

# 2025-2026 Family Handbook



## Lighthouse School®

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## **Table of Contents**

### **WELCOME**

#### **SECTION 1: LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL 6**

WHY THE NAME “LIGHTHOUSE?” ..... 6

MISSION STATEMENT ..... 7

LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL AS YOUR PRIMARY RESOURCE PROVIDER..... 8

TUITION/TRANSPORTATION COSTS ..... 8

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION..... 8

THE NECESSITIES OF DAILY LIFE AT LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL ..... 9

#### **SECTION 2: OUR SCHOOL AND ITS’ UNIQUE FEATURES 10**

LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL AS A SAFETY NET ..... 10

WE DON’T GIVE UP ON KIDS ..... 11

DURABILITY ..... 11

COMPREHENSIVE BIODEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES ..... 11

STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGIES..... 11

APEX BIODEVELOPMENT..... 12

APEX MODEL ..... 13

FUSION BIOMANAGEMENT ..... 14

EXPERIENCED AND MOTIVATED TEAM MEMBERS..... 14

PHILOSOPHY AMPLIFICATION PROJECT..... 15

#### **SECTION 3: THE TEAM: FAMILY, SCHOOL SYSTEM and LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL 15**

COMMITMENT TO THE TEAM: COLLABORATION AMONG LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL, FAMILIES AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS ..... 15

PLACEMENT PROTOCOL ..... 15

STUDENT ADMISSIONS..... 15

COMMITMENT TO THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROTOTYPE.. 16

|                                                                         |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) .....                            | 17        |
| PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS .....                                     | 17        |
| STATE-MANDATED TESTING .....                                            | 17        |
| STUDENT TRANSCRIPTS AND HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS .....                       | 18        |
| HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION.....                | 18        |
| STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN TEAM MEETINGS AND TEAM DECISIONS.....            | 19        |
| CONSENT AT AGE OF MAJORITY .....                                        | 19        |
| TRANSITION SERVICES.....                                                | 19        |
| ACCESS TO OFFICIAL RECORDS.....                                         | 19        |
| STUDENT/FAMILY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY .....                          | 20        |
| <b>SECTION 4: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION</b>                | <b>20</b> |
| COMMUNICATION WITH LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL STAFF AND<br>ADMINISTRATION .....  | 20        |
| FAMILY AND OUTREACH THERAPISTS AS THE MAIN COMMUNICATION<br>BRIDGE..... | 20        |
| STAFF AVAILABILITY .....                                                | 21        |
| EMAIL .....                                                             | 21        |
| STUDENT ACTIONS, INCIDENTS AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION .....               | 22        |
| COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES.....                                        | 22        |
| INTERDISCIPLINARY COMMUNICATION .....                                   | 23        |
| LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL’S ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY TEAM .....           | 24        |
| VISITING LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL .....                                        | 25        |
| PROBLEMS/COMPLAINTS/CONFLICTS/GRIEVANCES .....                          | 25        |
| PROCEDURES FOR REGISTERING A FORMAL COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE              | 26        |
| 24-HOUR FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEM .....                                     | 26        |
| SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN .....                                                | 27        |
| STUDENT ILLNESS AND ABSENTEEISM .....                                   | 27        |

|                                                                                        |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE MEDICATION<br>DURING SCHOOL HOURS ..... | 28        |
| TRANSLATION OF INFORMATION .....                                                       | 29        |
| INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CANCELLATION.....                                             | 29        |
| PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEOTAPE/WEBSITE/PUBLICITY INFORMATION<br>AWARENESS .....                  | 29        |
| DOOR-TO-DOOR TRANSPORTATION POLICY .....                                               | 29        |
| STUDENT ARRIVAL POLICY .....                                                           | 30        |
| SOCIAL MEDIA ISSUES.....                                                               | 30        |
| POST TRANSITION CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION .....                                        | 30        |
| <b>SECTION 5: STUDENTS: EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE</b>                                | <b>31</b> |
| CODE OF STUDENT BIODEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONING.....                                        | 31        |
| RULES, EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES AT LIGHTHOUSE .....                                     | 31        |
| AT LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL, WE VALUE .....                                                   | 32        |
| LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE.....                                                 | 32        |
| SUSPENSIONS .....                                                                      | 33        |
| PERSONAL POSSESSIONS .....                                                             | 35        |
| STUDENT CLOTHING/DRESS .....                                                           | 35        |
| STUDENT CELL PHONE AND ELECTRONICS POLICY .....                                        | 35        |
| NICOTINE-FREE CAMPUS.....                                                              | 36        |
| SUBSTANCE ABUSE: PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION.....                                      | 36        |
| POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT .....                                                           | 37        |
| SPECIALIZED PLANS.....                                                                 | 38        |
| SAFETY CHECK/CONTRABAND SEARCH PROCESS .....                                           | 38        |
| SPECIALIZED SUPPORT HOMEROOM.....                                                      | 38        |
| “AT RISK” INCIDENTS .....                                                              | 39        |
| STUDENT LEVEL SYSTEM.....                                                              | 39        |

|                                                                            |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, and HAZING .....                                  | 40        |
| A NOTE TO ON BULLYING TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.....                        | 41        |
| ATTENDANCE.....                                                            | 42        |
| HOMEWORK.....                                                              | 43        |
| TERMINATIONS.....                                                          | 43        |
| <b>SECTION 6: COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL<br/>REGULATIONS</b> | <b>44</b> |
| PUBLIC INFORMATION AND POSTINGS.....                                       | 44        |
| PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION .....                                       | 44        |
| INTERNET ACCESS TO STATE REGULATIONS AND FEDERAL LAWS .....                | 44        |
| ACCESS TO PROGRAM REVIEWS.....                                             | 45        |
| REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT .....                                  | 45        |
| LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL AS A NONSMOKING ENVIRONMENT.....                         | 46        |
| <b>SECTION 7: SERVICES</b>                                                 | <b>46</b> |
| COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES .....                                               | 46        |
| LIST OF SERVICES AVAILABLE AT LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL.....                       | 49        |
| <b>SECTION 8: REFERENCES</b>                                               | <b>50</b> |
| MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW: BULLYING .....                                  | 50        |
| MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW: HAZING .....                                    | 55        |
| IN CLOSING .....                                                           | 56        |

