that if your child is going to be late or leave early due to an appointment, please notify your child's Case Manager in advance.

### **Transportation to and from School**

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 drop off a student after 8:30 am, the bus driver is responsible for escorting the student to the upstairs main lobby (2<sup>nd</sup> floor).

## **Late Dismissal**

If a student's bus has not arrived by 3:05 pm, a Milestones faculty member will contact the transportation company to get information regarding an estimated time of arrival and reason for tardiness. A faculty member will contact a parent/guardian on their preferred contact phone number to inform them of the late departure from school.

## **Bus Safety and Emergency Contacts for Dismissal**

Milestones' faculty reserves the right to determine whether for any reason, riding the bus home is not safe for your child. This determination will happen by 2:30 pm. Should this occur, the student's parents/guardians will be called to pick up their child. If a Milestones faculty has not received confirmation by 3:00 pm that a parent/guardian is picking the student up, the emergency contacts will be called. We expect that parents/guardians or their emergency contact will pick up their student no later than 4 pm. \*\*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.\*\*

## **Transportation During the School Day**

Students may leave Milestones during the day for several reasons to enhance learning and generalize skills (a field trip, community outing, internship, community college, etc.). Students will be transported either in one of Milestones' vans (driven by an approved faculty member) or hired chartered buses.

*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/van or in the bus/van, do not scream or engage in other disruptive behavior that distracts the driver, 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.

## **Field Trips**

Students at Milestones Day School take various field trips during the year to practice social skills, daily living skills, employment, academic skills, and generalization of therapeutic skills. During the summer, our students leave school approximately twice a week. In June of each year, families will receive a calendar of summer events. High School Seniors have a week of fun prior to graduation. All activities are previewed with students by our academic and clinical faculty. Prior to going on a field trip, we request that families do the following:

- Please remind and review the field trip with your student.
- Please make sure your child is dressed 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, drinks, 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 faculty. Students are not permitted to purchase items at gift shops.

### **Community-Based Instruction (CBI)**

CBI is embedded through the programming of our students' milieu but can be specifically seen during OT/SLP classes, along with any transition-led groups for the 10th, 11th and 12th grade. 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.

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION STRATEGIES (PBIS)**

Milestones is proud to be a "PBIS School." PBIS facilitates best practices, which is an evidence-based program used in schools nationwide. PBIS is used as a framework for supporting universal teaching for responses to expected behaviors throughout the school in all areas of the day. Fostering students to extend to their highest potential is reinforced by best teaching practices across the school, creating a sense of community, and raising school spirit. Classroom PBIS strategies are important tools to decrease disruptions, increase instructional time, and improve student social behavior and academic outcomes. This is critical as schools are held to greater accountability for student outcomes and teacher effectiveness. PBIS fosters the optimal environment for learning, growth, independence, and success. At Milestones PBIS will better allow the majority of our students to best access our interventions and supports in their daily environment. In addition, PBIS allows a school to grow as a community and establishes a positive culture through school spirit and identity. Faculty and students are proud that Milestones is the home of the Bulldog, our mascot, and believe in the school's core values of respect, responsibility, and safety throughout the school environment.

**Reflection Sheets:** All students use "reflection sheets" to monitor their following of the core values. These are paper-based forms that support students in demonstrating the core values

across their school day (academic, therapeutic, and leisure blocks each day). Students can earn up to 3 points per core value (Safety, Respect, Responsibility), as well as a point for a personal goal (a goal the student has identified to work towards). Students have a brief moment of processing at the end of each block focusing on strengths and strategies or interventions to use in the next block for best success. These earning sheets are part of our positive reinforcement procedures and incorporate our integrated and ongoing processing to support student growth. Reflection sheets also tie into a current school-wide rewards system through our store.

The Bulldog Store is available to all students at Milestones. Students have the opportunity weekly to purchase items in the school store using credits earned. Students are able to purchase items each week and save their credits for larger purchases..

## **GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Lost and Found**

There is a lost and found box on the first floor side entrance where students are dropped off and picked up by buses. 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 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 computer or using websites that provide the same materials. Milestones has several subscriptions to audiobooks for students with dyslexia, language-based learning disabilities, or students who simply enjoy audiobooks.

### **Attendance**

If your child will be absent from school or arrive late to school, please email your child's case manager and [absent@advancingmilestones.com](mailto:absent@advancingmilestones.com). In your message, please include the reason for the absence. For students in the Post High School program, individual arrangements may be discussed regarding who (student or parent/guardian) may communicate regarding an absence.

Students are expected to be in school unless unable to attend due to illness, a death in the family, religious holidays, or severe weather. Attendance is critical to a student's ability to make

therapeutic and academic progress. The direct instruction provided to students cannot be replicated. If a student's absences in a quarter were to exceed 10 days, grades may be withheld. Please note that in most quarters, 10 absences equates to nearly 25% of the instructional time for that quarter. When concerns arise regarding a student's attendance, a meeting with the family will be held to review expectations and develop a plan regarding work completion. On an individualized basis, the school will determine if a student may be given an extension of two weeks to complete any work that may be outstanding at the end of the quarter. At that time, grades will be noted as 'incomplete'. At the conclusion of the two week extension, any work still not completed will be graded as a zero which may result in the student receiving a failing grade for the quarter. Please note that therapeutic classes cannot be recreated, so students who attend less than 60% of those classes will earn an 'F' for the quarter.

We encourage families to reference the school calendar, which is posted on the school's website, and to take time off for vacations when school is not in session (December, February, April, June, and August). We recognize that families may travel for reasonable durations during the course of our summer program, and work with families to support these trips. If a family were to have plans that would result in an extended absence from school, though, it is the family's responsibility to communicate this with both Milestones and the sending school district in advance of the anticipated absences. Per contracts with individual sending districts, Milestones is required to inform districts when a student is absent for a prescribed number of days. In addition, Milestones sends monthly attendance records to each student's district.

### **Reporting an Absence or Late Arrival**

If your child is absent, please send an email to: [Absent@AdvancingMilestones.com](mailto:Absent@AdvancingMilestones.com). If you know in advance that you will be away, please email your child's Case Manager so we can plan accordingly. To assist with our attendance tracking and health monitoring, we kindly request that parents/guardians include the reason for the student's absence or tardiness (ex: illness, offsite appointment, vacation, etc.)

### **Service and Therapy Dogs**

While dogs being on campus is not typical, there may be instances when a dog's presence may be allowed. Those instances include the following:

- **Service Dog:** The purpose of a service dog is to perform a specific task. Per the Americans with Disabilities Act, "Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding

a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA." If a student were to have the need for a service dog, we ask to be in ongoing communication with the involved family so the school and family can collaborate around messaging to the larger school community and troubleshoot any challenges that may arise. In addition, the expectation is that the student, not a parent/guardian, would be deemed as the handler of the dog. If you are looking for additional information regarding service animals, I would encourage you to review [this information](#) from the Department of Justice outlining accommodations per the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **Therapy Dog:** The purpose of a therapy dog is to volunteer in settings such as schools, hospitals, and nursing homes to provide comfort and emotional support. At Milestones this would involve a staff member's dog or a dog from an approved outside agency. Students are not permitted to bring in a dog, or any pet, from home to serve as a therapy dog.

## **Supervision of Students**

Milestones ensures all students are appropriately supervised within our DESE ratios at all times. Most students are permitted to travel in the hallways and to the bathrooms independently which helps address goals of daily living (but Milestones may exercise discretion to provide faculty support for operational or individualized reasons). For our older students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade or Post High School, they are permitted to have independence while at college at Mass Bay and/or in the community or onsite internships.

## **Emergency Drills**

Fire drills are held at regular intervals, are required by state 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. Milestones understands that these drills can be dysregulating for some students, and we will work closely with students to help them re-regulate during the drill and once it is over.

