

**STUDENT
AND FAMILY
HANDBOOK**

2010-2011

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MEETINGS: The Board of Trustees meets in the Four Rivers Farmhouse, 248 Colrain Rd., Greenfield, MA, from 7-9 pm on the second Monday of each month. The meetings are open, parents are welcome, and the agenda includes a time for public comment. Meetings are posted outside the School Office.

FOUR RIVERS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC.

Four Rivers Educational Foundation “FREF” is the affiliated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the purpose of supporting the mission of Four Rivers Charter Public School. It owns the buildings and grounds and leases them to the school. As a tax exempt organization, it is also the vehicle for receiving certain grants and donations to the school through our Annual Fund campaign.

Board of Trustees, 2010-2011

Edward Blatchford, President
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FACULTY AND STAFF 2010-2011

STAFF

Principal/Head of School -- Peter Garbus
Director of Operations -- Harlan Smith
Assistant Principal -- Susan Durkee
Dean of Students -- Matt Leaf
Director of Academic Support -- Andy Stenson
College Counselor -- Andy Stenson
Administrative Coordinator -- Leslie Taylor
School Secretary -- Carolyn Wood
Special Education Director -- Nancy Curtis*
School Psychologist -- Bill Fogel*
Special Education Secretary -- Carolyn Wood
Technology Coordinator -- Dan Lederer*
Technology Assistant -- Doug Finn*
Athletic Director -- Terry Plotkin*
School Nurse -- Jeanne Milton*

DIVISION I

7th English/Social Studies -- Clare Perry
7th Math/Science -- Mandy Locke
8th English/SS -- Robin Wilson
8th Math/Science -- Niki Gilbert
Spanish 7th/9th/11th -- Eliza Beardslee
Learning Specialist -- Kate Conant
Teacher Assistant -- Melinda McCall
Teacher Assistant -- Anita Falco

DIVISION II

English -- Maura Ambuter
Social Studies -- Andy Wallace
Math -- Cheryl Howard
Science -- Laura Stamas
Spanish 8th/10th/12th -- Craig McDonnell
Learning Specialist -- Anne Haxo
Teacher Assistant -- Heather Viens

DIVISION III

English -- Leah Plath
Social Studies -- Ray Neal
Math -- Joshua Hornick
Science -- Maureen Fagan
Learning Specialist -- Jessica Roll

ALL DIVISIONS

Wellness -- Amanda Griffith
Spanish 8th/10th/12th -- Craig McDonnell
Spanish 7th/9th/11th -- Eliza Beardslee

TRIBS

Nature -- Neill Bovaird*
Art -- Donna Carpenter*
Music -- Tony Derricotte*
Technology -- Dan Lederer*

SOCCER COACHES

Girls' Varsity -- Amanda Griffith
Girls' Middle School -- Susan Timberlake
Boys' Varsity -- Terry Plotkin
Boys' Junior Varsity -- Miles Montgomery-Butler

ULTIMATE COACHES

Girls' Varsity -- Amanda Griffith
Boys' Varsity -- Terry Plotkin

* Indicates part-time faculty or staff

EMAIL CONTACT

Faculty and Staff members each have an extension on the school number, 775-4577, and e-mail addresses with

firstinitiallastname@fourriverscharter.org.

For example, ltaylor@fourriverscharter.org will reach our Administrative Coordinator, Leslie Taylor.

OUR MISSION: LIVES OF LEARNING AND SERVICE

Four Rivers Charter Public School is dedicated to educating young people for lives of learning and service. The school offers a rigorous college preparatory program aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and an emphasis on character development for moral and social responsibility. Three central themes--nature, technology and community--guide teaching and learning at the school, engaging students and teachers in a fundamental question of our times: how do we find the healthy, sustainable interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community? The school works closely with parents and seeks both to serve and to learn from the many resources of Franklin County.

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

To support our mission, Four Rivers Charter Public School is affiliated with Expeditionary Learning Schools, a national non-profit model for comprehensive school reform. Expeditionary Learning emphasizes active learning, teamwork, academic rigor and character growth. Extensive professional development provides our staff with highly-effective instructional practices, regular coaching matched to our students and program, and a far-reaching network of other EL schools from which to learn and grow. We believe Expeditionary Learning harnesses the natural passion to learn and is a powerful method for developing the curiosity, skills, knowledge, and courage needed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it.

Expeditionary Learning is built on ten design principles that reflect the educational values and beliefs of Outward Bound. These principles also reflect the design's connection to related thinking about teaching, learning, and the culture of schools.

1. THE PRIMACY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

2. THE HAVING OF WONDERFUL IDEAS

Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. EMPATHY AND CARING

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

5. SUCCESS AND FAILURE

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

8. THE NATURAL WORLD

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

9. SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with others.

10. SERVICE AND COMPASSION

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service to others.

FOUR COMMITMENTS

To fulfill our mission, the school is guided by four basic commitments we have articulated to students, parents and the community, and by our powerful affiliation with Expeditionary Learning Schools.

Expect the best

Four Rivers expects high levels of achievement in academic learning, effort, and teamwork. We challenge students to dig deeper and work harder than most have done before. With talented and enthusiastic teachers, our program seeks to prepare every student for college. The curriculum grows from the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, with an emphasis on excellence in reading, writing and math, ensuring readiness for the MCAS. Its real energy comes from teachers working with small classes to develop challenging projects, through which students learn essential knowledge, skills, and values. They teach with clear standards for top quality work, respect for individual differences, and the conviction that every student can and wants to strive for the best.

Learn by doing

At Four Rivers, learning is active, not passive. Meaningful, engaging projects are central to our curriculum. Several times a year classes go on "learning expeditions": in-depth investigations of a theme or topic, guided by questions, which may extend from four to six or more weeks. Students do original research and fieldwork, often involving experts in the community. Expeditions promote responsibility and collaboration; they speak to diverse learning styles, reveal new strengths, and deepen understanding. Typically, learning expeditions end with the students producing work—a report, a publication, a presentation—that has a real purpose and a real audience.

Explore big questions

The school's themes of nature, technology and community engage teachers and students in basic questions that promote active learning and bring them in touch with our area and our times. What does the natural world have to teach us? What does technology, and the creative power of invention behind it, offer us? How do they work together for the good of all? There is endless learning to be explored -- and a cause to be served -- in our themes. Our answers can shape the future, here in Franklin County and in the world beyond.

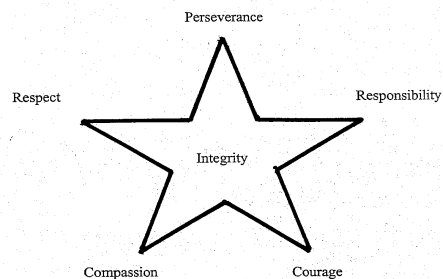
Build character and community

Development of character and community are as important as academic achievement. Our school is small, with a place for everyone. Every student is known; each is valued as bringing a unique gift to the school. All of us are called on to think and act for the common good. Through our crew program and our curriculum, we guide each student's quest for the strength of character and insight to make healthy choices and set positive goals. We encourage student leadership and initiative in helping one another, strengthening our school, and serving the community. We emphasize six character virtues; we also have a clear code of conduct, with no tolerance for behavior that is unsafe or hurtful to individuals or the community.

SCHOOL CULTURE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

There are several principles that lie at the heart of our school culture. They define the foundations behind our CODE OF CONDUCT and our GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNITY – to be found on the next pages.

One full set of them comes from our CHARACTER VIRTUES, represented in the Polaris star:



TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Students take responsibility for their own behavior, they demonstrate responsibility for learning, and they act responsibly as a member of school community.

SHOW RESPECT

Students show respect for self, they act respectfully toward other students and adults, and they treat personal and school property with respect.

HAVE COURAGE

Students act with confidence and good judgment, they are willing to try new or challenging experiences, and they hold to their own best values despite pressure from others.

SHOW COMPASSION

Students demonstrate kindness, they show interest in others' views and experiences, and they encourage and help others.

DEMONSTRATE PERSEVERANCE

Students show effort in pursuit of excellence, they persist in the face of difficulties, and they complete their tasks.

HAVE INTEGRITY

Students act in honest and trustworthy manner, they show commitment to developing strong character values, and they set positive examples for school community.

There are two other principles we believe contribute to a strong school culture:

WE ARE CREW, NOT PASSENGERS

All of us contribute to the strength of our community. No one is just along for the ride.

LEAVE NO TRACE

We take care of our environment, buildings, hallways, and classrooms by cleaning up after ourselves.

Taken all together, to follow these principles means adhering to a single rule for our school:

**YOU ARE FREE TO BEHAVE AS YOU WISH,
AS LONG AS YOUR BEHAVIOR
DOES NOT CAUSE ANY PROBLEM FOR SOMEONE ELSE.**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Four Rivers is fully committed to providing a safe, orderly and respectful environment in which all students can grow in academic ability and strength of character. Students whose behavior does not meet the school's standards for reasonable and acceptable conduct will not be permitted to disrupt the education or work of others. This applies both at the school, at all school-related activities off-campus, and outside activities that affect the school. The objectives of disciplining any student must be to help the student to improve in self-discipline and appropriate behavior, as well as to protect the rights and well-being of others. Policies and procedures for handling discipline problems, from simple misconduct to serious offenses, are designed to achieve these broad purposes.

PROCEDURES

1. The school strives to maintain a climate of positive expectations for all students. Success in meeting these expectations is celebrated in many ways, too.
2. Episodes of misconduct occur nonetheless. In general, when there is misconduct, the teacher or adult in charge seeks to ensure that the student understands how the behavior is unacceptable, what improvement is needed, and if the student has an explanation.
3. The school defines three levels of misconduct:
 - a. Level 1: Simple misconduct.
 - b. Level 2: Repeated simple misconduct or more harmful misconduct.
 - c. Level 3: Serious offenses
4. For Level 1 or 2 misconduct, the teacher, advisor or Principal may give a consequence appropriate to the misconduct after a reasonable investigation of the facts.
5. For Level 3 Serious Offenses, there will be a hearing as described below before consequences are decided. The School Psychologist is kept informed of Level 2 and 3 incidents and may play a supporting role.

While each incident will be treated individually, the following three levels of misconduct offer examples and possible consequences. The school reserves the right, depending on the severity and/or frequency of the misconduct, to use any of the disciplinary procedures in this policy, up to and including expulsion.

LEVEL 1: SIMPLE MISCONDUCT

Examples:

- interrupting or talking out of turn when asked to be silent
- distracting other students from learning
- inappropriate or distracting dress or grooming
- running or horseplay inside buildings
- eating candy during class, in halls, or on fieldwork
- mishandling or throwing food at lunch or snack
- coming late to class, without written excuse
- leaving the classroom without permission
- not following classroom rules
- dishonesty
- any other misconduct of a similar nature or severity

The typical sequence of CONSEQUENCES for Level 1 misconduct is not limited to but may include:

- 1st offense: Warning or redirection by the teacher or adult in authority*
2nd offense: Brief time out within the classroom or nearby
3rd offense: Incident Report completed (Blue Slip) with expectation of making amends.

If a student has two blue slips within one week (defined as five school days), he or she is expected to meet with the Dean of Students to discuss the incidents and the parent/guardian will be notified. If a student has four blue slips within one month (defined as four weeks), he/she is expected to serve a payback time. Payback is typically an hour of work on a specified day after school to restore something to the community that was weakened by the student's actions. When completing a Blue Slip, the student reflects on the instance of misconduct, how it affected others, and what might be done to make amends.

LEVEL 2: REPEATED SIMPLE MISCONDUCT OR MORE HARMFUL MISCONDUCT

Examples:

- severe or repeated Level 1 misconduct
- disobeying a teacher, staff member, or other adult in authority
- disrespectful talk, gestures or actions toward another student or an adult
- disregard for proper care and treatment of school or individual property
- taking anything from another student's locker without permission
- interfering with the learning of a class or individual
- failure to observe school rules or expectations despite warnings
- rude or negative body language
- teasing, name-calling, hurtful gossiping – other than sexual harassment
- excessive public displays of affection, such as kissing, petting or prolonged hugging
- any other misconduct of a similar nature or severity

The typical sequence of CONSEQUENCES for Level 2 misconduct is not limited to but may include:

1st offense: Blue Slip completed; call home.

*2nd offense: Blue Slip completed; student is given in-school suspension;
Advisor and Dean (and possibly the Principal) meet with the parent and student.*

3rd offense: Blue Slip completed; student is suspended until parent(s) meets with advisor and Dean (and possibly the Principal) and a plan for improvement is agreed to.

Note: As above, the student reflects on the instance of misconduct, how it affected others, and what should be done to make amends. In some instances, the severity of the misconduct may cause a student to be sent home on the first offense. In other instances, the time between offenses may mean that the consequence for 1st offense is repeated to improve the concerning behavior.

LEVEL 3: SERIOUS OFFENSES

Examples:

- severe or repeated Level 2 misconduct
- bullying
- possessing, selling, or distributing illegal substances
- being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages
- harming or attempting to harm another person with a weapon or dangerous object
- hurting another person (or threatening to hurt another person or group)
- bringing to school a weapon or dangerous object, including a knife
- using a mock gun or other mock weapon in a threatening manner
- damaging or stealing school or private property (or threatening to do so)
- sexually harassing another person
- using racial or ethnic slurs, profanity, or obscene language
- willfully disrupting school or classroom activity
- cheating and/or plagiarism
- hazing or violence, or the threat of hazing or violence, toward another student or school personnel
- using or possessing over-the-counter medication inappropriately
- smoking on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities
- tampering with school records
- leaving the school without permission or cutting classes
- any other misconduct of a similar nature or severity

CONSEQUENCES: *The Principal will call for a hearing to determine whether one of the following consequences is warranted:*

SUSPENSION: *Suspension* is not being allowed to attend school for *one to thirty* days. In the case of a short-term suspension of one to ten days, the Principal shall give the student notice of the charges against him or her, an explanation of the evidence, and the opportunity to present his or her side of the story. Before a student can be suspended for more than ten days, the Principal must (1) notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the violation, (2) schedule a hearing, (3) inform the family by letter of the date, time, and place for the hearing, and (4) hold the hearing. The school will schedule the hearing as promptly as possible and expects the parent/guardian to be ready to respond immediately. At the hearing, the Principal hears the evidence and decides whether the student should be suspended. If the student and the parent/guardian disagree with the suspension, they may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees within ten school days. Certain terms -- such as continuing with school work; writing reflections, apologies, or plans for improvement; counseling or other forms of support; and service activities -- may also be required as part of the suspension.