## **Visitors**

Milestones has visitors throughout the year to observe the general program. We offer onsite tours throughout the year for prospective students, parents/guardians, professionals, and community members. Of course, identifying information is always kept confidential. Additionally, from time to time, your child's district and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may also visit as Milestones has contractual obligations to permit visitors/observations with them. We kindly request that parents/guardians and other professionals pre-schedule visits in advance. Please contact your child's case manager should you have a request to visit or for a visitor to observe. For the health and safety of our students and faculty, we kindly request that if any pre-approved visitor is feeling ill that they please reschedule their visit to a future date. Masks are optional.

## **Volunteers and Interns**

Milestones Day School may utilize student interns and members of the community to augment existing faculty members and to further its mission and endeavors. Their support and assistance help to create a broader network and provide greater opportunities for those being serviced. Student interns and volunteers will all be required to consent to and have a criminal record check and fingerprinting and participate in required trainings. 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 faculty, volunteers, and interns.

## **What to Bring to School**

The list of items a student should bring to school on a daily basis is minimal. They should always come to school with food (snacks and lunch), a water bottle, appropriate clothing for the time of year, and any school supplies they may have. All students in elementary, middle, and high school are assigned lockers; post-high school students use a coat room. The expectation is for students to place the above listed personal belongings in their designated location (lockers or coat room) until needed. This would include a backpack. To support students' executive functioning skills and to ensure the community's safety, it is expected that backpacks remain in lockers and do not travel with students throughout the course of the day. It is recommended that students refrain from wearing expensive or irreplaceable clothing or jewelry to school as Milestones is not responsible for these items should they become lost or damaged.

## **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. Depending upon the student's individual support plans, Milestones may permit the use of electronic equipment; however, we cannot be responsible if something happens. We respectfully request that any game or materials that contain inappropriate content (i.e., violent, sexually explicit, or inappropriate language) should be left at home; parents/guardians should monitor what items their child is taking to school.

### **Cell Phones and Portable Electronic Devices**

Many students have cell phones, or portable gaming/computer devices that travel with them to and from school. Milestones recognizes that these items can provide a sense of security and/or entertainment during students' respective commutes. However, once students arrive at school, the expectation is for these devices to remain in a student's locker for the entirety of the school day (they may opt to put a lock on their locker). If a student were to be found using a device during the school day without permission, the student and family will be reminded of this expectation. If a student were to have multiple instances of misuse, the protocol will shift to having the device remain in a staff member's office each day, or the item may need to remain at home. Please note that faculty may approve and/or recommend students' cell phone use during off-campus Community-Based Instruction/Transition programming for eligible students in high school and Post High School.

In recent years, more students have also begun to wear smartwatches to school. Smartwatches may remain on the student's person as long as the watch is being used properly. The expectation is that the watch is to be used to tell time, and should not be used for texting or messaging. If a student were to be using the functions of a smartwatch beyond telling time, a warning would be issued. If the behavior were to continue, the school would likely direct the student and family to have the device remain at home.

We strongly encourage families to closely supervise and monitor their student's use of technology at home. At times the school becomes aware of students' communications with one another outside of the school day. Please note that Milestones is not responsible for overseeing the peer interactions that occur outside of 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, national or ethnic origin, disability or handicap, age, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, 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 coordinate with your child's case manager for how to celebrate! For the safety of our students, please be mindful that Milestones does not permit peanut/tree nut products at school.

### **Dress and Hygiene Code**

Students are expected to engage in regular hygiene such as showering, washing hair, hands, and face, and brushing teeth. All clothing must be clean. Students are also expected to dress appropriately. Students must wear appropriate and safe footwear; students are not permitted to wear high-heeled or open-toed shoes including flip flops to physical education/sports/fitness activities. They may not wear extreme or ostentatious apparel to school. 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. If there is doubt about a particular item of apparel, the student should contact their child's Case Manager for a decision prior to wearing the clothing to school. If a student comes to school wearing inappropriate clothing s/he/they 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. Clothing which overexposes the body is unacceptable. If Milestones goes swimming, all swimwear must be well-fitting, secure, and provide FULL coverage of all private areas as we are still in a school setting (ex: no revealing swimwear such as: men's speedo swim briefs, thongs, or string bikinis).

### **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. This also includes vaping and E-cigarettes. No student shall use or possess any tobacco-related products on school grounds, school-related business, field trips or other school sponsored events. Parents/guardians, faculty, 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/guardian 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.

Each year every enrolled student at Milestones has a written and executed (signed) contract between Milestones and the sending district (or family, if the student's tuition is paid for by the family) that is signed prior to the student's admission. For expiring contracts, Milestones will maintain a record of efforts to obtain new contracts. Each contract includes, but is not limited to the following information:

1. Milestones Day School Program (the out-of-district placement) shall comply with all elements of the IEP for the student and shall provide, in writing, to the Administrator of Special Education, detailed documentation of such compliance through completion of required student progress reports.
2. Milestones Day School Program (the out-of-district placement) shall allow the placing school district to monitor and evaluate the education of the student and shall make available, upon request, any records pertaining to the students to authorized school personnel from the school district and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with Massachusetts' student record regulation (603 CMR 23.00).
3. Milestones Day School Program (the out-of-district placement) shall allow the placing school district and/or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to conduct announced and unannounced site visits and to review all documents relating to the provision of special education services to Massachusetts students at public expense. Access to documents for the placing school district shall include general documents available to the public, documents specifically related to the student placed by such district, and other documents only to the extent they are necessary to verify and evaluate education services provided at public expense.
4. Milestones Day School Program (the out-of-district placement) shall afford publicly funded students all the substantive and procedural rights held by eligible students, including but not limited to those specified in 603 CMR 28.09, and shall comply with all other applicable requirements of 603 CMR 28.00 and applicable policy statements and directives issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

5. No school district shall contract with any out-of-district placement that discriminates on the grounds of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability or handicap, age, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or homelessness.

### **Student Records and Confidentiality**

Confidential student records are maintained by Milestones for all publicly funded and enrolled Massachusetts students in its program and management of such files are consistent with the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations 603 CMR 23.00 and M.G.L. c. 71, 34H.

Parents/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 the student 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 Elementary and Secondary 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 Elementary and Secondary Education, Operational and Services Division, as well as other governmental agencies.

Other than the student's school district or state agencies, Milestones will not share information with any outside party without express written consent from the student's family.

### **Work Relationships with Milestones' Faculty**

Unless otherwise pre-approved by the CEO, Milestones generally does not permit faculty 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 faculty 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 forms 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, family directory, health education, research, movies, etc. Consent for discretionary choice items marked as yes/no choices will have NO effect on student admission or standing. Parents/guardians 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 for a 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 considered as no longer able to participate in our programming, and we will initiate placement discussions with the family and sending district. 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). Milestones distributes consent forms to all families and must have completed forms on file for all returning or new students in June prior to the start of the next school year that begins on July 1st.

### **Research, Experimentation, Fundraising, Publicity, and Observations**

Milestones sends annual consents which must adhere to the following protocols:

Research: Milestones shall send out a description and consent form of intended research projects we may potentially become involved with. Parents/guardians always have the option to opt out without recourse.

Experimentation: Milestones does not involve students or faculty in experimentation.

Fundraising: From time to time the PAG and/or students fundraise. Some examples include coordinating a faculty Appreciation Week Luncheon, raising money for adopt-a-family during the winter holiday times, raising money for a field trip, etc. Milestones does not fundraise to support salaries or general Milestones' expenses.

Publicity: Milestones sends out annual consents to photograph/video tape our students. This consent serves multiple purposes such as advertising, annual yearbook, social media posts, etc. Parents/guardians always have the option to opt out without recourse.

Observations: Districts, state agencies, and prospective families/districts tour Milestones on a regular basis. Parents/guardians may also request someone in particular observe their child (e.g., an outside psychologist, etc.). Milestones will have the parents/guardians consent to any person who is specifically observing your child that is not part of your child's school district and/or state agency (ex: DESE).

## **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 month of school, your child may receive a list of any school supplies required. Parents/guardians do not need to purchase organizational items for your student, as Milestones has a school-wide system to help students with executive issues.

Depending upon the student's grade, s/he/they 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 to keep a copy at home, you may purchase duplicate textbooks (please contact your child's case manager to place an order).

Students will also have access to a computer 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's 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 Milestones' "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.

### **Student Acceptable Use Policy – Technology**

Introduction: Computer access is available to qualifying students, teachers, faculty, and administrators. These resources are provided and maintained at the school's expense and are to be used by members of the school community with respect for the public trust through which they have been provided. Our goal is to promote innovation and educational excellence by using technology tools for research, worldwide resource sharing, communication, and storage of student work.

Internet services provide access to electronic mail, public shareware of all types, and massive databases at universities, government agencies, and private industries. Students are assigned a Google Apps for Education account and that service is hosted on many Google servers off campus. Students must remember that accounts are not private and can be viewed at any time by Milestones faculty. In order to ensure the appropriate use of the network, Milestones reserves the right to monitor, access, and disclose files contained, stored, or transmitted using school equipment.

Issues: The primary purpose is to deliver educational programming. *Milestones Day School is using a content filtering system to comply with CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) regulations. The filtering is designed to block websites that educators believe are inappropriate for students.*

Responsibilities: Student responsibilities require ethical, efficient, and legal use of the network resources. If a student user violates any of these terms and conditions, his/her/their network/Internet access may be terminated and future access could be denied. The signature(s) at the end of this document is (are) legally binding and indicate(s) the party (parties) who signed

has (have) read the terms and conditions carefully and understand(s) their significance and agrees to abide by these terms.

#### Terms and Conditions – Milestones Day School

Privileges: Network/Internet use is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a loss of network privileges, disciplinary action, and/or referral to legal authorities. At the direction of the district administration, student user access and /or accounts may be denied, revoked, or suspended as a result of misuse of network privileges.

Netiquette: Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following: Be polite. Do not be abusive in your messages to others. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other language inappropriate in a school setting. Have the ringers turned off. Access to personal electronics (cell phone, ipod, ipad, etc) may only be used during instruction with the permission by faculty and all devices will be put away when asked to do so.

#### **Unacceptable uses of the school network:**

- Attempts to obtain access to restricted sites, servers, files, databases, etc. are prohibited.
- Students may not record or post still images, moving images, or voice recordings of students or faculty members to online websites without permission.
- Unauthorized access to other systems from computers (e.g. “hacking”) is prohibited. Use of peer-to-peer (P2P) downloading services to download non-approved software (World of Warcraft, Bit Torrent, etc.) is not allowed.
- Use of social forums & social sites (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat & google+).
- Transmission of any material in violation of any law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secrets. Use of the school network to communicate personal addresses, phone numbers, and/or financial information is not allowed.
- Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, including any intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, also called cyberbullying, is not acceptable.

#### **Acceptable Use (Privacy and Safety)**

- Network/Internet use must be consistent with the educational objectives of the school. Students will use only their school assigned username and password to gain access to the computer network & google apps.
- Google Apps for Education (Apps) is primarily for educational use.

- Students will use technology only to complete assignments that are related to the instructional lesson.
- Students will only send text messages, pictures, or video messages to others outside of Milestones with permission from faculty if related to the lesson or course content.
- Students will post only appropriate text, audio, and visual media to online websites as directed by the faculty if related to the lesson or class content.

### **Milestones Day School Guidelines for Access and/or Accounts**

Student user accounts will become inactive upon leaving Milestones. This agreement is formalized through the student and parent's/guardian's signatures on the Milestones annual consent form.

### **Property Destruction**

If students were to engage in property destruction while off campus in the community or onsite, families may be required to cover or contribute to any related expenses. The amount a family is required to cover will be determined by members of the school's administrative team. The team will take a variety of factors into consideration when making a decision. These factors include, but are not limited to the severity of the damage, the circumstances surrounding the incident, the frequency of incidents, the age of the student, and her/his/their duration of time at Milestones.

### **After School Club Guidelines**

Throughout the school year, Milestones offers various fee-based after school clubs that are open to current students. Each club has a designated Club Administrator, who ultimately makes decisions regarding after school club expectations and participation.

After school clubs are a separate program that families pay for. Participation is not contingent on a student's ability to produce work and participate in the school program. Exclusion from the after school club will be decided based on criteria created to ensure the safety of staff and students who are staying after school with reduced support available. Exclusion is not based on a student's work output during the day.

If a student who is enrolled in a club exhibits unsafe behavior three school days prior to a club meeting, the family will be contacted by Milestones and the student will not be eligible to participate in that week's meeting. The day of the club meeting will count as a full day towards the 3 days. For example, if the club meets on a Thursday afternoon, the student needs to demonstrate safe behavior on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. If a student demonstrates unsafe or extremely disruptive behavior during a club session, their continued participation will need to be assessed by the Club Administrator. This may result in temporary or permanent

termination from the club.

- **What if a student has “inconsistent” attendance?** Students must be in attendance at school the day of the club in order to participate that day. If attendance at school in general is a recurring concern, the student’s participation in the club can be re-evaluated. If a student misses 3 or more (consecutive or non consecutive) club meetings, at the Club Administrator’s discretion, a student’s spot can be re-evaluated. Family vacations or medical appointments do not count towards this tally.
- **After a suspension:** In order to return to an after school program, students need to have a minimum of 3 full school days in school for staff to determine readiness to participate in an after hours activity. The day of the after school will count as a full day towards the 3 days.
- **Payment Expectations:** Families are billed on a bi-monthly basis for club enrollment. The monthly cost is based on the total number of scheduled sessions held that month (ex: if a club meets once per week for 5 times that month, a family will be charged for 5 sessions; however, some months will have a lower cost if there are fewer scheduled sessions due to school holidays, vacations, snow days, or canceled sessions). If Milestones determines that a student is not eligible to participate in a club session due to unsafe behavior or if the Club Administrator needs to cancel a session, the family will not be required to pay for that session. However, due to staffing costs, families are charged for all missed sessions when the student is eligible to participate.

*The following are descriptions of what constitutes “unsafe behavior”. These criteria may be adjusted on a case by case basis if the student has a specific behavior plan in place.*

Behavior	Definition	Modification
<b>Physical Aggression</b>	Any isolated successful or targeted attempt to cause another bodily harm. Including but not limited to hitting, kicking, shoving, pinching, throwing/kicking objects at another person whether or not contact is made with that object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If behavior occurred within 3 days of the club meeting, student will not attend that week</li> </ul>
<b>Major Threat</b>	Threatening significant harm, injury with an object, or significant destruction (e.g. setting a classroom on fire). Examples of objects might include but not be limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Matches, butane, metal rod</li> <li>● Stack of books and materials</li> <li>● Bricks</li> <li>● Hammer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If behavior occurred within 3 days of the club meeting, student will not attend that week</li> </ul>