EXPULSION: Massachusetts law permits the Principal to expel a student for:

1. Bringing to school a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance
2. Assaulting an educational staff person
3. Persistent or severe misconduct, bullying, unruly behavior, and/or creating a danger to the community.

Expulsion is not being allowed to attend school for a minimum of *thirty* school days up to the maximum of *permanent exclusion* from school. Before a student can be expelled, the Principal must (1) notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the violation, (2) schedule a hearing, (3) inform the family by letter of the date, time, and place for the hearing, and (4) hold the hearing. At the hearing, the Principal listens to witnesses and examines the evidence. The student or parent/guardian may bring a lawyer or advocate to the hearing. The school also will provide an interpreter for parents who have limited English-speaking skills. Following the hearing, if the Principal decides to expel a student, the student and parent/guardian must be notified in writing. If the student and the parent/guardian disagree with the expulsion, they may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees within ten school days. The student has the right to counsel and the hearing shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated the policies. When a student is expelled under these provisions and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the Principal shall notify the superintendent of the receiving school of the reasons for the student's expulsion.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

These expectations, rules, and procedures apply to *all* students. There are specific procedures, however, for disciplining students with disabilities.

a) Each student's IEP should indicate if he or she is not expected to meet the regular discipline code, explain why, and indicate what modification is required.

b) Records must be kept of the number and duration of suspensions of special needs students. Procedures should be established for notifying the Special Education Principal whenever a student with special needs is given a suspension of more than ten cumulative days. Written notice of a proposed suspension exceeding ten days, and a request for approval of the alternative plan must be filed with the Department of Education, Division of Special Education. If a suspension of more than ten cumulative days is challenged, the charter school shall not suspend a student pending the Bureau of Special Education Appeals hearing or judicial process, unless the school obtains a court order.

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

The Massachusetts legislature has passed a new law calling on all schools to try to prevent bullying, as reflected in the definitions, the policy, and the prevention plan below. If there are any changes or clarifications to this new law that affect our policy, you will be notified through an Addendum in writing delivered in October.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of Four Rivers Public Charter School to provide a learning and working environment for students, employees and visitors free from bullying.

We all - students, teachers, administrators, and parents - share the *responsibility* of maintaining a safe school community. We all deserve to work in an environment in which we can feel safe and free from distraction in the pursuit of learning and teaching. This means treating each other with *respect* and *compassion* and sometimes making amends when we make mistakes. It also means that we sometimes need to have the *courage* to speak up when others are doing things that affect our community negatively.

In a community, every individual matters and needs to feel he or she has a place and can thrive. The one guiding rule – You are free to act as you wish, as long as your behavior does not cause any problems for someone else – was created to recognize that while we all bring unique traits, abilities and talents to Four Rivers, we all share the *responsibility* for making our school a safe and productive place.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. “Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or employees of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property;
- (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process, orderly operation of a school or the working environment at a school.

B. “Cyber-bully” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include:

- (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identify of another person; or
- (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying;
- (iii) the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying scenarios

- A. Student uses school owned computer
 - i. Discipline can be imposed in accordance with published handbook policy.
 - ii. A student has reduced expectations of privacy when using school property.
- B. Student uses his/her own electronic device (i.e. cell phone or laptop) but sends message while on school property or at a school sponsored event:
 - i. Discipline can be imposed in accordance with published handbook policy.

- ii. M.G.L. c. 71 § 370(b) prohibits bullying “on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds.”
- C. Student uses his/her own device while not at school or a school sponsored event
 - i. Discipline can be imposed if the action “creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operations of a school.” c. 71 § 370(b)
- C. Hostile environment: A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education.
- D. Perpetrator: A student who engages in bullying or retaliation.
- E. Target: A student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.
- F. Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

III. POLICY

A. Bullying is hereby prohibited by Four Rivers Public Charter School:

1. on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned leased or used by the school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school; and,
2. at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned leased or used by the school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process, the orderly operation of the school or the working environment.

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

C. False accusations of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

D. This policy does not require Four Rivers Public Charter School to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

IV. BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN

A. REPORTING

1. Any staff including but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra curricular activity or paraprofessional **shall immediately** report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Dean of Students.
2. Any student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report any bullying or suspected bullying to the Dean of Students as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written. Reports may also be submitted to an advisor or a teacher, the school nurse, or the Principal.
3. If an instance of bullying is reported to a staff member other than the Principal or Dean of Students, the staff member **shall immediately** inform the Dean of Students.

4. The Dean of Students, who is in charge of receiving complaints, should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
5. The Dean of Students should document the following:
 - a. the name of the complainant;
 - b. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
 - c. the name of the alleged bully;
 - d. the date the complaint was received;
 - e. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
 - f. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
 - g. the names of witnesses.
6. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
7. Please note that any individual who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.

B. INVESTIGATION

- a. The Dean of Students should conduct an investigation within 24 to 48 hours of the complaint, if possible.
- b. The Dean of Students should ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
 - a. who, what, when, where, how;
 - b. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
 - c. effect of bullying - what will restore the complainant's sense of safety; and
 - d. assess the complainant's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.
- c. The Dean of Students shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged bully and the victim.
- d. The Dean of Students should caution all witnesses and the alleged bully that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
- e. The Dean of Students should interview the alleged bully and fairly warn him/her that the conduct will, if appropriate, be reported to local law enforcement.
6. The Dean of Students should interview witnesses.
7. The Dean of Students should establish the following:
 - a. if the alleged bullying occurred;
 - b. when the alleged bullying occurred;
 - b. how frequently the alleged bullying occurred; and
 - c. specific facts about the type and severity of the alleged bullying;
 - d. if the bullying has affected the complainant;
 - e. what action will restore the complainant's sense of safety;
 - f. is the complainant in need of protection and if so what type;
 - g. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require; and,
 - h. is notification to local law enforcement required.

C. DECISION

1. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Dean of Students shall make a decision that is appropriate for all parties concerning whether bullying occurred and if so what is the appropriate remedy including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the complainant.

2. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that bullying has occurred the Dean of Students may discipline the offending party by ordering:
 - a. counseling;
 - b. schedule or class change;
 - c. stay away order;
 - d. an educational component;
 - e. a verbal warning;
 - f. a written warning;
 - g. suspension;
 - h. expulsion, or;
 - i. any other consequence deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students.
3. The Dean of Students shall notify local law enforcement if he/she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator.
4. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
5. If the incident involves students from more than one school, the school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or schools. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21, the school shall inform local law enforcement when appropriate and consistent with this policy.
6. The Dean of Students should confer with the complainant and his/her parents to explain the action being taken including what if any actions are being taken to create a sense of safety for the complainant, and implementation of any protection plans and to make counseling referrals if appropriate.
7. The Dean of Students shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Dean of Students shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
8. The Dean of Students should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

D. BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN – EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This bullying prevention plan shall be developed and updated biennially in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. There shall be notice of the consultation and a public comment period.

1. **SPECIFIC BULLYING PREVENTION APPROACHES:** Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:
 - a. using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
 - b. empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
 - c. helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
 - d. emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
 - e. enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
 - f. engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

2. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:
 - a. setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
 - b. creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
 - c. using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
 - d. using positive behavioral supports;
 - e. encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
 - f. modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
 - g. using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
 - h. using the Internet safely; and
 - i. supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

3. There are several additional ways that the school works with students to prevent bullying:
 - a. CREW: Crews devote time each year to discussing the importance of the school-wide character virtues -- Respect, Responsibility, Courage, Compassion, Perseverance and Integrity -- in both personal development and in keeping our community safe and productive.

 - b. WELLNESS CLASS: Additionally, the Wellness curriculum contains units on Conflict Resolution in 7th grade, Bullying in 8th grade and covers bullying in its Decision-Making units in 9th and 10th grades. Through parent workshops sponsored by the Family Council, there is further discussion of the dynamics of bullying, online safety and cyber-bullying, and how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home; and

 - c. COMMUNITY BUILDING: The school also conducts school-wide events each year – Social Justice Day in November and a Film Festival highlighting one of our character virtues in February -- that allow students to work in both their Crews and cross-grade groups to address different aspects of maintaining a safe community.

 - d. TEACHING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR THROUGH SKILLS-BUILDING: Skill-building may include:
 - i. offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's anti-bullying curricula;
 - ii. providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with the School Psychologist or Wellness Advocate;
 - iii. implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
 - iv. meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
 - v. adopting behavior plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
 - vi. making a referral for evaluation.

4. There will be ongoing professional development to build skills of all staff members, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals to prevent, identify and respond to bullying.
 - a. Professional development shall include:
 - b. developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
 - c. developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;

- d. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying;
 - e. research findings on bullying including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
 - f. information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
 - g. internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.
5. There shall be age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade incorporated into the curriculum. This curriculum shall be evidence based.
- f. Parents and guardians shall be informed about the bullying prevention curriculum of the school, specifically:
 - a. how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school and school plan;
 - b. dynamics of bullying; and,
 - c. online safety and cyber-bullying.
 - g. The school shall provide to students and parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms and in the languages which are most prevalent among the students, parents, or guardians, annual written notice of the student related sections of the plan.
 - h. Parent education and resources: The school will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the Family Council.
 - i. The school shall provide annual written notice of the plan to all staff.
 - j. All staff shall be trained and provision for faculty and staff duties shall be included in the school employee handbook.
 - k. The Plan shall be posted on the website for the school.
 - l. The Dean of Students shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan.

HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION PREVENTION POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION

Incidents of harassment – as distinguished from incidents of bullying – require similar actions, as defined below.

II. DEFINITIONS

Harassment in any form will not be tolerated. Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

1. repeated or persistent offensive remarks
2. intimidation for favors
3. overt threats or demands
4. unwanted physical contact
5. display or circulation of written materials or pictures of a derogatory nature.

III. POLICY

A. HARASSMENT: Four Rivers Charter School is committed to maintaining a school and work environment free of harassment of any kind, including harassment based on gender, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, mental illness, sexual orientation, or disability. The Four Rivers Charter School expects all employees and members of the school community (Board of Trustees, parents, staff, students and volunteers) to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner with concern for their fellow employees and students.

B. DISCRIMINATION: The Four Rivers Charter School does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1974 (Age Discrimination Act), or on the basis of sexual orientation or religion in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 5.

IV. HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION PREVENTION PLAN

A. REPORTING

1. Any staff, student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report any harassment or discrimination to the Dean of Students as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written. Reports may also be submitted to an advisor or a teacher, the school nurse, or the Principal.
2. If an instance of harassment or discrimination is reported to a staff member other than the Dean of Students, the staff member shall immediately inform the Dean of Students.
3. The Dean of Students, who is in charge of receiving complaints, should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
4. The Dean of Students should document the following:
 - a. the name of the complainant;
 - b. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
 - c. the name of the alleged perpetrator;
 - d. the date the complaint was received;
 - e. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
 - f. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
 - g. the names of witnesses.

5. Reports of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student or staff member solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
6. Please note that any individual who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.

B. INVESTIGATION

1. The Dean of Students should conduct an investigation within 24 to 48 hours of the complaint, if possible.
2. The Dean of Students should ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
 - a. who, what, when, where, how;
 - b. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
 - c. effect - what will restore the complainant's sense of safety; and
 - d. assess the complainant's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.
3. The Dean of Students shall notify the alleged perpetrator or the parents or guardians of the alleged perpetrator and the victim.
4. The Dean of Students should caution all witnesses and the alleged perpetrator that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
5. The Dean of Students should interview witnesses.
6. The Dean of Students should establish the following:
 - a. if the alleged harassment or discrimination occurred;
 - b. when the alleged harassment or discrimination occurred;
 - b. how frequently the alleged harassment or discrimination occurred; and
 - c. specific facts about the type and severity of the alleged harassment or discrimination;
 - d. if the harassment or discrimination has affected the complainant;
 - e. what action will restore the complainant's sense of safety;
 - f. is the complainant in need of protection and if so what type;
 - g. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require.
7. The type or degree of a consequence can be influenced by the level of student cooperation in investigations. If a student admits to a violation there will be a consequence. If a student denies involvement and it is later determined that he or she was involved, the consequence will be more severe.