<p><b>Weapons</b></p>	<p>Weapons: It is our position that all weapons (real or simulated) are prohibited at Milestones Day School or any school-sponsored event.</p> <p>Please see the Family Handbook for a comprehensive list of examples.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To be assessed on a case by case basis. For example... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student brings a large steak knife to cut his food during lunch with no intent to harm &amp; willingly hands it over. This might result in only a warning.</li> <li>○ But repeated disregard for the rule regardless of intention could result in being suspended from the club that week.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Bolting</b></p>	<p>Any instance of leaving or attempting to leave the school building, group or designated area. Wandering away from the group when outside or in the community or going/attempting to go to a dangerous space (parking lot) while on a field trip/in the community. Leaving a designated space without permission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attendance will be evaluated if a student is bolting or attempting to bolt <b>out of the building.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Property Destruction</b></p>	<p>Any occurrence of tearing items, swiping materials off of desks/tables, throwing/knocking/tipping over items (not at people), drawing on or defacing school property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Major property destruction such as flipping a desk, or purposely breaking or wrecking school property that occurred within 3 days of the club meeting would result in the student not attending that week.</li> <li>● Minor incidents such as crumpling up paper or swiping materials off a desk (unless it is a laptop) would not result in a suspension.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Abusive Communication</b></p>	<p>Escalated vocal volume, cursing, gestures that disrupt the environment, instigate and/or make others uncomfortable (threats, verbal or written).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If they are able to be redirected, process the behavior, and/or move on, the student will not be prevented from attending the club.</li> <li>● If the behavior is repeated, the Club Administrator will make a determination regarding eligibility to stay.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>Self Injurious Behavior (SIB), Sexualized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If the student is able to process</li> </ul>

	<p>Behavior</p> <p>A student is displaying an inability to follow basic safety instructions from a staff member. An example might include but is not limited to blocking a staff member from leaving a room.</p>	<p>and move on with their day and does not require medical attention due to their actions (e.g. picking at scabs, pulling out hair), the student will not be prevented from attending the club.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If the student is unable to follow basic safety instructions from a staff member from 1 pm until the end of the day on the day of the club, the student will not attend the club that day.</li> </ul>
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**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 Policy**

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 faculty member in which they feel comfortable disclosing the information, however it is always preferable that they go directly to the 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, Gender Fluid, and Gender Non-Conforming Students' Rights**

When a student or parent/guardian 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, should the student feel harassed, 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. Milestones will also not disclose a student's transgender status, including their birth name or sex assigned at birth, without the consent of the student's parents/guardians or the student (if of age).

### **Title IX Policy and Process**

Please see the attached Appendix for Milestones' Title IX Policy and Investigation Process.

### **Aggressive/Assaultive Behavior (Physical or Verbal)**

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); and/or 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 may include a recommendation for expulsion. As a parent/guardian it is imperative that you ensure 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 faculty 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 to be doing one of the following shall be subject to disciplinary action: selling, supplying, or giving, or attempting 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 is approved by the school's nurse, and 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

All policies under the Behavior section of the Family Handbook are approved by Milestones' Board of Directors and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. All policies can be found on our website under the family section. Additionally, a hard copy of all Milestones' Policies and Procedures can be found in the reception area on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor at the Administrative Assistant's desk. Please note, Milestones can print out a hardcopy of these policies as well. Please contact the Chief Operating Officer, Alex Smith-Michaels, if you would like to be provided a paper copy.

\*Note: As stated above, DESE is issuing changes to behavior support protocols (changes to policies 9.1 and 9.4 and the elimination of 9.1a starting in August, 2026. These changes will be updated on Milestones website once in effect.

## **Behavior Support Policy**

To review our full policy and procedures for behavior support, which is approved by Milestones' Board of Directors and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the "Parents" tab on Milestones' website. This policy also contains our procedures for time out and using the safe space.

## **Student Separation Resulting from Behaviors**

To review our full policy and procedures for a student separation resulting from behavior support, which is approved by Milestones' Board of Directors and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the "Parents" tab on Milestones' website.

## **Time Away**

Students at Milestones are provided with opportunities to leave the classroom either on a voluntary basis or at the request of a faculty member. Examples of this would include a student requesting to take a break and go for a walk, or a faculty member asking the student to step outside into the hallway for a private conversation. Many times, this time outside of the classroom is designed to help a student remain regulated. There are times though when a more concerning event involving a student may occur and the student is directed to leave the classroom. These incidents are typically a result of concerns arising related to the health and safety of the student, the student's peers, and/or faculty. In those instances, Milestones has a

*Time Away* procedure to ensure everyone's safety and to provide the student with the necessary support and opportunity to process.

When faculty deem that a situation warrants time away for the student, she/he/they moves out of the classroom to a designated area. In instances in which the student does not comply with the request to leave the classroom, the class is relocated to both provide the student with privacy and to allow the lesson to continue. There are times when a student demonstrates imminent safety concerns to themselves or others. In those situations, a student may be physically restrained using CPI protocol.

The following is the process faculty will follow during this time away:

- The student's safety is the immediate priority. This may require the student to spend time in the safe space or in an adjacent area designated for these purposes. Internally, we refer to it as our 'admin area'. Students are always supervised by Milestones faculty.
- Once the student is de-escalated, a faculty member will begin to process with the student. This processing will begin with a completion of a social behavior map or processing sheet. Just as in our classrooms, we provide our students with the necessary level of support to assist them with processing.
- As a part of processing, faculty will work with the student to preview and discuss if any peer or faculty repair is necessary given her/his/their actions prior to leaving the classroom. An example of this would be writing an apology note.
- While in this time away, the student will complete any classwork that may have been missed.
- Once these steps have been completed, a school administrator or a designee will meet with the student and faculty member to ensure that the student is prepared to return to class.

When a student has been in a Time Away, there is a one school day restriction put upon her/his/their ability to participate in any off-campus activities. Meaning, if the student were to be in a Time Away on a Friday, the student would not be eligible to go off-campus until the following Tuesday. This protocol is put into place to ensure that the student can again demonstrate the ability to be safe within our community prior to being out in the larger community. It also provides the student with a realization that actions have consequences.

## **Physical Restraint Policy**

To review our full policy and procedures for physical restraint, which is approved by Milestones' Board of Directors and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the "Parents" tab on Milestones' website.

## **Anti-Hazing**

To review our full policy and procedures for anti-hazing, which is approved by Milestones' Board of Directors and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the "Parents" tab on Milestones' website. All middle and high schoolers are required by DESE to sign this policy annually.

## **Bullying**

To review our full policy and procedures for bullying, which is approved by Milestones' Board of Directors and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, please visit the "Parents" tab on Milestones' website.

## **Student Aggression**

The safety of our students and faculty is of the utmost importance to Milestones Day School. As a program, we work with students through direct instruction to follow the school's Core Values of *Safety, Respect, and Responsibility*. Students attending Milestones may have difficulty with regulating their emotions and responses to various situations. This dysregulation is not uncommon. All faculty are trained in Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) practices to verbally process and de-escalate students. We support our students in moments of heightened emotional state through the use of nonviolent crisis intervention.

While supporting students with their dysregulation is a component of the program, Milestones does not tolerate when that behavior leads to aggression towards peers. Student-on-student aggression, verbal or physical, is grounds for processing with administrators and a student's family and suspension or expulsion depending upon the severity of the incident may apply.

*Verbal Aggression:* Given the nature of our students' disabilities, unexpected comments from students occur at times. When this occurs, faculty work to provide timely feedback to students. Interventions may be put into place to support students in an effort to model expected and appropriate comments and help educate students by increasing their own internal awareness of the significance of their comments. While there are many teachable moments for students, statements that threaten the safety of a peer or are targeted towards the race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability or handicap, age, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or homelessness of another student will be deemed to be a violation of

the school's handbook. When these violations take place, the school may respond with administrative processing, additional interventions and supports, discussions with families and district, and/or at times suspensions or expulsion.

*Physical Aggression:* Peer-to-peer physical aggressions will not be tolerated at Milestones. A physical aggression may include, but not be limited to, any of the following: spitting, pinching, kicking, slapping, punching, striking with an object, or inappropriate touching. When these violations take place, the school may respond with administrative processing, additional interventions and supports, discussions with families and district, and potential suspension.

### **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/guardian, 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-entry.

No student may be suspended and sent home unless a responsible adult is available to receive the student.

Once a student has been suspended for three consecutive school days or five nonconsecutive school days in a school year, Milestones, parents/guardian, and the 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 students' IEPs (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 DESE.**

The student shall be afforded all the substantive and procedural rights held by eligible students.