C. DECISION

1. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Dean of Students for incidents involving students or the Principal for incidents involving staff shall make a decision that is appropriate for all parties concerning whether harassment or discrimination occurred and if so what is the appropriate remedy including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the complainant.
2. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that harassment or discrimination has occurred the Dean of Students or the Principal may discipline the offending party by ordering:
 - a. counseling;
 - b. schedule or class change;
 - c. stay away order;
 - d. an educational component;

- e. a verbal warning;
 - f. a written warning;
 - g. suspension;
 - h. expulsion, or;
 - i. any other consequence deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students or the Principal.
3. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
 4. The Dean of Students should confer with the complainant and his/her parents to explain the action being taken including what if any actions are being taken to create a sense of safety for the complainant, and implementation of any protection plans and to make counseling referrals if appropriate.
 5. For incidents involving students, the Dean of Students shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Dean of Students shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
 6. Any employee or member of the school community found to have engaged in harassment shall be subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, a warning, suspension, or expulsion for students, and a warning, suspension, or termination of employment for staff.
 7. Under certain circumstances, harassment (particularly sexual harassment) may constitute child abuse under Massachusetts law G.L. c. 119, 51A. Four Rivers Charter Public School shall comply with Massachusetts laws in reporting suspected cases of child abuse.
 8. The Dean of Students or the Principal should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

V. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND PREVENTION PLAN

A. INTRODUCTION

It is the goal of Four Rivers to promote a workplace that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of employees or students occurring in the school or in other related settings is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. To achieve our goal of providing a workplace and school free from sexual harassment, the conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated and we have provided a procedure by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with, if encountered by employees.

Because Four Rivers takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace or school conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

B. DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In Massachusetts, the legal definition for sexual harassment is this: "sexual harassment" means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; or,
- (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work or school environment.

Under these definitions, direct or implied requests by a supervisor or staff member for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work place environment or learning environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances -- whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

All employees and students should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization.

C. REPORTING COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT – Same as above, except that students may report incidents to the Wellness Advocate as well. Contact Dean of Students or Wellness Advocate, Four Rivers Charter Public School, 248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, MA, 01301, 413-775-4577.

D. INVESTIGATION – Same as above.

E. DISCIPLINARY ACTION – Same as above.

F. STATE AND FEDERAL REMEDIES

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC - 300 days; MCAD - 300 days).

1. [The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \("EEOC"\)](#): 1 CONGRESS STREET, 10TH FLOOR, BOSTON, MA, 02114, 617-565-3200
2. [The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination \("MCAD"\)](#); Boston office, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 601, Boston, MA, 02108. 617-727-3990. Springfield office 424 Dwight Street, Room 220, Springfield, MA, 01103. 413-739-2145.

SUBSTANCE USE AND WEAPON PREVENTION POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION

The possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances or possession of a weapon in school creates significant problems for members of our school community – students, teachers, administrators and parents – and can create larger problems for the school. Four Rivers is committed to creating a substance-free, weapons-free, safe environment for all who attend school and work here.

- A. Drugs and alcohol pose significant health threats to all people, even more so for teenagers. The average brain does not stop developing until the early to mid twenties. Use and abuse of drugs and alcohol can alter the development of the brain and permanently impact cognitive and emotional growth. Four Rivers' very mission is to help students develop their minds in healthy ways to prepare them for adult life.
- B. Addiction is a serious concern for some students and being in an environment where illegal substances are present can pose a threat to their well being.
- C. The presence of drugs and alcohol at school distracts students and teachers from their primary purpose at school, which is learning and teaching.
- D. Students may be forced to leave the school as a result of problems with controlled substances. Some may leave for disciplinary reasons and others may leave or be pulled out by parents due to safety concerns.
- E. The presence of a weapon in school undermines the safety of all community members.
- F. The presence of illegal substances or weapons in our community affects the reputation of our school.

To this end all members of the community pledge not to come to school under the influence, not bring controlled substances to school, not use any controlled substances while at school, and not to bring weapons to school.

II. DEFINITIONS

e. ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

- 1. Tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes or smokeless tobacco
- 2. Alcohol
- 3. Marijuana
- 4. Other illegal drugs (hallucinogens, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, etc) and also substances that may be used illegally (e.g. prescription drugs, steroids, inhalants).

f. WEAPON: Any instrument or object possessed or used to inflict harm on another person, or to intimidate any person. Examples include but are not limited to firearms of any kind (operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded); all types of knives, chains, pipes, razor blades or similar instruments with sharp cutting edges; ice picks, dirks, other pointed instruments; brass knuckles; Chinese stars; billy clubs; tear gas guns; electrical weapons or devices (stun guns); BB or pellet guns; and explosives or propellants.

III. POLICY

- A. The use, possession, or distribution of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities, on the school grounds, on school buses, or at school-sponsored or school-related events by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.
- B. The use, possession, or distribution of any illegal drugs or alcohol within the school buildings, the school facilities, on the school grounds, on school buses, or at school-sponsored or school-related events by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.
- C. The use or possession of weapons within the school buildings, the school facilities, on the school grounds, on school buses, or at school-sponsored or school-related events by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.

- D. As provided in MGL Ch 71, Section 37H, any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school by the principal.
- E. School lockers are the property of the school, the school retains control over the lockers, and periodic general inspections of lockers may be conducted by school authorities at any time for any reason, with or without notice and without a warrant. The school reserves the right to conduct random or periodic searches by local law enforcement with dogs.

IV. SUBSTANCE USE AND WEAPON PREVENTION PLAN

A. REPORTING

1. Any staff including but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra curricular activity or paraprofessional **shall immediately** report any instance of the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Dean of Students.
2. Any student, parent, guardian or other interested person may report the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons to the Dean of Students as soon as reasonably possible. If possible, reports should be in writing but there is no requirement that they be written. Reports may also be submitted to an advisor or a teacher, the school nurse, or the Principal.
3. If an instance of the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons is reported to a staff member other than the Principal or Dean of Students, the staff member shall immediately inform the Dean of Students.
4. The Dean of Students, who is in charge of receiving complaints, should keep accurate documentation of all complaints received.
5. The Dean of Students should document the following:
 - a. the name of the complainant;
 - b. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
 - c. the name of the alleged perpetrator;
 - d. the date the complaint was received;
 - e. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
 - f. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
 - g. the names of witnesses.
6. Reports of the use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
7. Please note that any individual who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.

B. INVESTIGATION

1. School officials are obligated to follow up on any reasonable suspicion or reports that a community member is under the influence of illegal substances or in possession of illegal substance or weapons. Follow up may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Having students checked by the school nurse for symptoms of impairment or evidence of injury,

- b. Direct questioning about what a student may have taken, may have in their possession or what they might have witnessed.
 - c. Reasonable search of the student's locker, backpack, or person.
2. The Dean of Students should conduct an investigation as soon as possible and at least within 5 school days of the complaint, if possible.
3. The Dean of Students should ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
 - a. who, what, when, where, how;
 - b. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
 - c. assess the complainant's need for protection and if needed determine what form the protection should take.
4. The Dean of Students shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged perpetrator.
5. Whenever possible the Dean of Students does not share the name of students or families making reports.
6. The Dean of Students should caution all witnesses and the alleged perpetrator that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
7. The Dean of Students should interview the alleged perpetrator and fairly warn him/her that the conduct will, if appropriate, be reported to local law enforcement.
8. The Dean of Students should interview witnesses.
9. The Dean of Students should establish the following:
 - a. if the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred;
 - b. when the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred;
 - c. how frequently the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred; and
 - d. specific facts about the alleged use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons;
 - e. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require; and,
 - f. is notification to local law enforcement required.
10. The type or degree of a consequence can be influenced by the level of student cooperation in investigations. If a student admits to a violation there will be a consequence. If a student denies involvement and it is later determined that he or she was involved, the consequence will be more severe.
11. If students or families are uncooperative in interviews and investigations, Four Rivers reserves the right to turn the investigation over the police or other community authorities.

C. DECISION

1. Based upon a thorough investigation, the Dean of Students shall make a decision whether use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons occurred and if so what is the appropriate consequence, including discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies and protection of the complainant. If the consequence might be long-term suspension beyond 10 days or expulsion, the Principal is the Hearing Officer and shall determine the consequence.
2. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that use, possession, or distribution of illegal substances or weapons has occurred the Dean of Students may discipline the offending party by ordering:

- a. counseling;
 - b. an educational component;
 - c. a verbal warning;
 - d. a written warning;
 - e. suspension;
 - f. expulsion, or;
 - g. any other consequence deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students.
3. The Dean of Students may notify local law enforcement if he/she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator.
 4. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
 5. The Dean of Students shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The Dean of Students shall explain the discipline if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate any retaliation by alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline up to and including expulsion.
 6. The Dean of Students should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that his/her recommendation has been put into effect.

g. SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

The school's discipline policies make it clear that possession or use of illegal substances at school, on school grounds, or at school sponsored activities are strictly prohibited and could lead to long term suspension or expulsion from the school. Our primary concern is prevention, though there are consequences for violating these rules.

1. CONVERSATIONS IN CREW, WITH ADVISORS, OR IN JOURNALS: It is important that substance use outside of school can be discussed with responsible adults. These conversations can remain confidential unless it raises significant concerns involving the student's health and safety. If concerns are raised, the advisor contacts Mr. Leaf. The advisor may protect the source of information, but they must report the student of concern. It is important that advisors watch boundaries – we are careful about how we discuss these topics. We might talk about our own experiences growing up but we keep certain information private. We don't encourage tell-all journals without students knowing what we must report and what we feel responsible to report.
2. CONFIDENTIALITY IN SAFE ZONES: While advisors can't promise full confidentiality, conversations with Dr. Fogel, the School Psychologist, Ms. Griffith, the Wellness Advocate, or Jeanne Milton, the School Nurse -- can be kept confidential. These are safe zones for conversations about substance use. They can listen and provide resources for students and families to get further help.
3. WELLNESS: The Wellness program develops knowledge and skills that help young people avoid substance abuse. Young people need to "feel the strength of their bodies", which Wellness works on. Feeling strong and healthy yields positive results and good decision making. Wellness also involves adventure -- young people can seek and find adventure through healthy alternatives. Wellness also helps students develop a toolbox of decision making skills.
4. WELLNESS ADVOCATE: Amanda Griffith starts her second year as Wellness Advocate. Students for whom we have wellness-related concerns (substance abuse, eating disorders, or other issues) will be brought up at the weekly student review. Amanda Griffith will have up to 2 meetings

with that student to try to determine the nature and seriousness of the issue and make a plan for next steps.

5. OTHER INTERVENTIONS:

- a. Substance Abuse Prevention Crew: A group of peers willing to talk with classmates about substance abuse issues.
- b. Child in Need of Services (CHINS): Sometimes we will need to follow this official path to get a student the help they need.
- c. School Resource Officer: Our school has a police officer designated to work with us and our students. Contact Matt Leaf, Dean of Students if you think this may be needed.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF A SAFETY PLEDGE

Some schools ask their students and families to sign a pledge like the one below. At the beginning of last year there was some discussion of a similar idea. We print this sample here for your consideration – to be discussed further this fall.

Our school urges those students who drive and gather off campus to make an annual safety pledge. The reasons for this pledge are as follows:

- The crash rate for drivers aged 16-19 years is 4 times that of older drivers.
- 16-19 year old drivers are responsible for one-third of all auto-involved fatalities.
- Most students will, at some point, be in a car with a driver who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Every year, the unthinkable happens. We ask student drivers and their parents to read and sign a form agreeing to the following statements:

- I will not allow parties or gatherings in my home without proper adult supervision.
- I will not serve, nor will I allow anyone under the age of 21 to consume, alcohol in my home or on my property.
- I will not allow the use of illegal drugs in my home or on my property.
- I will call the parent host of a party that my child is attending in order to assure that the party will be safe, free of alcohol and/or drugs, and properly supervised by an adult.
- I have discussed this pledge with my child/children.
- I will guarantee my child a ride home if he/she is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE REGARDING GENERAL CONCERNS

(Excluding harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, substance use, or violations of state or federal laws – complaint procedures for these are included in those policies or the section below.)

(revised and pending approval by the Board of Trustees)

1. When complaints arise, the first step in the complaint procedure is to ensure that every attempt is made to have them resolved by the parties most directly involved. At the classroom level, for example, most complaints should initially be addressed to the teacher or staff member involved.
2. If the nature of the complaint makes it difficult to go directly to the source, the complaint may go immediately to the Principal.
3. If a resolution cannot be found by going to the source, the complaint should then go to the Principal. The Principal should document the complaint, investigate to whatever extent necessary, and problem-solve with the parties involved.
4. Should that step fail to bring a satisfactory resolution within two weeks, a written statement by the complaining party should be submitted to the chair of the Four Rivers Board of Trustees. The Board chair will not consider a complaint unless it has gone through the previous steps in the complaint process. The Board Chair will review the issue with the Principal, and investigate to whatever extent necessary. The Board Chair will respond, in writing, to the complaining party no later than 45 days from the receipt of the complaint.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE REGARDING STATE/FEDERAL LAWS

1. A parent, guardian or other individuals or groups who believe that the school has violated or is violating any provision of M.G.L. c 71, sec. 89 or 603 CMR 1.00 may file a complaint with the Four Rivers Charter School Board of Trustees.
2. The Board of Trustees shall respond no later than 30 days from the receipt of the complaint in writing to the complaining party.
3. The Board shall, pursuant to a complaint received under 603 CMR 1.10, or on its own initiative, conduct reviews to ensure compliance; and the school and the specific individuals involved shall cooperate to the fullest extent with such review.
4. Any complaining party who believes the complaint has not been adequately addressed by the Board of Trustees may submit the complaint in writing to the Commissioner of Education, who shall investigate such complaint and make a written response.
5. In the event the school is found in non-compliance with M.G.L. c. 71 sec. 89 or CMR 1.00, as a result of a complaint or upon investigation, the Commissioner or Board of Education may take such action as it deems appropriate, including but not limited to suspension or revocation of the school's charter under 603 CMR 1.12, or referral of the matter to the District Attorney or the Office of the Attorney General for appropriate legal action.
6. A parent, guardian or other individuals or groups who believe that the school has violated or is violating any state or federal law or regulation regarding special education may file a complaint directly with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

If you have any questions, complaints or need any information regarding any of the above named Titles, please contact the Special Education Director, Nancy Curtis, concerning ADA or 504, and the Principal for all other matters.

Peter Garbus, Principal
248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, MA 01301
413-775-4577

Nancy Curtis, Special Education Director
248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, MA 01301
413-775-4577

BEHAVIOR POLICIES

The following policies are presented for your understanding and reflect the consensus of the Four Rivers faculty and administration. They are meant to help guide all of us in our mission of all contributing to a positive, productive and safe community.

Each section begins with an explanation of the EXPECTATIONS that students, faculty, staff and administrators follow while in school and at school events. These are presented to help make clear some of the ways the guiding principles are put into action at Four Rivers. Expectations may be used to help someone understand how behavior not specifically named in these guidelines might go against the Guiding Principle we value in our community.

RULES are listed to make clear what is and is not allowed at Four Rivers. Rule infractions can result in immediate consequences as listed in each section. Please note that repeated violation of behavior listed in any of the Expectations sections can also result in other consequences.

CONSEQUENCES listed in this document are typically presented as a spectrum of possibilities. Actual consequences for behavior counter to Four Rivers' expectations or rules will be determined by considering all available facts and relevant information.

SCHOOL SAFETY

EXPECTATIONS: It is the responsibility of every member of the community to work to ensure our school is and feels safe. Physical safety and emotional safety are of equal importance at Four Rivers.

Four Rivers is committed to creating and maintaining a learning environment that feels and is safe for all members of the community. To this end, and often in accordance with Massachusetts state law, several items are prohibited from school

RULES:

- No guns, knives, weapons or dangerous objects may be brought to school.
- No lighters or matches may be brought to school.
- Acts of physical aggression – fighting, pushing or shoving with anger, etc – are prohibited.
- Threatening the safety or well-being (verbally or with physical gestures) of any member of the school community is forbidden.
- Bullying and teasing are not tolerated.
- Harassment of any kind based on gender, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, mental illness, sexual orientation, or disability is not tolerated.

CONSEQUENCES: Violating rules around safety or playing a role that makes Four Rivers unsafe is a serious infraction and can result in suspension or expulsion. Possession of a dangerous item will result in an immediate suspension of up to 10 days and a hearing to consider long-term suspension or expulsion.

RULES:

- Wrestling, rough-housing, play-fighting are all prohibited.
- No images of weapons or dangerous objects may be displayed on clothing, computers, notebooks, lockers or elsewhere at school, unless specifically meeting the criteria of an assignment.

CONSEQUENCES: These range from payback to parent conference to suspension depending on severity and frequency.

NOTE ON SEARCH AND SEIZURE

School officials maintain the right to seize items in a student's possession and to search school property (lockers, desks, vehicles in parking lot, etc.) assigned to a student or the student's personal belongings under the following guidelines:

1. There is reasonable suspicion to believe the items in possession are illegal or in violation of school rules, or constitute a hazard to the health and safety of the students and others.
2. In case of an emergency, or when the student is unavailable, the principal or her/his designee has the authority to enter and/or search school property or personal possessions, and seize items covered by the policy. The student should be informed as soon as possible.
3. Four Rivers reserves the right to use other means to search school property, including, but not limited to, use of a hand held metal detector if there is reasonable suspicion that a student may be concealing a weapon and/or drug sniffing dogs to deter illicit possession of drugs within the classrooms, common areas and lockers.
4. Examples of items subject to this policy include, but are not limited to, drugs, weapons (real or facsimile), pornography, counterfeit or stolen goods, fireworks, explosives, and/or alcohol.
5. School lockers are the property of the school, the school retains control over the lockers, and periodic general inspections of lockers may be conducted by school authorities at any time for any reason, with or without notice and without a warrant. The school reserves the right to authorize random or periodic searches with dogs.

SUBSTANCE USE

EXPECTATIONS: Students, faculty and administrators at Four Rivers Charter Public School make an annual commitment to a drug and alcohol free environment.

We ask all members of our community to make the following pledge:

- I will not to use illegal controlled substances while at school or at school events.
- I will not bring, sell or purchase illegal controlled substances while at school or at school events.
- I will not come to school or school events under the influence of illegal controlled substances.

It is essential that Four Rivers be a safe environment that is focused on growth and learning. Any individual's impairment due to substance use or their possession of illegal controlled substances threatens the safety of others.

RULES:

- Community members will not bring drugs, alcohol or other illegal controlled substances to school.
- Community members will not come to school under the influence of drugs, alcohol or other illegal controlled substances.
- Community members will not use drugs, alcohol or other illegal controlled substances while at school.
- The expectations for keeping Four Rivers substance free within the facilities, on the school grounds, on school buses, or at school-sponsored or school-related events.
- Any use, possession, distribution or being under the influence of illegal controlled substances at school or on school grounds is completely unacceptable.

CONSEQUENCES: Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol or other illegal drugs on school grounds or at school events will result in an automatic suspension of up to 10 days and a hearing for long-term suspension or expulsion.

APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

EXPECTATIONS: Four Rivers is committed to comfortable, respectful and professional environment for all its members.

Members of the Four Rivers community interact in an appropriate and respectful manner. Community members speak in a manner appropriate for a public place and school. Inappropriate or offensive materials are not brought to or shared at school.

RULES:

- Disrespectful backtalk is not tolerated.
- Inappropriate language directed towards an individual is not allowed.
- Inappropriate language that is overheard will be addressed, repeat offenses will carry consequence.

CONSEQUENCES: Consequences for inappropriate use of language or disrespectful talk can range from payback to conferences with parents to suspension.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

EXPECTATIONS: Four Rivers is committed to a comfortable, respectful and professional environment for all its members. Many forms of public displays of affection (PDA) can be disrespectful or uncomfortable to others and are strongly discouraged on school premises or at school events. Hand holding and quick hugs are usually acceptable.

RULES:

- PDA, including but not limited to, prolonged hugging, draping, close body contact, or kissing is strongly discouraged on school premises or at school events.
- No PDA of any kind is permitted once class is in session.

CONSEQUENCES: If simple reminders do not work in curtailing PDA problems for students then conferences with parents may be warranted and payback can be earned.

DRESS CODE

EXPECTATIONS: We expect students and staff members to dress and groom themselves in a manner that shows respect for oneself, for others, and for the process of learning. Members of the Four Rivers community dress in clean clothing free of excessive rips and tears. Clothing, including footwear, is appropriate for all school activities and does not interfere with a person's ability to participate appropriately. Grooming takes place in the bathroom. Eyes and ears are to remain visible during class time.

RULES:

- Underwear is to remain unseen and under clothing.
- At standing, shirts meet pants for all.
- Skirts or shorts reach mid-thigh length.
- Clothing is not distracting – it provides adequate coverage, does not have offensive images or messages, does not refer to drugs, alcohol or tobacco, and does not present a hazard.
- No bare feet.
- Hoods are not allowed, but hats may be worn at the classroom teacher's discretion.

- No hats or head coverings for formal gatherings, unless for religious or medical purposes.
- Excessive or bothersome perfumes and colognes are not allowed.

CONSEQUENCES: Individuals who come to school dressed inappropriately will be expected to make corrective measures right away. Corrective measures may include covering inappropriate clothing for the duration of the day, finding alternate garments to wear, wearing clothing provided by the office, waiting in the office until a parent/guardian can deliver appropriate clothing or going home. Repeated infractions may result in further consequences.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

EXPECTATIONS: Time during the school day should be focused on work and community. The use of electronic devices will not present any distraction from that responsibility. Students are fully responsible for their personal property and therefore are discouraged from bringing any electronic devices to school. Some members of the school community may have to make use of electronic devices during the day in order to do their jobs.

RULES: Cell phones, electronic games, and personal music devices must remain off and out of sight during regular school hours (8:00 am until dismissal in the afternoon, excluding time during the day on a van or a bus). Teachers may permit use of personal electronic devices when doing so supports student learning.

CONSEQUENCES: Electronic devices that are used inappropriately may be confiscated and stored in the office for the duration of the day to be picked up by parents.

TARDINESS

EXPECTATIONS: It is important to be on time in any learning and working environment. Members of the Four Rivers community make their best effort to honor time commitments and the work of others.

CONSEQUENCES: Repeated tardiness to a class will be addressed by the teacher involved. If the pattern of tardiness does not change, a conference with parents will be required. Every five tardy arrivals to school are considered an absence.

CANDY, GUM AND SNACKS

EXPECTATIONS: Four Rivers is committed to maintaining a clean campus and having a day free of distractions from learning. Snacks can be enjoyed at appropriate times during the day provided they are disposed of properly. Candy, snacks and gum will not pose any distraction from what is going on in the classroom and will not create any kind of mess for others to clean up. Periodic checks (approximately every 2 weeks) for gum and other trash will be performed by crews to assess if candy, gum and snack privileges need to be changed. **LEAVE NO TRACE.**

RULES:

- No candy, snacks, or drinks other than water are allowed in the classroom unless specifically permitted by a teacher for special occasions.
- As a privilege, students in Division III are allowed to have drinks other than water during class time.
- Candy, gum or snacks are not to be shared during class time.
- All trash must be disposed of properly.
- Candy, gum or snacks are not permitted during formal gatherings (i.e. Community Meeting, assemblies, and presentations).

CONSEQUENCES: Consequences for violating candy, gum and snacks rules can range from cleaning up messes, larger acts of service or loss of Candy, Gum, and Snack privileges for the extended community.

BIKES AND SKATEBOARDS

EXPECTATIONS: Four Rivers is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment.

Members of the Four Rivers community do not ride skateboards or other wheeled devices on campus or while at school events. Bikes may be ridden to school and stored outside school buildings during the day. Bikes are not ridden on sidewalks or lawns.

RULES: Use of skateboards, rollerblades, “healies” or other wheeled devices is not allowed at any time on school grounds.

CONSEQUENCES: Misuse of bikes may result in loss of bike privileges. Skateboards, rollerblades, “heelies” or other wheeled devices may be confiscated. Payback may be earned for violating school rules.

GREETINGS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXPECTATIONS: Four Rivers strives to be a professional, courteous and respectful environment for students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents and guests. Members of the community greet each other in a polite and appropriate way. Guests are met with a greeting, introduction or handshake and eye contact is made. When called on, people respond politely.

RULES: Faculty, staff, and adult visitors are addressed by their last names and Ms/Mrs/Mr/Title (i.e. Dr.). Visitors may be addressed by a different name if they request.

CONSEQUENCES: If simple reminders about respectful interactions are not effective, then consequences may range from payback to conferences with parents to suspension.

STAY HOME IF YOU'RE SICK

EXPECTATIONS: Respect the health of those around you. Please do not come to school if you are sick. Take some time to get better and not bring illness to others in the school. Please make arrangements by emailing your student’s advisor to get your work while you are out.

CONSEQUENCES: Individuals coming to school while sick may be removed from classes and community and may be sent home.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

EXPECTATIONS: Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in every aspect of their life at Four Rivers. This includes meeting the expectations of their assignments with good quality work of their own, and ensuring that the work they present to their teacher or a class is not borrowed or taken without acknowledgment from another person or source. Plagiarism of any kind is a serious offense, as described in the *Plagiarism Policy*.

DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM: “To steal and pass off as one’s own the ideas, words, artistic productions of another; to use without due credit the ideas, expressions, or productions of another”

--*Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language*

PLAGIARISM IS CHEATING. It is academically dishonest and an ethical offense; it is inconsistent with the Four Rivers goals for character and academic rigor and is therefore unacceptable.

If a student is concerned or has questions about how to cite material for a particular assignment, the student is responsible for consulting his or her teacher.

TYPES OF PLAGIARISM INCLUDE:

1. Passing off the entire text of another person’s work as one’s own original work
Example: a student might download an essay off the internet or find the work of another student and turn this work in as if it were his/her essay.
2. Passing off large sections of another person’s work as one’s own original work
Example: a student might cut and paste whole paragraphs from another person’s work, or use a translation site to create whole paragraphs that are not the work of the student.
3. Copying another student’s work
Example: copying another student’s homework; “sharing” homework.
4. Not properly citing data, statistics and ideas presented through paraphrasing
Example: a student might use statistics to support a claim and not cite the source of the statistics.
5. Not properly citing data, statistics and ideas presented verbatim (word for word)
Example: a student might write an essay about a scientific theory and copy the theory directly from a book or off the internet without citing the source from which s/he learned the theory.
6. Having someone other than the student make major revisions in the thoughts included in any work, especially if these revisions show a capability beyond that of the author.
Example: a student might ask a friend or parent to completely revise and make additions to his/her essay such that the student’s original thoughts and capabilities are altered.

CONSEQUENCES: Specific consequences for an act of plagiarism will be determined, following the policy, at a meeting to include some or all of the following: the student, teacher involved, advisor, Principal, and parents.