### **10+ Day Suspension**

Milestones Day School has a 10+ day suspension policy which can be found in our student handbook on our website. When a student is accepted to Milestones Day School, parents, the sending district, and/or other agency who placed the student is directed to this (and other) policies. Milestones Day School provides extensive antecedent preventative interventions for all students and robust behavior plans for those students who exhibit difficulty with behavior control. Milestones uses the CPI model which focuses on verbal de-escalation and uses restraints as a last resort.

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 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 DESE.

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 a disability.

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 (e.g., 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 another setting
- If the Team determines that the behavior ***is*** a manifestation of the student's disability, the Team takes steps to modify the IEP, the behavior intervention plan and/or the placement.

Should a 10-day suspension occur, a 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 constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities.

The student shall be afforded all the substantive and procedural rights held by eligible students.

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 setting(s)
- Conduct a manifestation determination (e.g., 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/their behavior? Can the student control his/her/their behavior?

If the Team determines that the behavior is ***not*** a manifestation of the student's 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 parents' consent) to modify the IEP, the behavior 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.

**\*\*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 DESE.**

### **Re-Entry Meeting After a Suspension or Clinical Treatment**

Milestones works to ensure a smooth transition back into the program for any student who has been absent from school for reasons beyond general sickness. Examples would include, but not be limited to, a student being suspended from school, needing to leave school to assess her/his/their health and safety, or participation in a full or partial hospital program. In these instances, a re-entry meeting must be held prior to the student returning to school. If the student missed school due to a hospitalization, a discharge summary needs to be made available to the internal team for review prior to the meeting being held.

The purpose of the re-entry meeting is multi-faceted. It is designed to:

- review why the student was out of school.
- discuss what, if any, supports need to be in place for the student to have a successful transition.
- evaluate the student's readiness to return to school.

The nature of the student's absence(s) will inform which individuals will participate in the meeting. Milestones faculty who may participate include: school Principal and/or administrators, case manager, special education administrator, and/or school psychologist. In addition, the student's parents/guardians participate, and the district will be notified and invited to attend.

## **Termination**

Transitioning from Milestones, 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 to maximize a student's potential for success. For students who have mastered our curriculum and are ready to move on, at the annual IEP or other team meeting, the team will determine the transition timeline and prospective school(s) the student will be transitioning to. Milestones Day School Faculty has expertise in transitioning students and is eager to be involved in this process.

**When a student is unable to stay at Milestones (planned termination):** Milestones Day School shall notify the sending district and parents/guardians of the need for an IEP review meeting and provide notice of this meeting to all appropriate parties ten (10) school 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 himself/herself/their self 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 sending district is informed and assumes responsibility for the student. If Milestones is unable to reach the contact person at the sending district, Milestones will contact the Superintendent or DESE. 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.

## **Runaway**

Milestones considers a student as having bolted any time a student leaves the property or grounds without authorization. The student will be considered a runaway if they are unable to be located within five (5) minutes. If a student leaves the building without authorization, a faculty member will follow the student and work with the student to encourage him/her/them to return. If the student has run away:

- The Director of the Day (CEO, CFO, COO, or Operations Manager) will be immediately notified of the student's absence by the faculty involved. If the Director of the Day is unavailable, that person's designee will be notified.
- An immediate search of the building, grounds, and nearby streets will be conducted. Faculty conducting the search should use a cellular phone or walkie-talkie to communicate. The Director of the Day will assign faculty to conduct the search.
- Police will be notified within the first five (5) minutes of the reported absence. The length of time may vary depending on the nature of the incident and the individual student involved. Weather conditions must be considered. If a student is on seizure control medication and/or has diabetes or runs away during the winter months, the police are to be contacted immediately.
- A complete description of the student, and any other pertinent information, will be provided by the Director of the Day or designee, with assistance from the faculty, when possible.
- The parents/guardians will be notified immediately following notification of the police by the Director of the Day.
- The Director of the Day shall notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education immediately via a Form 2 and followed by a written report within twenty-four (24) hours.
- Upon return of the student, the police, parent/guardian, and DESE will be immediately notified.
- An incident report will be completed, and copies forwarded to the parent/guardian, DESE, and the school district.

# **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES 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 School Operations Manager.

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

Milestones strives to alleviate concerns from parents/guardians at our first opportunity. Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify their case manager and/or the 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 s/he/they has a general complaint that warrants the attention of the Founder or CEO or believes s/he/they have 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 based on gender, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, gender identity, and/or handicap, or homelessness.

### **Reporting Complaints**

If any of our employees, students, or families believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment or any other harassment or has a general complaint (including educational complaints or discrimination against a protected category), the employee, student, or family has the right to file a complaint with Milestones. 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 and sending it to:

Kim Rockers and/ or Alex Smith-Michaels and/or Heather Miller  
410 Totten Pond Road  
Waltham, MA 02451  
781-895-3200

\*Families (parents, guardians, students) are notified of the complaints and grievances procedures via the issuing of the annual family handbook and consent form. Milestones family handbook is consistently available online on our website and families are notified of our annual revision every school year by email and as part of our annual consent form.

\*Employees are notified of the complaints and grievance procedure via the Milestones Employee Handbook which is consistently available online in a shared drive. Milestones notifies employees of annual revisions each school year via email.

Any such authorized individual who receives a complaint or report of harassment must notify the firm's Chief Executive Officer, Kim Rockers, the Founder /COO, Alex Smith-Michaels, and Human Resources, Heather Miller.

**Complaint Investigation:** When Milestones receives a complaint, we will investigate 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 may include interviews with witnesses or other individuals who we believe would be useful to the investigation. In cases of harassment, we also will also interview the person alleged to have committed the harassment.

The 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 will be created and maintained by Alex Smith-Michaels, Kim Rockers, and/or Heather Miller.
- 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.
- Milestones will complete its investigation within five (5) business days of the initial report and convene a meeting with the reporting employee and/or student to discuss options for proceeding forward and resolution. Milestones will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner, usually within one week of the date of the initial filing of the complaint. The decision will be issued in person and in writing.

### **Disciplinary Action in Cases of Harassment or Misconduct**

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of our employees or partners, we 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**

Employees, students, or parents, wishing to challenge Milestones' decision or course of action as it pertains to addressing their complaint, will be granted access to their personal file or student file for review and given a meeting with Kim Rockers, Alex Smith-Michaels, and/or Heather Miller, their direct supervisor (if applicable) to review the determination and consider any additional steps that may be applicable and appropriate to the situation. After additional consideration, Milestones will issue its final resolution to the complaint in person and in writing.

- Employees, students, or parents must file a written appeal to Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels. At this point, the employee, student, or parent may present additional evidence or materials to appeal their complaint, which will be reviewed.
- Within ten (10) business days, the appeal will be reviewed by Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels, and a resolution 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.
- If the employee, student, or parent does not believe the complaint has been satisfactorily resolved by Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels, the employee, student, or parent may submit in writing to one of the following agencies below.

### **State and Federal Remedies**

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to harassment, you may file a formal complaint with the respective State agency and/or the EEOC. Using MILESTONES' complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each agency has a short time period for filing a claim. (EEOC—180 days; Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination—6 months)

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

One Congress Street, 10th Floor  
Boston, MA 02114  
617-565-3200 / TDD 617-565-3204

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

One Ashburton Place, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-727-3990

**GRIEVANCES:**

Should a staff member, student, or family member have a grievance or feel discriminated against (including, but not limited to, legally protected categories such as race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness), they can file a written complaint to Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels. The grievance will be investigated immediately, and written notification regarding the grievance will be generated within ten (10) business days from the time the grievance is filed.

**Grievance appeal process:**

Employees, students, or parents, wishing to challenge Milestones' decision or course of action as it pertains to addressing their complaint, will be granted access to their personal file or student file for review and given a meeting with Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels, their direct supervisor (if applicable) to review the determination and consider any additional steps that may be applicable and appropriate to the situation. After additional consideration, Milestones will issue its final resolution to the complaint in person and in writing.