<p>A CATEGORY I OFFENSE involves the student using a few phrases or a few lines of text, images or graphics without proper citation. This also includes paraphrasing without proper documentation. Most of the student’s work is still his or her own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent notification • Teacher may adjust grade accordingly • Possible opportunity to resubmit the assignment with proper citations and documentation • Notation on disciplinary record
<p>A CATEGORY II OFFENSE is more serious, involving the student’s use of multiple sentences from someone else’s work, and/or the use of someone else’s images, graphics or ideas without the proper attribution, and/or repeated paraphrasing without proper attribution, and/or use of translation sites without proper attribution. While some of the work is the student’s own, it is clear that a substantial amount of the work presented is not the student’s own. This level can also include a student presenting work that is plagiarized to the extent that the work is essentially not his or her own. Examples of this include, but are not limited to essays downloaded from the Internet, the work of another student presented as the student’s own, and work done using translation sites for the entirety of an assignment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent conference • No credit for the assignment • One day suspension • Notation on disciplinary record <p>Repeated Category II offenses may result in the student failing the class and/or the grade.</p>

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

CREW PROGRAM

Each student at Four Rivers is a member of a Crew, comprised of 10 to 13 students and led by one of the full-time faculty members known as the student's advisor. Crews meet briefly each morning to start the day and once or twice a week for longer. The Crew Program serves to support the academic and character goals of the school in these ways:

- a) Academic: The advisor monitors the overall academic progress of the students in his or her Crew, working with other teachers and individual students to ensure the student is learning to his or her best. The advisor will convene parent/student/advisor conferences in the middle of the first and second semesters, and other meetings as needed.
- b) Character and Community: Through advisory meetings, Community Meetings and special activities, the Advisory Program works to foster growth in character and a positive school culture. Advisory activities will include rotating duties in clean-up after lunch or at the end of the day; goal-setting to achieve each student's "personal best"; exploring the school's character virtues and ways to strengthen the school community; team-building activities, celebrations and service projects; and leading Community Meetings.
- c) Parent Communication: The advisor is the primary contact for parents regarding general academic and behavior issues of students in his or her Crew. The advisor may call parents with a question or concern, and parents may call or e-mail the advisor as need arises. (Matters limited to a specific class may best be dealt directly between the parents, student and that teacher. Policy or school-wide questions should be addressed to the Principal.)

FIELDWORK

As an Expeditionary Learning school, Four Rivers extends student learning into the community through fieldwork and service projects. Parents will be informed when students are leaving the campus for fieldwork beyond immediate vicinity of the school. Students will typically travel in the school's 14-passenger bus, driven by one of the faculty or staff trained and approved to drive the bus. They may be accompanied by another staff member or parent driving a car with several students. Students will be expected to maintain good conduct and be positive ambassadors for Four Rivers throughout the fieldwork, including travel in the bus or car; and regular school guidelines remain in effect anytime students are off-campus.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

The faculty writes progress reports for each student at the end of each semester. These include brief course descriptions, grades indicating achievement on course standards, and narrative comments. The semester marking periods will end January 20, 2011 and June 14, 2011 or the last day of school. Student-led conferences with Advisors will be scheduled midway through the first and second semesters, on dates to be announced. Students, parents or teachers may request additional conferences as needed.

HOMEWORK

Families should assume homework will take up to two hours each day for students in grades 7 and 8, and up to three hours each day in high school. High school students can expect an average of 25-30 pages of reading per day. Families should help set aside this time and work with students to plan ahead if some days in the week are busier than others after school.

The school counts on family support of its homework expectations. Because homework at Four Rivers is a meaningful extension of classroom learning, a student who comes to school without homework completed is not only unprepared for the day personally but may also inhibit the progress of the class.

COMMON EXPECTATIONS FOR HOMEWORK OR CLASSWORK

1. Legible – appropriate font size, neatly lettered in pencil or blue or black pen
2. Heading – Upper left corner of paper
 - a. Name
 - b. Class/section

- c. Date
- d. Assignment
3. 8 ½ x 11 paper, unless otherwise specified
4. Clean, without tears, wrinkles or ragged edges
5. Neatly presented with proper margins and layout
6. Additional pages stapled to first page, with name and date in upper left

COMMON PRACTICES FOR HOMEWORK

1. Teachers post homework on white board in class.
2. Students copy homework into assignment books.
3. Assignments and handouts may be available for students who are absent – contact your student’s Advisor to make arrangements. Assignments may be picked up in the school office.
4. Homework is collected at the beginning of each class.
5. If a student fails to bring in homework or has a chronic pattern of missed work, teachers may call home to discuss the issue of missing work with parents. The student may also be required to attend extra help after school with the teacher. If a student continues not to do homework, that student’s advisor will set up a conference with the student and his or her parents and develop a clear plan for improvement.

PLANNERS

Success for a student requires preparation and organization. Each student should bring the necessary tools to each class daily, including his or her Planner. Four Rivers provides students with a special assignment Planner at the start of school. The student’s Planner is used daily in each class to record assignments and work due. It should be brought home each night, and we encourage parents to review it as needed with their students.

GRADING POLICIES

FOUR RIVERS GRADES

These are the grades that appear on Progress Reports and that are assigned for individual pieces of work.

Beginning (Bg)	The student's performance is rudimentary and just <i>beginning</i> to meet the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. Improvement is needed if the student expects to pass to the next grade.
Approaching (Ap)	The student's performance is <i>approaching</i> the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. It shows an improving level of quality but is not yet consistently satisfactory work.
Meeting (Mt)	The student's performance is <i>meeting</i> the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. It shows good quality and is fully satisfactory.
Exceeding (Ex)	The student's performance is <i>exceeding</i> the standards of grade-level work at Four Rivers. It shows effort and accomplishment well beyond what was required for meeting the standard.
Work Not Accomplished (WNA)	The student's performance has either not been turned in or is of such poor quality that it is not acceptable.
Incomplete (INC)	The student's performance is <i>incomplete</i> at the time of this progress report. It needs to be completed within a specified amount of time, or else the grade will become WNA.
Not Applicable (NA)	This indicates an area of the program that has not yet been introduced to the students.

It takes some work to help new students and parents understand this grading system. This system cannot just be compared to a traditional letter grade based system -- Beginning work is not like a "D" and Exceeding work is not like an "A". In fact, Meeting is more like an "A" and exceeding literally means that you did work that went beyond what was required for an "A". In this system, the goal is to have all students reach Meeting level.

There will be a meeting for parents on Grading in the fall – date and time to be announced.

PASSING and MAKING UP STANDARDS OR CREDITS

1. To pass a course, a student must pass all standards for that course. Ap+ is passing.
2. Students in Div I who do not pass all of their standards must make up those standards during the year or during the summer in order to move on to the next grade.
3. In Division II and III, students who do not pass all standards may earn partial credit for the course and will have to make up all credits they missed.
4. Students in Div II and Div III must make up credits when they fail a course according the school's PROMOTION POLICIES.
5. Students in Div II and III may make up credits through approved summer school or on-line courses, and through Independent Studies in some cases.
6. Students in Div II have one wild card to make up one standard of one course in one term.
7. In Div II and Div III, standards grades in each course are combined into one final grade that will go on transcripts.

COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to complete all assignments. Some are for practice. Some are first attempts that will have to be revised. And some receive final grades that indicate how well students have met specific learning targets. Completing all assignments helps determine HOWL grades. Certain daily assignments may also contribute directly to standards grades.

REVISION

We want to encourage revision while holding students accountable for putting effort into assignments and meeting deadlines. These policies support that dual goal:

1. Turn in work on time: An assignment not turned in on time can't be revised, unless the teacher grants an extension.
2. Good faith effort: Students need to demonstrate good faith effort on their first drafts and subsequent drafts in order to qualify for revision. Good faith effort means that the student made a serious attempt to complete all parts of the assignment, as determined by the teacher.
3. Teacher discretion: Teachers assign deadlines for work and they let students know up front which assignments are open for revision, what the expectations for revision are, and what the deadline for the revision period will be. Teachers may accept late work under reasonable circumstances.

MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES

Given that the purpose of our assessments are to help students learn important skills and knowledge, we try to offer them multiple opportunities to meet our standards. This might mean any of the following:

1. Students receive feedback through peer review or critique of ongoing assignments before the final draft is completed.
2. Students revise work from the teacher's assessment and feedback.
3. Provide a second opportunity to take a test or assign students to somehow show they understand what they did wrong the first time.
4. Create multiple assessments through which students can show they can meet a standard.

CAPTURING BEST WORK

Teachers determine a student's grade for an academic standard from more than one opportunity but not necessarily from all assignments. There are different approaches for looking at a student's best work; that is, evidence (demonstrated more than once) of the fullest extent of that student's learning. Capturing a student's best work might be done by any of the following approaches (there may be others):

1. More than one grade at Ap+ or better on a standard, therefore passing that standard as long as a minimum number of assignments have been completed.
2. Use weighted averaging to calculate performance on a standard. At the end of the term, the teacher looks over the whole term how much they learned.
3. Count all assignments for completion, but grade only major assessments. Take only the best performances or drop the lowest grade and combine those grades within the standard.
4. Give feedback -- but no grade yet -- on assignments leading to an assessment, test or culminating assignment. Grade only the final assessments, tests or assignments.

HABITS OF WORK AND LEARNING (HOWLS)

Students receive HOWL grades for standards related to participation, preparation, and organization. HOWL grades show whether or not students are stepping up and taking responsibility for their assignments, their classwork, and their learning. Our aim is to encourage students to work hard, give their best effort, and engage as fully as possible in their learning.

1. HOWLs grades may appear on our High School transcripts.
2. Good HOWLs allow a student to earn Honors or High Honors.
3. Students who are not passing their HOWLs or who are passing their HOWLs but not passing all of the standards are strongly encouraged to attend after-school help sessions.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR SPORTS

We follow the rules and guidelines of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, of which Four Rivers is a member.

1. Students who are passing four out of five core academic classes as of their last report card are eligible to participate in sports. A student failing more than one core class will be ineligible.

2. Eligibility is determined by the prior Progress Report. A student may regain eligibility with the next Progress Report or by permission of the Division Team. Students in Division I may become eligible through a week to week plan.
3. Individual coaches may determine that an ineligible student can practice, but that student must attend after school help before they practice and they may not play in games.
4. The consequence of ineligible students playing in a game is forfeit of that game.

ACADEMIC HONORS AND HIGH HONORS

These designations are determined at the end (of each term/of the year).

To achieve Honors for the term in a course, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Achieve Mt- or above in every academic standard for that course;
2. Achieve Mt+ or above in the majority (more than half) of the academic standards for the course;
3. Achieve Ap+ or above in every HOWL standard for the course.

To achieve High Honors for the term in a course, a student must meet each of the following criteria:

1. Achieve Mt+ or above in every academic standard for the course; and
2. Achieve Mt- or above in every HOWL standard for the course.

Graduation with Honors or High Honors is determined using the same criteria looking at grades earned subject by subject through Division III courses.

PROMOTION POLICY

These policies describe what is required to move forward to the next grade. Every student's situation is somewhat different so final decisions are made on a case by case basis with the Principal.

Grade Levels	Guidelines for Promotion	Recovery Options
7 th to 8 th	<u>Pass all standards in core classes.</u> No more than 1/3 of standards may be made up through Summer Tutoring.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Standards that are repeated the next semester may be made up in the following semester. Standards make-up through Wednesday Help. Standards make-up through Summer Tutoring.
8 th to 9 th	<u>Pass all standards for Passage.</u> No more than 1/3 of standards may be made up through Summer Tutoring.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Standards that are repeated the next semester may be made up in the following semester. Standards make-up through Wednesday Help. Standards make-up through Summer Tutoring.
9 th to 10 th	<u>Earn credits in 2/3 of all core classes.</u> No more than 4 credits can be earned through summer school. Remaining credits (no more than 6) must be completed by the end of 10 th grade.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> For 1 course 1 semester where short 1 standard, standard make-up through Wednesday Help or Summer Tutoring. Credit make-up through Summer School. Credit make-up through online courses.
10 th to 11 th	<u>Earn all credits for Passage.</u> No more than 4 credits can be earned through summer school. If a student is within 2 credits of passing all credits, he or she may move on to the next grade.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> For 1 course 1 semester where short 1 standard, the standard can be made up by completing make up work. Credit make-up through Summer School or online courses.
11 th to 12 th	<u>Earn credits in 2/3 of all core classes.</u> No more than 4 credits can be earned through summer school. Remaining credits must be completed by the end of 12 th grade.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Credit make-up through Summer School, online courses, or Individual Learning Opportunities.
Graduation	<u>Earn all credits for Graduation.</u> Students may participate in graduation if they are no more than 2 credits short.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Credit make-up through Summer School, online courses, or Individual Learning Opportunities.

- Summer deadline for completion of work or credits is August 15th. Records must be submitted to the Principal.
- Students in Passage years must meet all requirements (within 2 credits for entering Div III or participating in Graduation) before moving to the next Division.
- If a student fails to meet all specific requirements, that student may be promoted through an appeal with the agreement of the student's academic team and a precise Student Success Plan. A student's academic team includes current teachers, the next year's teachers, and the Principal.

GRADUATION POLICY

Graduation from Four Rivers marks an end and a beginning. It is the moment when students complete their learning under our guidance and it's when they head off towards the world of college, work, and citizenship. These are the requirements and policies for graduation from Four Rivers.

PART 1: TO DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS LEARNED, COMPLETE ALL CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

1. The CREDIT WORKSHEET lists the Board approved specific requirements for graduation.
2. Wellness: current Seniors must have earned 3 credits junior year or been exempted for sports. Current Juniors must complete the Independent Wellness requirement (more info to follow).
3. Residency: Eleventh graders must take at least four of their core academic courses each trimester at four rivers, allowing them to take 1 or 2 courses outside four rivers. Twelfth graders must take at least two of their courses each trimester at four rivers. There is an exception for accredited academic programs away from four rivers.
4. Students in Division III may earn credits towards graduation in the following ways:
 - a. **Four Rivers courses**
 - b. **Independent Studies** -- Independent studies must follow the format and criteria described in the Independent Study Contract, to be approved by the Assistant Principal.
 - c. **Accredited Classes and Programs** (ie GCC or online courses or other established, formal programs through other institutions) – This is an option for those students who want to pursue college-level work, earn additional credit, or need to make up credit deficiencies to ensure timely graduation. Students may not replace a course that is already offered at Four Rivers. The Principal determines how much credit will transfer to Four Rivers.
 - d. **Internships**: Learning through the world of work -- Students may earn elective credit for internships or other work outside of school that is related to academic subject matter. For example, a student might volunteer as an assistant in a pre-school, have an internship in a machine shop, or work as a volunteer in the local fire department. Students who wish to earn credit must complete an Internship Contract, to be approved by the Assistant Principal.
 - e. **Alternative Tribs** -- Students involved in classes or activities out of school that focus on the arts, technology or nature may replace Four Rivers Trib classes. Students must complete an Alternative Tribs Contract, to be approved by the Assistant Principal.
5. Approval Deadlines: Students who want to apply for Independent Studies, Internships, or other classes during semester 1 of Junior or Senior year must have approval from Assistant Principal in place by August 15. For semester 2, the deadline is January 1.
6. Making up credits: students in Div II and III do not have to make up the exact standards they missed. They have to make up the credit in the subject area – a student may make up science credits with a different science course.
7. Junior Internships may be completed during the summer before Junior year with permission from the Assistant Principal by June 15.
8. Early Graduation: Students wanting to graduate early must submit an Early Graduation Plan to the Principal by June 15 of sophomore year. Specific milestones will need to be met along the way in order to progress toward an earlier graduation.
9. Transition plans developed as part of IEP plans will be used to guide academic planning and the inclusion of credit-worthy alternatives to coursework.
10. Special Permissions: Students may apply to the Principal for exceptions to these policies on a case by case basis.

PART 2: TO DEMONSTRATE SUCCESS WITH INDEPENDENT INQUIRY, COMPLETE JUNIOR INTERNSHIP/PROJECT AND SENIOR EXPEDITION

The Junior Internship/Project has three purposes: to help prepare students for the independent work required for Senior Expeditions; to provide students with an opportunity to design a project that springs from their passions or interests; and to support students as they begin the process of thinking about and preparing for the college application process. The Junior Project begins in the fall, when students identify one or more fields they are interested in exploring. Once students have identified potential internship sites, they go through the steps necessary to set up their internships: make introductory phone calls to potential mentors, set up interviews, and complete internship agreements. Internships take place during a week usually in March, in place of intensives. Students complete a brief, focused research project related to the field they have selected for internships. Students include the resulting research paper and a visual display in their final Junior Project presentations at Expo Night in the spring.

Senior Expedition – described fully in the SENIOR EXPEDITION GUIDE – is the culmination of our program. It involves creating a high quality product and making a public presentation. It is designed by the student in conjunction with an advisor and other Four Rivers faculty, and is structured as a learning expedition, with essential questions, fieldwork, specific projects/work named, and the final product. The senior expedition is intended to meet the requirement that a learning expedition address a real-world problem, have an authentic audience and result in a product that is of use in the world beyond the school. The working model is that students plan their senior expedition in the beginning of the year: choose a topic, do the research and writing of the expedition plan, identify and enlist experts to learn from, and set up of field work. Towards the middle of the year, students do the work; and towards the end of the year, students create the final products presentation and present what they've learned.

PART 3: TO DEMONSTRATE REFLECTION AND SELF KNOWLEDGE, COMPLETE A GRADUATION PORTFOLIO

As with other passages at the end of Division I and Division II, completing Division III involves the most important passage of all – a demonstration of readiness to graduate.

To complete the Graduation Portfolio, students follow the same process and requirements as the regular portfolio process, plus two additional components:

1. The Post Four Rivers Plan
2. Documentation of Service: Students in 11th and 12th grade are required to complete and document 20 hours of independent service work both years.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS		CURRENT CREDITS EARNED	
English 4 years	24 credits	English 9	
		English 10	
		Div III English Courses	
		Div III English Courses	
Math 3 years	18 credits	IMP 1	
		IMP 2	
		IMP 3 or approved alternative	
		Elective Level IV IMP or approved alternative in 12th	
History 4 years	24 credits	US History 1	
		US History 2	
		Div III History/Government Courses	
		Div III History/Government Courses	
Science 4 years	24 credits	Environmental Science 9 th	
		Biology 10 th	
		Div III Science Courses (Physics, Chem, Env Sci)	
		Div III Science Courses (Physics, Chem, Env Sci)	
World Language 2 years	12 credits	Spanish 1 or Spanish 2	
		Spanish 2 -- Proficiency at 2 nd year level (unless excused) or Spanish 3	
PE/Wellness	6 credits	9 th Grade PE/Wellness (1 credit/semester)	
		10 th Grade PE/Wellness (1 credit/semester)	
		Div III PE/Wellness (1/2 credit/semester)	
Tribs Must take all 4 in Div II, but may specialize in Div III. (1 credit/semester)	8 credits	Nature	
		Music	
		Art	
		Technology	
Crew Junior Seminar Senior Seminar	4 credits	9 th Grade Crew and Portfolio (1 credit)	
		10 th Grade Crew and Passage (1 credit)	
		Junior Crew and Portfolio (1 credit)	
		Senior Crew and Graduation Portfolio (1 credit)	
Junior Int	1 credit	11 th grade internship in workplace with mentor	
Senior Ex	3 credits	12 th grade student-designed project	
Service	2 credits	11 th Grade (20 hrs, 1 credit)	
		12 th Grade (20 hrs, 1 credit)	
Total 126			

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Every Four Rivers student is expected to come to school on time and ready to learn. **Parents are expected to call the school by 8:30 am if their child will not be attending school that day (#413-775-4577).** Whenever possible, earlier written notification is requested. If a student is not in his or her classroom and the school has not been notified, the parent will be called at home or work by Ms. Wood.

1. This year the school will no longer be tracking excused and unexcused absences. A day missed is a day missed.
2. Students who miss more than 10 days in a semester might not receive credit for the course.
3. Warning letters are sent home when a student has missed 7 days in a semester; the student and his or her parents will be required to meet with the Principal unless exempted.
4. In cases of extended or chronic absence due to illness, medical documentation may be requested.
5. Should a student be absent for 10 consecutive days and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his or her absences, that student will be reported as un-enrolled and will lose his or her place at Four Rivers.
6. Students are responsible for making up all worked and getting all notes missed because of family vacations while school is in session. Teachers might be able to provide assignments ahead of time, but are not expected to.

A student is considered *tardy* when he or she arrives late to the morning meeting at 8:00 am. Five days tardy without an acceptable excuse will constitute one day of absence. If the parent or driver is responsible for the lateness, he or she must write a note of explanation and have the student bring it to the school office that day.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS PERTAINING TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School Attendance: Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, each school may have its own attendance policy with which parents and guardians should be familiar.

What is a CHINS? A “CHINS” (Child in Need of Services) petition may be filed in court by a school if a child between the ages of six and sixteen persistently and willfully fails to attend school or persistently violates lawful and reasonable regulations of her or his school. The Court’s authority pursuant to a CHINS petition includes the power to place the child in the custody of the state agency known as the Department of Social Services.

What is a 51A? A “51A” is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the state Department of Social Services. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

Parental Responsibility: Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions within any six month period, the school may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent or guardian. It is a crime to induce or attempt to induce a minor to miss school, or harbor a minor who should be in school.

~from 05-06 Project Alliance, Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

It is the policy of Four Rivers Charter Schools to utilize verbal and non-verbal behavior management techniques prior to utilizing physical intervention whenever possible. Physical Restraints are only used when needed to

protect a student or member of the school community from serious harm. When utilizing a physical restraint, staff will use the least restrictive means to protect the student from self or others. Physical Restraints are used in situations when less restrictive alternatives have failed and safety is of concern. Nothing in the DOE regulation or in Four Rivers School policy and procedure would preclude any teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students other staff or themselves from assault or serious physical harm. Four Rivers Charter Public School requires staff to be familiar with the School policy and provides training to staff as required by DOE regulation.

Four Rivers Charter Public School personnel shall use physical restraint for the following reasons:

- When needed to protect a student and/or staff member of the school community from serious physical harm.
- To prevent or minimize any harm to the student.
- No other intervention has been or is likely to be effective in averting danger.

SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION POLICY (EXCERPTED)

In order to prevent disruption of school operations, ensure a productive and secure environment and create an environment conducive to teaching and learning, the school has established the following rules governing the solicitation of individuals and the distribution of materials on Four Rivers Charter Public School (“School”) property.

The solicitation, distribution of literature, or trespassing by non-employees is prohibited on School property. It is the policy of the School to treat all of its property as a non-public forum. Non-School-sponsored events or announcements may be posted for a limited time in a publicly visible bulletin board designated for that purpose only if it is determined by the Principal that the requested posting is of general interest and value to the School community.

USE OF THE SCHOOL MAIL SYSTEM

Use of the School’s mail system is reserved for School related business and internal communications between employees. Use of the School internal mail and e-mail system by non-employees is prohibited.

POLICY ON STUDENT FEES

Student fees are established for:

- (a) Academic Activities such as academic Intensives options that have per-person costs (e.g. admission tickets to museums or plays, specialized sports clubs, etc.), or national college entrance tests, if the test is not required of all students at Four Rivers and
- (b) Voluntary Activities such as after-school sports, class-, club-, or Family Council-sponsored recreational activities, yearbooks, or dances.

Four Rivers Charter Public School will provide financial support if requested by a student or parent/guardian, for Eligible Academic Activities and selective Voluntary Activities. Eligible Voluntary and Academic Activities will include a note that a “Need-Based Fee Waiver is available”. Need-Based Fee waivers or reductions are available if a family qualifies under the Free and Reduced Lunch program financial guidelines. Confidential forms are available through the School Secretary, to be filled out once a year to determine eligibility. If a family qualifies for the Free lunch program, the total fee is waived. If the family qualifies for “Reduced” cost lunches, then 35% of the fee must be paid.

Four Rivers Charter Public School depends on adequate funding to maintain this Need-Based Fee Waiver program and reserves the right to add or remove activities or alter the program as circumstances dictate.

STUDENT DRIVING AND PARKING POLICY

Driving to Four Rivers is a privilege, holding with it the responsibility of following the school’s driving regulations. An application for driving privileges may be obtained from Ms. Taylor, Administrative Coordinator. It must be completed, signed and submitted to the school along with a photocopy of the student’s drivers license and a copy of a current certificate of insurance (or binder) showing the student as a named insured driver and the limits of coverage, and a copy of same any time it is changed. **Students may drive to school only after the application has been signed (approved) by Ms. Taylor, Administrative Coordinator.** Parking permits may be restricted in number due limited space. Behavior in cars on campus should at all times comply with student behavior guidelines as outlined in previous pages of this Handbook.

Four Rivers Charter Public School cannot assume any responsibility for damage done to a vehicle while on school grounds. Furthermore, the school requires that the student driver submit to the school a copy of a current certificate of insurance (or binder) showing the student as a named insured and the limits of coverage, and a copy of same any time it is changed.

All drivers are subject to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Motor Vehicles. Violators of state law will be reported to the local authorities.

The purpose of the permission forms and policies below is to keep all of our students safe. These forms cover on school parking permission, students driving students, and parent volunteer driving. During the course of the school year, there will be some activities Four Rivers Charter Public School may **not** be providing transportation for – these forms must be completed well in advance of such events.

STUDENT DRIVER AGREEMENT

Students must initial their understanding of all items:

All drivers are subject to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Motor Vehicles. Violators of state law will be reported to the local authorities.

Four Rivers Charter Public School cannot assume any responsibility for damage done to a vehicle while on school grounds. Furthermore, the school requires the student driver submit to the school a copy of a current certificate of insurance (or binder) showing the student as a named insured and the limits of coverage, and a copy of same any time it is changed.

_____ I may not drive other students except the person(s) noted in the Student Driver Release.

- _____ Other students may not ride in my vehicle without written permission from their parent. Signed permission must arrive at the school office as soon as the student arrives at school in the morning.
- _____ I must register my car with Ms. Taylor, Administrative Coordinator, at the start of each school year and receive written permission/parking permit in order to park on school grounds. I must re-apply each year. Unauthorized vehicles parked at school may be towed.
- _____ Only the student registered with the school may drive the vehicle.
- _____ I may park only in designated parking area. Motorcycles must park alongside the Blue Barn.
- _____ I may not hang out at my car in the morning or afternoon or return to it during the school day, unless for a pre-approved field trip, internship, GCC Class or other pre-approved activity.
- _____ I must abide by a speed limit of 10 mph while on school property,
- _____ I must yield to pedestrians and school buses.
- _____ I may not pass any moving vehicle on school property.
- _____ I must drive in a mature manner and stay on the roadways.
- _____ I must stay off school grounds after being excused, unless attending a co-curricular activity or school social function.
- _____ I am expected to be on time to school. Tardiness may result in suspension of parking privileges.
- _____ If I violate any of the above regulations, or act in ways that could result in the harm of others or the property of others, I shall be subject to the following penalties:
 - a. 10-day loss of motor vehicle privileges for the first offense
 - b. 20-day loss for the second offense
 - c. loss of privileges for the remainder of the year for the third offense
- _____ If I lose driving privileges, I may not drive my car or others' cars on campus.

Any case not specifically outlined in the above regulations will be handled at the discretion of the administration.

STUDENT DRIVER RELEASE

Parents must sign off on the following permissions for their student to be able to drive at school:

- My student has permission to drive his/her privately operated vehicle to and from school.

_____ (Parent Signature) _____ (Date)

- My student has provided all appropriate insurance and license information to the School and has been granted a parking permit for the 2010-11 school year.

_____ (Parent Signature) _____ (Date)

- My student has permission to drive his/her privately operated vehicle on school field trips and sporting events.