- Employees, students, or parents must file a written appeal to Kim Rockers and Alex Smith-Michaels. At this point, the employee, student, or parent may present additional evidence or materials to appeal their complaint, which will be reviewed.
- Within ten (10) business days, the appeal will be reviewed by Kim Rockers, Alex Smith-Michaels, and/or Heather Miller, and a resolution 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.
- If the employee, student, or parent does not believe the complaint has been satisfactorily resolved by Kim Rockers, Alex Smith-Michaels, and/or Heather Miller, the employee, student, or parent may submit in writing to one of the agencies below.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)  
One Congress Street, 10th Floor  
Boston, MA 02114  
617-565-3200 / TDD 617-565-3204

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-727-3990

Employees can also reach out to the Human Resources manager, who can provide contact information for a third-party counsel.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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

## **APPENDIX: SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ TITLE IX POLICY**

Milestones does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including in admission and employment.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to Milestones' Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. The Milestones' Title IX Coordinator is Grace Little, Milestones' Language-Based Curriculum and Instruction Specialist (Milestones Day School and Transition Program, 410 Totten Pond Road, Waltham MA 02451) and can be contacted at: [glittle@advancingmilestones.com](mailto:glittle@advancingmilestones.com) and the main office phone line: 781-895-3200.

The Milestones Title IX Coordinator may delegate specific duties to one or more designees as the Title IX Coordinator finds appropriate.

The Milestones' nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located below. Milestones has adopted these grievance procedures to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints made by students, employees, or other individuals who are participating or attempting to participate in its education program or activity, or by the Title IX Coordinator, alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX or the Title IX regulations.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the procedures below.

## Definitions

Discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Under state law, sexual harassment is sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment under Massachusetts law when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's advancement (quid pro quo harassment);
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions;
- Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties; or
- The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Under Federal law, sex-based harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex, including on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity, that is:

- *Quid pro quo harassment.* An employee, agent, or other person authorized by Milestones to provide an aid, benefit, or service under Milestones' education program or activity explicitly or implicitly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- *Hostile environment harassment.* Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from Milestones' education program or activity (*i.e.*, creates a hostile environment). Whether a hostile environment has been created is a fact-specific inquiry that includes consideration of the following:

- o The degree to which the conduct affected the complainant’s ability to access Milestones’ education program or activity;
- o The type, frequency, and duration of the conduct;
- o The parties’ ages, roles within Milestones’ education program or activity, previous interactions, and other factors about each party that may be relevant to evaluating the effects of the conduct;
- o The location of the conduct and the context in which the conduct occurred; and
- o Other sex-based harassment in Milestones’ education program or activity.
- *Specific offenses.*
  - o Sexual assault meaning an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;
  - o Dating violence meaning violence committed by a person:
    - § Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
    - § Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
      - The length of the relationship;
      - The type of relationship; and
      - The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship;
  - o Domestic violence meaning felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a person who:
    - § Is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction, or a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim;
    - § Is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
    - § Shares a child in common with the victim; or
    - § Commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction;
- Stalking meaning engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:
  - o Fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others; or
  - o Suffer substantial emotional distress

The following additional definitions apply:

“Complainant” means:

- A student or employee who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its regulations; or
- A person other than a student or employee who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its regulations and who was participating or attempting to participate in Milestones’ education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination.

“Complaint” means an oral or written request to Milestones that objectively can be understood as a request for Milestones to investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination under Title IX or its regulations. The Title IX Coordinator will file this complaint if the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct as alleged presents an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of the complainant or other person, or that the conduct as alleged prevents Milestones from ensuring equal access on the basis of sex to its education program or activity. The following factors go into the decision by the Title IX Coordinator:

- The complainant’s request not to proceed with initiation of a complaint;
- The complainant’s reasonable safety concerns regarding initiation of a complaint;
- The risk that additional acts of sex discrimination would occur if a complaint is not initiated;
- The severity of the alleged sex discrimination, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the removal of a respondent from campus or imposition of another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence;
- The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is an employee of Milestones;
- The scope of the alleged sex discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern, ongoing sex discrimination, or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals;
- The availability of evidence to assist a decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
- Whether Milestones could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating its grievance procedures.

“Disciplinary sanctions” means consequences imposed on a respondent following a determination under Title IX that the respondent violated Milestones’ prohibition on sex discrimination.

“Relevant” means related to the allegations of sex discrimination under investigation as part of these grievance procedures. Questions are relevant when they seek evidence that may aid in showing whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred, and evidence is relevant when it may aid a decisionmaker in determining whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred.

“Remedies” means measures provided, as appropriate, to a complainant or any other person Milestones identifies as having had their equal access to Milestones’ education program or activity limited or denied by sex discrimination. These measures are provided to restore or preserve that person’s access to Milestones’ education program or activity after a Milestones determines that sex discrimination occurred.

“Respondent” means a person who is alleged to have violated Milestones’ prohibition on sex discrimination.

“Retaliation” means intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any person by Milestones, a student, or an employee or other person authorized by Milestones to provide aid, benefit, or service under Milestones’ education program or activity, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its regulations, or because the person has reported information, made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the Title IX regulations.

“Respondent” means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

“Supportive measures” means individualized measures offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, without unreasonably burdening a complainant or respondent, not for punitive or disciplinary reasons, and without fee or charge to the complainant or respondent to:

- Restore or preserve that party’s access to Milestones’ education program or activity, including measures that are designed to protect the safety of the parties or Milestones’ educational environment; or

- Provide support during Milestones’ grievance procedures or during an informal resolution process.

“Parental status” means the status of a person who, with respect to another person who is under the age of 18 or who is 18 or older but is incapable of self-care because of a physical or mental disability, is:

- A biological parent;
- An adoptive parent;
- A foster parent;
- A stepparent;
- A legal custodian or guardian;
- In loco parentis with respect to such a person; or
- Actively seeking legal custody, guardianship, visitation, or adoption of such a person

“Pregnancy or related conditions” means:

- Pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation;
- Medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; or
- Recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions.

## **Complaints and Reports of Sexual Harassment**

The following people have a right to make a complaint of sex discrimination, including complaints of sex-based harassment, requesting that Milestones investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination under Title IX:

A “complainant,” which includes:

- a student or employee of Milestones who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX; or
- a person other than a student or employee of Milestones who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX at a time when that individual was participating or attempting to participate in Milestones’ education program or activity;
- A parent, guardian, or other authorized legal representative with the legal right to act on behalf of a complainant; or
- the Milestones Title IX Coordinator

Note that a person is entitled to make a complaint of sex-based harassment only if they themselves are alleged to have been subjected to the sex-based harassment, if they have a legal right to act on behalf of such person, or if the Title IX Coordinator initiates a complaint consistent with the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 106.44(f)(1)(v).

With respect to complaints of sex discrimination other than sex-based harassment, in addition to the people listed above, the following persons have a right to make a complaint:

- Any student or employee of Milestones; or
- Any person other than a student or employee who was participating or attempting to participate in Milestones' education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination.

Milestones may consolidate complaints of sex discrimination against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against another party, when the allegations of sex discrimination arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Milestones cannot consolidate if it would violate FERPA. Consolidation would not violate FERPA when Milestones obtains prior written consent from the parents/guardians or eligible students to the disclosure of their education records.

Milestones will address a sex-based hostile environment allegation under its education program or activity, even when some conduct alleged to be contributing to the hostile environment occurred outside Milestones' education program or activity or outside the United States. .

### **Obligation to Report**

All employees must notify the building principal or the Title IX Coordinator when the employee has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX.

### **Informal Resolution**

In lieu of resolving a complaint through Milestones' Title IX grievance procedures, the parties may instead elect to participate in an informal resolution process. Milestones does not offer informal resolution to resolve a complaint that includes allegations that an employee engaged in sex-based harassment of an elementary school or secondary school student, or when such a process would conflict with Federal, State, or local law.