_____ (Parent Signature) _____ (Date)

- My student has permission to drive the following students in his/her privately operated vehicle the following students:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PERMISSION TO BE A PASSENGER

Carpooling Transportation Liability Release Agreement

Your permission below instructs Four Rivers Charter Public School (the “School”), that your child is released from School to drive with private drivers on field trips and acknowledges your understanding that the School and its instructors or agents are not liable for this action, that no student, parent or private driver is sponsored by the School, or a part of any School activity, and that the School cannot check or supervise each student’s or driver’s driving record or habits. Signature also indicates your assurance that your child has valid medical and accident insurance. Signature acknowledges that this form is valid as long as your child is in attendance at the School or until the School agrees otherwise in writing. No student is to be driven without personally being released by a School administrator and the teacher in charge; unless released, no student is to be outside the immediate and present direction of a teacher at any time. Without this release the student who goes in a private car is truant.

Parent/Guardian Check All that Apply:

- My child may be released from supervision to drive in a car driven by a teacher or parent
- My child may be released from supervision to drive in student cars (e.g., on field trips)
- My child may drive only with the following drivers (fill in names):

- My child may not leave the School unless I drive, and my child understands this.

PARENT VOLUNTEER DRIVER INFORMATION

I am fully aware my automobile insurance coverage is primary for myself and all passengers I transport to and from school activities. Signature also indicates my assurance that my child and I have valid automobile insurance policy: bodily injury, \$100,000/\$300,000 per accident; Property Damage, \$50,000 per accident; Medical Payment \$2000 per accident.

CONSEQUENCES

Any violations of the above regulations, or actions that could result in the harm of others or the property of others, shall be subject to the following penalties:

- 10-day loss of motor vehicle privileges for the first offense
- 20-day loss for the second offense
- loss of privileges for the remainder of the year for the third offense

Students who lose driving privileges may not drive their car or others’ cars on campus. Any case not specifically outlined in the above regulations will be handled at the discretion of the administration.

NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Four Rivers Charter Public School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, Four Rivers Charter Public School may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with Four Rivers Charter Public School’s procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Four Rivers Charter Public School to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- An annual yearbook
- Academic and other school recognition of achievement
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets and reporting of game results
- A playbill, showing your student’s role in a drama production

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, colleges and universities that wish to mail information to your child, and companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs- like Four Rivers Charter Public School) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without their prior written consent. ¹

If you do not want Four Rivers Charter Public School to disclose some or all of the directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the school in writing by October 15, 2010. You may restrict any of the directory information categories listed below. Your restriction will cover any request for that category, unless specific permission is granted by you as requests occur. Please remember that restrictions will create an additional burden on both the school and on you for notification and for returning written consents.

Four Rivers Charter Public School has designated the following categories as directory information:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| -Student’s name | -Participation in officially recognized activities and sports |
| -Address | -Recognition, honors, and awards received |
| -Telephone listing | -Dates of attendance |
| -Grade level | |
| -Age | |

HOMELESS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Four Rivers Charter Public School is open to all students and families in Franklin County and is committed to serving the needs of all our students. The school has specific policies addressing the needs, concerns and rights of homeless students, copies of which are available in the School Office. The homeless education liaison is Andrew Stenson, Director of Student Services, and he may be reached through the School Office for questions or support. Should a Four Rivers student become or be identified as homeless, the homeless education liaison will put the student and his/her family in touch with local and state agencies that provide assistance. He will also make available to that student the same counseling and family support that is available to all students at Four Rivers.

AGE OF MAJORITY STATUS

Any student reaching the age of 18 may apply for age majority status. Once a student turns 18 they are able to declare themselves independent; when a student reaches the age of 18 it is his or her decision. Age of majority, in effect, allows the student to be recognized by the school as an adult so that s/he may be accorded the privileges of an adult. However, the student must have any dismissals, tardies, and absences approved by the administration. A student with age majority must call her/himself out sick in accordance with the Student Handbook procedures. Age majority status may be revoked if the student abuses this right. The administration reserves the right to refuse or withdraw any majority requests if they feel it is in the best interest of the student. The school reserves the right to inform the parent/guardian of the use of age majority of the students for each tardy, dismissal and or absence.

BEFORE SCHOOL PROCEDURES

The school building opens for students at 7:30 a.m. **Students who arrive at school earlier than 7:30 must have made previous arrangements to do so with Ms. Wood in the main office.** All students wait in the Common Room until 7:50 when they are allowed to head to class, with the following exceptions:

1. Seniors may gather in room 103.
2. Students who already have appointments scheduled with particular staff members or are in a school activity meeting before school.

¹

3. NO STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED UPSTAIRS ON THE SECOND FLOOR OR IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL BEFORE 7:50.

AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES

All students not picked up when school ends at 3:05 (1:30 on Wednesdays) are expected to be in a supervised after school program: extra help from a teacher; sports; clubs; after school care/homework club. Students are not allowed to wait on school grounds if they are not part of a supervised program – that includes waiting for siblings or car pool members. If you have an emergency and cannot pick up your student or car pool, please call Ms. Wood in the main office to make arrangements for supervision of your child.

- a. Students whose rides don't come by 3:15 are swept to the front of the farmhouse or into the farmhouse to wait. Rides should pick up from the U in front of the farmhouse.
- b. This year the school will offer a supervised fee based after school care program Homework Club. Homework Club will operate in the library and porch of the Farmhouse on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 3:15 to 5:15.
- c. There is a fee of \$5/hour, \$3/hour for families that qualify for reduced lunch, and \$2/hour for families that qualify for free lunch.
- d. Students picked up later than 5:20 might not be allowed to continue participating.
- e. All core teachers offer an hour of extra help one afternoon a week. Students report to that room by 3:15 and remain there until 4:15. Pickup is from the U in front of the Farmhouse. Students who are not picked up at 4:15 are expected to go to Homework Club -- families will be charged.
- f. Teachers still offer extra help in their classrooms one day a week from 3:15-4:15. Students are expected to go from there to Homework Club if getting picked up after 4:15.
- g. Students whose rides don't come by 3:30 on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays must report to Homework Club and get picked up from there. Families will be charged.
- h. On Wednesdays and Fridays, there is no Homework Club or extra help, so families need to make sure they have plans for pick up by 1:45 on Wednesdays and 3:15 on Fridays.

LATECOMERS AND VISITORS

Students arriving late must check in at the Office. Parents and other visitors arriving during the day must sign in at the office and pick up a visitor badge which must be displayed while they are on campus. Visitors must return to the office to sign out before departing campus. Any student leaving before regular dismissal time must meet their parent in the main office in the Farmhouse Ell and be signed out by the parent, or someone authorized by the parent. Please DO NOT pick up students in the parking lot – meet your student in the school office. The school expects advance notice in writing when a student plans to leave school for an appointment or other reason.

CONTACTING OR TELEPHONING YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

The School strives to keep the school day free of interruptions and distractions, therefore we request Parents not contact their student at school unless for an urgent matter, and then only make contact by calling the school office. Students are instructed to keep electronic devices, including cell phones or any texting devices, turned off and stowed out of sight until the school day is over. We hope that parents will respect this rule and not telephone or text their student during the school day, and remind them to keep cell phones turned off and stowed out of sight.

Students may call home if necessary by using the phone available in the school office during lunch or after school. We ask that parents do their best to have plans in place for their student and avoid last minute phone calls to the school.

If an urgent matter arises, please call Ms. Wood in the school office.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Four Rivers will follow the lead of the Greenfield Public Schools in determining when school should be cancelled, delayed or dismissed early due to harsh weather conditions. Information about cancellation or delayed opening will also be recorded as early as possible on the school's telephone, 775-4577. The school uses an automated calling system to notify families of cancellations due to weather or other emergencies. Information is also listed on local radio and TV stations. When Greenfield has not cancelled or delayed opening, but weather in

other parts of Franklin County presents dangerous driving conditions, parents should use their own discretion about sending their students to school.

LUNCH AND SNACK

Lunches are available each day during the designated lunch period (except on some days with 12:30 pm dismissal). Students purchasing the prepared lunch from the menu are expected to keep current with payments. Parents may call Ms. Wood in the office to discuss payment options to suit their needs. Lunch bills are updated on Focus on the 1st and 15th of each month beginning September 15, 2010. Payments are to be dropped off at the School Office. Students may also bring their own lunches, which should be stored in their lockers (no refrigeration is available). Lunch will take place in the Common Room in the High School. We encourage each student to bring a healthy snack for breaks.

TEXTBOOKS

Texts and other books are issued to students, and these will be an important -- but not the only -- resource for learning. They remain school property and must be well cared for throughout the year. STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO COVER ALL TEXTBOOKS. Parents will be charged a fee for lost or damaged books belonging to Four Rivers.

LOCKERS

Every student is assigned a locker. Although lockers are school property, each one is the responsibility of the student assigned to use it, and they should not be marked, scarred or damaged in any way, nor decorated inappropriately. Only the student assigned to the locker may have access to it. Students may not take things from, or put things in, another student's locker. We want everyone's personal belongings to be safe and respected.

PERSONAL LAPTOPS AND OTHER NETWORK DEVICES

Personal laptops and other devices that will connect through the school's network must be registered with the Technology office in order to be used on campus. The school will record the devices unique network address, and will issue a specific Internet address that students can use while at the school. Students are welcome to bring their own computer devices to school provided they are used in ways which are consistent with the above guidelines; that is, we expect personal laptops to be used only for school related activities.

The school expects all students to adhere to an *Acceptable Use Policy*, a copy of which will be sent home as school begins. Students are required to sign the *Acceptable Use Policy* at their advisor meetings prior to being allowed access to the internet.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET AND SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY

As a school committed in its themes to exploring the best applications of technology, Four Rivers emphasizes that students must be respectful and responsible in all use of computers, the internet and other information technology at the school. Websites, files and software that are not related to the educational purposes of Four Rivers may not be opened, used or installed on any of the school's computers. All technology users must agree to respect the files and equipment of other members of the school community, and to treat the school's technology with care so as not to modify or damage it (including having no food or drink near computers). Misuse of the equipment and unauthorized or inappropriate use of the internet will mean the student loses access to the school's computers for a period of time, and may result in more severe consequences.

COLLEGE COURSES

Students in Division III (11th & 12th) may take a limited number of classes at Greenfield Community College (GCC) with the approval of the school. Eleventh and twelfth graders hoping to take a GCC course should first speak with Ms. Durkee, Assistant Principal, to review the student's schedule and the most appropriate course selection.

COLLEGE & CAREER COUNSELING

The College Counseling Team includes Andy Stenson who works closely with Division II and III students in making and following through on their post-Four Rivers plans, including assembling and tracking their applications to college or other post-secondary institutions. Parents or students in younger grades may also address questions of college counseling to him. Administrative Coordinator, Leslie Taylor, handles transcripts, testing and other student records. They both are located in the Farmhouse and can be reached through the school main number as well as via email at: astenson@fourriverscharter.org and ltaylor@fourriverscharter.org.

News on Informational presentations such as *Applying to College* or *Applying for Financial Aid*, SAT and ACT deadlines, and area College Fairs, can be found on the School website, and in the monthly newsletter Currents.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

The School Counselor and Psychologist, Dr. William Fogel, is an important resource to support the social and emotional growth of our students. He is at the school Monday through Thursday, and he is available to any student or parent who requests time with him. To make an appointment, simply speak with him, call his voice mail (ext 210) or leave a message in the School Office.

SCHOOL NURSE

The School Nurse is present every day for four hours, from 10:00-2:00 pm, in the Health Office in the Farmhouse. She oversees school health records and medical recommendations, and cares for students who come to her during her hours. During other times, students who are not feeling well should report to the School Secretary, who will contact the student's parents if the condition merits their attention. Any student who has medication (including over-the-counter medications like Tylenol) must keep the medication in the Health Office along with the required permission forms signed by parents and/or medication order forms signed by their doctor. All medications are to be administered in the Health Office under the supervision of the School Nurse.

SPORTS PROGRAM

An elective after school Sports Program is offered in the Fall and Spring seasons, with Intramural Ultimate two days a week in the winter. A fee is charged to help reduce the cost of equipment and staffing. The fall sport is soccer, and the program will meet three or four afternoons per week for practices and games. The spring sport is Ultimate Frisbee. Basketball was not offered last year due to low participation and high expenses, but is under consideration for this year. Further details of the programs will be provided to students and parents by Terry Plotkin, the Athletic Director. Please note that students participating in games must be in good academic standing, and that a student who has been absent from school is not allowed to participate in sports or other after school activities that day. (*A student is considered absent if he/she attended school for less than ½ the day.*) Students must also provide evidence of a current (within the last 12 months) physical examination to the school nurse.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Four Rivers is fortunate in its school buildings and grounds, and we want to care for them with respect and gratitude. The school has a long-term, renewable lease with Four Rivers Educational Foundation, for the Farmhouse, the 7th and 8th grade classroom building called the Barn, and the High School building and the Blue Barn. The seven acre campus includes a full-sized soccer field west of the High School.

The Farmhouse, the front part of which was built around 1777, houses the Business Office, the Gardner Room (serving as a school library and meeting room), and a conference room downstairs. Students are not permitted upstairs in the Farmhouse unless accompanied by an adult. The Farmhouse Ell provides the main entrance to the school, with the School Office and the Principal's Office on either side of the entrance. At the north end of the Ell is our Project Room.

Students are not allowed to leave the school's grounds during school hours unless accompanied by an adult or with specific parent permission.

We ask that parents and visitors follow the posted directions for pick-up and parking, and we urge extra caution and patience during the busy pickup time in the afternoon.

FAMILY COUNCIL

The school invites all interested parents and guardians to join the Family Council, which meets monthly and offers ways for parents to be informed about and support the purposes, program and community of Four Rivers. Family Council activities include planning and overseeing non-academic school functions, from community pot-lucks to service projects on campus and organizing after-school activities, as well as offering assistance to the faculty for fieldwork, class projects, and other volunteer needs. The Family Council also sponsors programs to foster parent education and address ways to strengthen parent/child communication and understanding. At the monthly meetings the school Principal or other staff members report on the school's program and growth, and discuss questions of interest to the group. Meetings are held monthly -- check *Currents*, the monthly school newsletter, for the schedule. The email address for the Family Council is FamilyCouncil@fourriverscharter.org

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Special Education Parents Advisory Council (PAC) will meet at least three times each year to support parents and discuss issues of children with special education needs. The meetings are announced in the school newsletter, *Currents*, and are open to all.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS AND CORI CHECKS

Parent or guardian volunteers who may be with students in an unsupervised setting (such as driving students on fieldwork or working with a small group in a separate space at school) are now required to have passed a CORI check before such activities can be permitted. Please see the School Secretary for guidance in requesting a CORI check.

FAMILY COMMITMENT

All members of the Four Rivers Charter Public School community—teachers, students, parents, staff and trustees—have responsibilities to promote student learning and the growth of our school. This is a brief description of the essential commitments we ask from parents and guardians at the time of their application, and every parent now enrolled has signed this.

BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL LIFE

- Attend important meetings with your child and his or her advisor, including conferences, exhibitions, and portfolio presentations.
- Go over your child’s progress reports and other school communications together.
- Review with your child the school’s Family Handbook when it is distributed this summer.
- Contact your child’s advisor or the school Principal about issues that may affect your child’s learning and positive participation in the school.

HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP GOOD HOMEWORK HABITS AND MAKE SCHOOL A TOP PRIORITY

- Check that your child’s assignments are clear and homework is completed each night.
- Limit TV, video, telephone and on-line time which interfere with homework, and encourage your child to read at least one-half hour each night.
- Help your child to live a healthy lifestyle, with regular bedtimes and good nutrition.
- Ensure that your child arrives on time each day, and inform the school promptly of absences
- If your child is required to stay after to work with a teacher to make up late or incomplete work, arrange alternative transportation to support this consequence.

SUPPORT FOUR RIVERS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL CHARACTER VALUES AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- Show your child that you understand and support the school’s emphasis on character development and the Expeditionary Learning Design Principles.
- Promote and reinforce the school’s Code of Conduct.
- Work closely with faculty to support appropriate consequences for misconduct.
- Help promote a school community free of any form of substance abuse and work closely with the school when concerns may arise.

PARTICIPATE IN PARENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND VOLUNTEER IN SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL

- Take part in the school’s Family Council and the programs or projects it develops.
- Offer to volunteer your skills and time, as needed by the school and workable for you.
- Support the work we all need to do to build a strong school community, in the ELOB spirit of “We are crew, not passengers!”

FAMILY COUNCIL SAFE FAMILIES LETTER

Written by Family Council March 2006, reaffirmed May 2010.

The Family Council, with full support of the school administration and in keeping with the tradition of community, trust, and respect at Four Rivers Charter Public School, strongly encourages families to communicate with one another using the published School Phone List.

As our sons/daughters grow, it becomes more difficult to monitor all their activities. It is our hope that parents/guardians will feel comfortable calling each other to support/confirm appropriate supervision is provided while our son/daughters are not under our own supervision. Student plans are often fluid, flexible, and occasionally made without adult input. If your son/daughter is visiting, know that it's ok to call to be sure that a gathering or party will be actively supervised. Exposure to, and experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs is a difficult, challenging, and real fact of life in our culture.

Safety first.

The goal is to have a strong community of families that support each other to keep our students (sons/daughters) safe and healthy with the following guidelines in mind.

1. When other friends visit, it's important to let them know that the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other drugs will not be tolerated/allowed, and that parents will be called. **Safety first.**
2. Four Rivers Charter Public School hopes that parents will call and accept calls from other parents freely, without judgment. Be an open listener.
3. We encourage parents to let their son/daughters know that a call to a parent for a ride will always be responded to positively if they find themselves in a situation that is unsafe or uncomfortable. **Safety first, questions later.**
4. If your son/daughter is a passenger or driver of a car when there has been alcohol or drugs in use, they should always call a parent or other adult for a ride regardless of the hour of day or night. **Safety first, questions later.**

While these are just some suggestions about how to keep our sons/daughters safe, please have conversations with your sons/daughters about what to do before something happens. What are your family's expectations? Help them by guiding them to be best prepared in any situation. **Safety first!**

GLOSSARY OF FOUR RIVERS TERMINOLOGY

Buster and Vanna – our cute 14 passenger vans that look like a little bus.

Character Virtues – Respect, Responsibility, Courage, Compassion, Perseverance and Integrity; Qualities we hope to help our students develop, understand and embody. Our faculty of course models this as well.

Community Meeting – A meeting of two or more grade levels that happens once a week using the community meeting format (see community meeting section)

Crew – A group of 10-12 students with a faculty advisor. (see Advisory section)

Currents – Our monthly school newsletter (to which you will be expected to contribute – so plan to write a little blurb about your classroom happenings and take plenty of pictures because then you don't have to write as much!)

Division - A group of two grades. Division I = middle school grades 7 and 8, Division II = lower high school grades 9 and 10, Division III = upper high school grades 11 and 12.

Expo Night – an end-of-the-year event where each grade level shows off their best work for the year. (see Expo Night section)

Family Council - The Family Council is organized in coordination with the school administration, and Family Council activities include planning and overseeing non-academic school functions, from community pot-lucks to service projects on campus and organizing after-school activities, as well as offering assistance to the faculty for fieldwork, class projects, and other volunteer needs. The Family Council also sponsors programs to foster parent education and address ways to strengthen parent/child communication and understanding. At the monthly meetings the school Director or other staff members report on the school's program and growth, and discuss questions of interest to the group. Meetings are held monthly, on alternating second Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning Tuesday, Sept. 14. Check "Currents", the monthly school newsletter, for the schedule.

Farmhouse – the building that houses the administrative offices, meeting room, Gardner room and project room; so called because the original house and property were the Myers Farm.

Field Work - We do not call them "field trips" here because when we go out into the world, it is not just to have a look around or a guided tour, it is to go out to get our questions answered or collect data, or move a project forward. (We do occasionally schedule fun field trips, but our main focus is on field work).

Gardner Room – the Library, named for John and Carol Gardner, mentors and friends to several of the school's founders and benefactors to the school.

Homework Club – contrary to popular belief, this is not a euphemism for detention. Homework club is a place to get homework done. Some stay because their parents need to pick them up at a later time, some stay because it is a part of a school success plan worked out by parents and teachers, some stay for extra-help with teachers, and some stay to be able to work on homework with friends for support. It is held Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3:15-4:15.

Indoor Action- A big bubble in Bernardston that covers an indoor field house. Since we have no gymnasium, this has been the place where our kids are bussed for after school winter sports.

Morning Meeting – A meeting with the teachers and students of one grade level in the Middle School.

Passage Presentation – end-of-year student presentation of work and growth done every 2 years to pass from division to division.

Porch – Small glassed-in area adjacent to the library and connected to it by 2 doors. The porch is currently used for storage of large projects and often used by ski-club as a location for students to store equipment during the school day.

Portfolio – a neatly presented collection of drafted and revised student work and reflections that shows the best quality work that the student has achieved during a given year or division. A crucial part of assessment at Four Rivers.

Polaris Awards – Weekly awards presented at community meeting to students who demonstrate or embody one of the character virtues. (There is an expected method of presentation for which you will quickly get a feel; the story of the award is told carefully and clearly as to reveal all of the reasons for the award before revealing the name of the recipient(s))

Recess – a break from the academic day in the Middle School, supervised by faculty

Reflection – activities designed to help participants think about the quality of a process or product and what makes it so. If you ask any student at Four Rivers, we make them do this way too much... that is what we like to hear!

River Sections - Each grade in Div I and II is divided into classes which travel together for a trimester (these groups may or may not be re-arranged at the discretion of the grade-level teams and within the confines of the schedule). Because of our school name, we have named these class groups according to the 4 rivers. So far, it has been that the first grade in any division used Green and Millers while the second grade in a division uses Connecticut and Deerfield.

Scaffolding - steps taken to guide and support students through challenging assignments. Breaking down challenging or complex tasks into smaller more do-able steps.

Stepping Up – NOT “graduation” (that is reserved for seniors) but our last-day-of-school celebration of accomplishments and tradition of recognizing that students are moving to the next grade. During the ceremony students are called to the front one-by-one to turn in their portfolios to their teachers for the next year, be recognized for earning honors or distinction and have a few, brief words said about them by their current advisor.

Tributary class -- in keeping with our river theme, our “specials” (Nature, Technology, Music and Art) are called Tributaries, with the idea that integrated project or coordination between teachers means that these classes “feed into” the overall flow of a student’s academic experience in any given grade.

STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK

ADDENDUM 2010-2011

The following are additional, clarified, or revised sections to this year's handbook, approved by the Board of Trustees on November 8, 2010. The Board will review and approve the Student and Family Handbook every spring.

CLARIFICATION ON "THE ONE RULE" (page 7) This statement is not meant to diminish the positive values of our Character Virtues. Indeed, some of our greatest heroes caused problems for others around them and they did so for good reason. However, this statement is useful to us in our classrooms, hallways, and generally around school as a reminder about student behavior. In future handbooks, the one rule will appear with our behavioral expectations and not on the page with our Character Virtues.

CLARIFICATION ON COMPLAINT PROCEDURES (page 26) The timeframe for a response from the Board Chair should read "no later than 30 days from the receipt of the complaint."

APPEALS TO SUSPENSIONS or EXPULSIONS (page 10) To be consistent with the revised Complaint Procedure (page 26), families that disagree with a suspension or expulsion decision may submit a written appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees (not the full Board) within ten days.

INVESTIGATION TIMEFRAMES For investigations of alleged bullying, harassment, or possession of illegal substances, the Dean of Students will act as promptly as possible and at least within 5 school days of the complaint or concern. The 24 to 48 hour statement in the Bullying Prevention Policy (page 13) and the Harassment/Discrimination Prevention Policy (page 18) might be a goal but does not imply a different requirement.

CLARIFICATION ON PARENT NOTIFICATION (pages) For incidents of alleged bullying and harassment, the Dean of Students will notify the parents or guardians of the alleged bully and the victim (page 13). The Dean may interview any possible witnesses; parents of witnesses may be notified when it is appropriate and warranted. For incidents of alleged use or possession of illegal substances, the Dean of Students shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged perpetrator (page 23). The Dean may interview any possible witnesses; parents of witnesses may be notified when it is appropriate and warranted. Any of these interviews may take place without a parent or guardian present. Most will take place with a second adult present if possible.

CLARIFICATION ON POLICE INVOLVEMENT RELATED TO ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

While the police have told us verbally that they leave it up to the school to determine whether criminal charges should be pursued when students are found in possession or under the influence of illegal substances in school, they may make that determination themselves, especially if they've conducted a search. Technically the use of a dog team to sniff bags or lockers or classrooms is not a search. In order to clarify the role of police in relation to illegal substances at school, the school will pursue a formalized memorandum of understanding as is the practice in other school districts, with full review by school counsel. Pursuing this step is not a guarantee that an agreement will be reached. One last note – the reason this policy stands is that this practice allows teachers and administrators to focus on teaching and learning and supporting students, and leave the searching for possible illegal substance to the professionals.

STRUCTURED LEARNING TIME (Add to General School Policies, page 42)

Four Rivers ensures that our structured learning time is time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning, or assessments within the curriculum of core subjects and other subjects as defined in 603 CMR 27.02 (including physical education, required by M.G.L. c. 71, s. 3).

The school's structured learning time may include

- a. Directed study (activities directly related to a program of studies, with a teacher available to assist students) – which we call Academic Support and Challenge
- b. Independent study (a rigorous, individually designed program under the direction of a teacher, assigned a grade and credit), when approved and overseen through a process led by the Assistant

Principal

- c. Technology-assisted learning, when approved and overseen through a process led by the Assistant Principal
- d. Presentations by persons other than teachers, school-to-work programs, and statewide student performance assessments.
- e. Courses offered through other institutions, including Greenfield Community College and Virtual High School.

The Assistant Principal oversees all programs of independent study, online learning, or learning through the world of work. The Assistant Principal approves, oversees, and guides the assessment and documentation of all such programs.

The school ensures that its structured learning time does not include time at lunch, passing between classes, in morning crew, at recess, in non-directed study periods (study halls), participating in optional school programs, or receiving school services such as health screening, speech, or physical and occupational therapy, except where those services are prescribed by a student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

The hours spent in any type of structured learning time are verified by the school. Where the school counts independent study or a school-to-work program as structured learning time, it has guidelines that explain clearly how hours spent by students are verified.

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR PREGNANT STUDENTS (Add to General School Policies, page 42)

If a student at Four Rivers becomes pregnant, that student is allowed to participate in all programs and services available to all other students

Pregnant students are permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave.

The school does not require a pregnant student to obtain the certification of a physician that the student is physically and emotionally able to continue in school unless it requires such certification for all students for other physical or emotional conditions requiring the attention of a physician.

SCHOOL INFORMATION IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (Add to General School Policies, page 42)

Four Rivers seeks to be accessible by all families in Franklin County and beyond, which at times includes families who speak a language other than English.

At present, only our school brochure has been translated into Spanish. Under the school's new Recruitment and Retention Plan, these brochures will be distributed to area community organizations that might serve a Spanish-speaking population.

The school will seek to provide oral translation for any parent who might need that service either to learn about the school or to participate in conferences or school events.

ANTI-HAZING POLICY

(Based on MGL Ch. 269, sections 17-19)

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined below, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term “hazing” means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Failure to report hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

Notification to students and student groups, teams and organizations

The school shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization a copy of this policy. Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this policy to its members. Each of its members must acknowledge that they understand and agree to comply with its provisions.