Facilitators of informal resolution will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator and must not be biased against any of the parties. Prior to beginning informal resolution, the Title IX Coordinator will send notice to the parties of the process and their rights.

Informal resolution is entirely voluntary. Parties may elect to pursue formal procedures at any step in the process of making their complaint, including prior to filing one.

If the complainant and the respondent feel that their grievances have been sufficiently addressed via informal resolution, then no further action needs to be taken. This voluntary conversation must occur within thirty (30) school days after receiving the allegations, unless both parties agree otherwise. The results of an informal resolution shall be maintained by the facilitator, in writing.

### **Supportive Measures**

Upon receiving actual notice of alleged sexual harassment without a formal complaint, staff members must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator must then contact the complainant within five (5) school days of receiving the complaint and do the following:

- Discuss and offer supportive measures;
- Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- Explain that supportive measures may be received with or without filing a complaint;
- Determine whether the complainant wishes to file a complaint; and
- Explain to the complainant the purpose of filing a complaint.

The Title IX Coordinator must document in writing the supportive measures offered/provided or why no supportive measures were offered/provided.

A respondent will be offered supportive measures if Milestones has initiated a Title IX complaint or if Milestones has offered informal resolution. If the Title IX Coordinator is initiating the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the complainant prior to doing so and appropriately address reasonable concerns about the complainant's safety or the safety of others, including by providing supportive measures.

Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar

measures. Milestones must maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of Milestones to provide the supportive measures.

If the complainant or respondent is a student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator will consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's IEP or 504 Team to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794, in the implementation of supportive measures.

### **Grievance Process Overview**

During the grievance process, Milestones will treat complainants and respondents equally. Milestones requires that any Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decisionmaker not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. A decisionmaker may be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or investigator.

Milestones presumes that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sex discrimination until a determination is made at the conclusion of its grievance procedures.

Milestones has established the following timeframes for the major stages of the grievance procedures:

- Within five (5) business days, Milestones will decide whether to dismiss or investigate a complaint.
- Within sixty (60) business days, Milestones will investigate and decide on the complaint.
- The parties will have ten (10) calendar days to appeal a decision from the decision-maker or of a decision to dismiss the complaint. Milestones will decide an appeal within thirty calendar days of receipt.

Milestones will provide all parties with a reasonable extension of time frames on a case-by-case basis for good cause with notice to the parties that includes the reason for the delay. If a party is seeking an extension, they should request an extension from the Title IX Coordinator in writing, explaining the reasons for the requested extension. The Title IX Coordinator will rule on the extension in writing to all parties. If Milestones requires an extension for good cause, it will notify all the parties of the reasons.

Milestones will take reasonable steps to protect the privacy of the parties and witnesses during its grievance procedures. These steps will not restrict the ability of the parties to obtain and present evidence, including by speaking to witnesses; consult with their family members, confidential resources, or advisors; or otherwise prepare for or participate in the grievance procedures. The parties cannot engage in retaliation, including against witnesses.

Milestones will objectively evaluate all evidence that is relevant and not otherwise impermissible—including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. Credibility determinations will not be based on a person’s status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

The following types of evidence, and questions seeking that evidence, are impermissible (*i.e.*, will not be accessed or considered, except by Milestones to determine whether one of the exceptions listed below applies; will not be disclosed; and will not otherwise be used), regardless of whether they are relevant:

- Evidence that is protected under a privilege recognized by Federal or State law unless the person to whom the privilege or confidentiality is owed has voluntarily waived the privilege or confidentiality;
- A party’s or witness’s records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party or witness, unless Milestones obtains that party’s or witness’s voluntary, written consent for use in its grievance procedures; and
- Evidence that relates to the complainant’s sexual interests or prior sexual conduct, unless evidence about the complainant’s prior sexual conduct is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct or is evidence about specific incidents of the complainant’s prior sexual conduct with the respondent that is offered to prove consent to the alleged sex-based harassment. The fact of prior consensual sexual conduct between the complainant and respondent does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant’s consent to the alleged sex-based harassment or preclude determination that sex-based harassment occurred.

### **Notice of Allegations**

Upon initiation of Milestones’ Title IX grievance procedures, Milestones will notify the parties of the following:

- Milestones’ Title IX grievance procedures and any informal resolution process;
- Sufficient information available at the time to allow the parties to respond to the allegations, including the identities of the parties involved in the incident(s), the conduct

alleged to constitute sex discrimination, and the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s);

- Retaliation is prohibited; and
- The parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence.

If, in the course of an investigation, Milestones decides to investigate additional allegations of sex discrimination by the respondent toward the complainant that are not included in the notice provided or that are included in a complaint that is consolidated, Milestones will notify the parties of the additional allegations.

### **Dismissal of a Complaint**

Milestones may dismiss a complaint of sex discrimination if:

- Milestones is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so;
- The respondent is not participating in Milestones' education program or activity and is not employed by Milestones;
- The complainant voluntarily withdraws any or all of the allegations in the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator declines to initiate a complaint, and Milestones determines that, without the complainant's withdrawn allegations, the conduct that remains alleged in the complaint, if any, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX even if proven; or
- Milestones determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX. Before dismissing the complaint, Milestones will make reasonable efforts to clarify the allegations with the complainant.

Upon dismissal, Milestones will promptly notify the complainant of the basis for the dismissal. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then Milestones will also notify the respondent of the dismissal and the basis for the dismissal promptly following notification to the complainant, or simultaneously if notification is in writing.

Milestones will notify the complainant that a dismissal may be appealed and will provide the complainant with an opportunity to appeal the dismissal of a complaint. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then Milestones will also notify the respondent that the dismissal may be appealed. Dismissals may be appealed on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that would change the outcome;
- New evidence that would change the outcome and that was not reasonably available when the dismissal was made; and
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision maker had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that would change the outcome.

If the dismissal is appealed, Milestones will:

- Notify the parties of any appeal, including notice of the allegations, if notice was not previously provided to the respondent;
- Implement appeal procedures equally for the parties;
- Ensure that the decision maker for the appeal did not take part in an investigation of the allegations or dismissal of the complaint;
- Ensure that the decision maker for the appeal has been trained consistent with the Title IX regulations;
- Provide the parties a reasonable and equal opportunity to make a statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome; and
- Notify the parties of the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result.

When a complaint is dismissed, Milestones will, at a minimum:

- Offer supportive measures to the complainant as appropriate;
- If the respondent has been notified of the allegations, offer supportive measures to the respondent as appropriate; and
- Take other prompt and effective steps, as appropriate, through the Title IX Coordinator to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within Milestones' education program or activity.

## **Investigation**

Milestones will provide for adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of complaints. The burden is on Milestones—not on the parties—to conduct an investigation that gathers sufficient evidence to determine whether sex discrimination occurred.

Milestones uses a single investigator/decision maker. The investigator will be an Assistant Principal or Assistant Clinical Director, and a decision maker will be the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, or Principal.

Milestones will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present fact witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence that are relevant and not otherwise impermissible. Milestones will review all evidence gathered through the investigation and determine what evidence is relevant and what evidence is impermissible regardless of relevance.

Milestones will provide each party with an equal opportunity to access the evidence that is relevant to the allegations of sex discrimination and not otherwise impermissible, in the following manner:

- Milestones will provide an equal opportunity to access either the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence;
- Milestones will provide a reasonable opportunity to respond to the evidence; and
- Milestones will take reasonable steps to prevent and address the parties' unauthorized disclosure of information and evidence obtained solely through the grievance procedures. Disclosures of such information and evidence for purposes of administrative proceedings or litigation related to the complaint of sex discrimination are authorized.

### **Questioning the Parties and Witnesses**

Milestones will require the decision maker to question parties and witnesses to adequately assess a party's or witness's credibility to the extent credibility is both in dispute and relevant to evaluating one or more allegations of sex discrimination. The decision maker will question witnesses and parties directly to make this determination.

### **Determination Whether Sex Discrimination Occurred**

Following an investigation and evaluation of all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, Milestones will:

Use the preponderance of the evidence standard of proof to determine whether sex discrimination occurred. The standard of proof requires the decision maker to evaluate relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence for its persuasiveness. If the decision maker is not persuaded under the applicable standard by the evidence that sex discrimination occurred, whatever the quantity of the evidence is, the decision maker will not determine that sex discrimination occurred.

The decision maker will:

- Notify the parties in writing of the determination whether sex discrimination occurred under Title IX including the rationale for such determination, and the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal, if applicable;
- Not impose discipline on a respondent for sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX unless there is a determination at the conclusion of the grievance procedures that the respondent engaged in prohibited sex discrimination.
- If there is a determination that sex discrimination occurred, the Title IX Coordinator will, as appropriate:
  - o Coordinate the provision and implementation of remedies to a complainant and other people Milestones identifies as having had equal access to Milestones' education program or activity limited or denied by sex discrimination;
  - o Coordinate the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions on a respondent, including notification to the complainant of any such disciplinary sanctions; and
  - o Take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within Milestones' education program or activity.
  - o Comply with the grievance procedures before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions against a respondent; and
  - o Not discipline a party, witness, or others participating in the grievance procedures for making a false statement or for engaging in consensual sexual conduct based solely on the determination whether sex discrimination occurred.

Following a determination that sex-based harassment occurred, Milestones may impose disciplinary sanctions, which may include revocation of privileges, detentions, suspensions or expulsions. Milestones may also provide remedies, which may include supportive measures, counseling, stay away orders, class switches or any additional measures that are appropriate.

After the grievance process, Milestones may, as appropriate, modify or terminate supportive measures. If Milestones does so, it will provide the parties to timely seek from an appropriate and impartial employee, modification or reversal of Milestones' decision to provide, deny, modify, or terminate supportive measures applicable to them. The impartial employee will be someone other than the employee who made the challenged decision and must have authority to modify or reverse the decision, if the impartial employee determines that the decision to provide, deny, modify, or terminate the supportive measure was inconsistent with the definition of supportive measures. Milestones will also provide a party with the opportunity to seek

additional modification or termination of a supportive measure applicable to them if circumstances change materially.

## **Appeal**

Milestones offers the following process for appeals from a determination whether sex discrimination occurred which is consistent with other school appeal processes:

- 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 (CEO) and Alex Smith-Michaels (Founder/COO) 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 the complaint desire. Within 10 school days the appeal will be reviewed by Kimberly Rockers (CEO) and Alex Smith-Michaels (Founder/COO) and a resolution will be issued. The appeals process will include reviewing documents provided and interviewing or re-interviewing (if necessary) any additional people noted in the complaint.

## **Training**

All employees will be trained annually and upon hire on:

- Milestones’ obligation to address sex discrimination in its education program or activity;
- The scope of conduct that constitutes sex discrimination, including the definition of sex-based harassment; and
- All applicable notice and information requirements.

All investigators, facilitators of informal resolution, decision makers and other persons responsible for supportive measures/Title IX process will have additional training on:

- Milestones’ grievance procedures;
- How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias;

- The meaning and application of the term “relevant” in relation to questions and evidence, and the types of evidence that are impermissible regardless of relevance; and
- rules and practices associated with Milestones’ informal resolution process and on how to serve impartially, including by avoiding conflicts of interest and bias.

In addition, the Title IX Coordinator and designees will receive training on their specific responsibilities, recordkeeping and any other training necessary to implement Title IX.

## **Records**

A record will be maintained for a period of seven years of any actions, including supportive measures or informal resolution, taken in response to a report or complaint and Milestones staff will document the basis for Milestones’ conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent.

## **External Grievance Procedure**

Any student, parent/guardian or employee who chooses not to use Milestones' internal grievance procedures or who is not satisfied with Milestones' internal grievance procedures may file a complaint of discrimination or harassment with an appropriate state or federal agency.

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:

The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education

5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

One Ashburton Place

Sixth Floor, Room 601

Boston, MA 02108

Phone 617-994-6000, TIY: 617-994-6196

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of parents/guardians:

The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education

5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of employees:

The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education

5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

One Ashburton Place

Sixth Floor, Room 601

Boston, MA 02108

Phone 617-994-6000, TTY: 617-994-6196

OR

The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission

John F. Kennedy Federal Building

475 Government Center

Boston, MA 02203

Phone: 1-800-669-4000

### **Referral to Law Enforcement, Other Agencies**

Some alleged conduct may constitute both a violation of Milestones' policies and criminal activity. The Principal, Coordinator, Director, or designee will refer matters to law enforcement and other agencies as appropriate under the law or Milestones policy, and inform the complainant/ alleged victim of the right to file a criminal complaint.

### **Retaliation**

Complainants and those who participate in the complaint resolution process or who otherwise oppose in a reasonable manner an act or policy believed to constitute discrimination are protected from retaliation by law and Milestones policy. The coordinator or designee will inform all involved individuals that retaliation is prohibited, and that anyone who feels that they have experienced retaliation for filing a complaint or participating in the resolution process should inform the coordinator. The coordinator will investigate reports of retaliation and, where retaliation is found, take separate remedial and disciplinary action.

## **Pregnancy**

Milestones does not discriminate in its education program or activity against any student based on the student's current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions.

## **Title IX Coordinator**

When a student, or a person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student, informs any employee of the student's pregnancy or related conditions, unless the employee reasonably believes that the Title IX Coordinator has been notified, the employee will promptly provide that

person with the Title IX Coordinator's contact information and inform that person that the Title IX Coordinator can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure the student's equal access to Milestones' education program or activity.

## **Reasonable Modifications**

Specifically, Milestones must make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, or procedures as necessary to prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to Milestones' education program or activity. Each reasonable modification must be based on the student's individualized needs. In determining what modifications are required, Milestones will consult with the student. A modification that would fundamentally alter the nature of its education program or activity is not a reasonable modification. The student has discretion to accept or decline a reasonable modification.

Reasonable modifications may include, but are not limited to, breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions,

including eating, drinking, or using the restroom; intermittent absences to attend medical appointments; access to online or homebound education; changes in schedule or course sequence; extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations; allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby; counseling; changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest); elevator access; or other changes to policies, practices, or procedures.

The student may voluntarily take a leave of absence from Milestones' education program or activity to cover, at minimum, the period of time deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider. When the student returns to Milestones' education program or activity, the student will be reinstated to the academic status and, as practicable, to the extracurricular status that the student held when the voluntary leave began. To request tutoring

in these circumstances, a family must fill out the home-hospital form.

Milestones will ensure that the student can access a lactation space, which will be a space other than a bathroom, that is clean, shielded from view, free from intrusion from others, and may be used by a student for expressing breast milk or breastfeeding as needed.

Milestones will only require supporting documentation that is necessary and reasonable to determine reasonable modifications. Milestones will not request documentation for reasonable modifications such as when a student who is pregnant needs a bigger uniform; when the student has previously provided the recipient with sufficient supporting documentation; when the reasonable modification because of pregnancy or related conditions at issue is allowing a student to carry or keep water nearby and drink, use a bigger desk, sit or stand, or take breaks to eat, drink, or use the restroom; when the student has lactation needs.

### **Certification to Participate**

Milestones will not require a student who is pregnant or has related conditions to provide certification from a healthcare provider or any other person that the student is physically able to participate in the recipient's class, program, or extracurricular activity unless:

The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for participation in the class, program, or extracurricular activity; The recipient requires such certification of all students participating in the class, program, or extracurricular activity; and the information obtained is not used as a basis for discrimination.