# WELCOME

On behalf of the Team at Lighthouse School®, we are happy and proud to have you join our family. Whether we are just beginning our relationship or have been together for some time, we look forward to working with you and confronting the challenges that we will face together.

Lighthouse School has many unique features. We are a school, but more importantly, we are a treatment facility. Effective collaboration regarding your child's therapeutic and educational needs therefore requires an understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of core beliefs and practices. With this in mind, this handbook has three specific purposes:

- To clearly communicate core beliefs and overarching policies
- To concretely connect these core beliefs to common practices that will affect you and your child
- To efficiently answer questions that frequently arise

Starting out quite literally on the same page will facilitate communication and greatly reduce future misunderstandings and conflicts. Please take the time to read this handbook and to consider how it applies to your child. We developed this handbook in compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and because we place a high value on good communication. Thank you again for entrusting your children to the care of all of the staff at Lighthouse School.

## SECTION 1: LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

### WHY THE NAME “LIGHTHOUSE?”

We chose the name “Lighthouse” for our school because we wanted a name that properly represented our goals, philosophy and mission.

A lighthouse represents direction, guidance, and safety through complex or difficult passages. Our students come to Lighthouse School with a wide range of strengths and difficulties. They require direction in their daily experiences, guidance in mastering the challenges of life, and a safe environment in which to learn and grow.

A lighthouse also represents light, brightening the shadows and offering hope and success to those who come here. Lighthouse School offers the brightness of a better future.

## MISSION STATEMENT

**We believe** that, first and foremost, we are a “corporation for kids” and that everything we do needs to focus upon promoting optimal life success for every child entrusted to our care.

**We believe** that Lighthouse School comprises a “safety net” that will catch and protect children having very heterogeneous and diverse challenges in their lives and provide them with a nurturing environment in which to thrive.

**We believe** that all decisions must be based on the important criterion of “What’s in the best long-term interest of kids?” because this is the only criterion that both guides the integrity of decisions and also assures that long-term perspective will never be compromised because of short-term considerations.

**We believe** that the highly skilled and extremely dedicated team members who constitute Lighthouse School’s staff comprise its most valuable resource and that FUSION Biomanagement Technology provides members of the team with the best possible opportunities for achieving both personal and professional growth and enrichment.

**We believe** that parents are our “partners in treatment” and to the degree that a child’s home, school, and community experiences are integrated, the child has the best opportunity possible to succeed in life.

**We believe** that our valued customers, the many municipalities of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and the other New England states, who work in collaboration with us on behalf of enrolled students, deserve to receive efficient and effective account management, high quality services at a fair price, and a partnership that reflects our respect and appreciation for the opportunity to serve them.

**We believe** that “everything goes back to culture” and that the quality and integrity of Lighthouse School’s culture constitutes the critical foundation upon which every other organizational component and prerogative is based.

**We believe** that quality of treatment is extremely important and that APEX<sup>®</sup> Biodevelopmental Technology provides our students with the best possible opportunities to succeed in life.

**We believe** that “functional adaptation,” referring to the capacity to do well in circumstances involving the real world, is the most reliable indicator of optimal life success and that emphasis always needs to be placed upon teaching our students skills and offering them access to experiences that have real life applications.

**We believe** that the appearance, quality, and composition of the treatment environment is extremely important because it provides the necessary “alternative frame of reference” that fosters among students the positive and optimistic notion that the difficult challenges of the past and present can be replaced by the rewarding accomplishments of the future.

## LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL AS YOUR PRIMARY RESOURCE PROVIDER

Lighthouse School is strongly committed to working closely with families. We want to be the first people you call with any questions, concerns, or issues related to your child or to our work together. You may have a number of different individuals and agencies working with you. We are committed to working with this team of people to efficiently and effectively advance your child's well-being. Please communicate closely with us about any issues that arise. We see any difficulty we experience as an opportunity to strengthen the valued and trusting relationship that we began during the referral process.

## TUITION/TRANSPORTATION COSTS

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.) mandates that the costs for a student to attend Lighthouse School be fully paid for by your city or town. It is the good fortune of families to be funded for and to receive comprehensive out-of-district services in an approved private school. In addition to this, there are considerable associated transportation costs, also covered by your city or town. This investment represents a strong commitment on the part of your local school system to provide every student in your community with the best education available.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**Lighthouse School is a treatment center.** Students typically come to Lighthouse School having struggled in other settings, especially those with a more educational focus. These challenges go far beyond the classroom setting and may accurately be described as *life challenges*. Our primary objective is to help all students gain the insights and skills necessary to successfully master all challenges in life at school, at home, and in the community.

**Lighthouse School is a school.** As a school, we function much like all schools. We have teachers and other staff providing educational services, and students go to classes, receive grades, and earn credits. As we discuss in more detail in Section 7 of this handbook, as a school we conform to all of the regulations and expectations of every school in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Lighthouse School's treatment philosophy is called APEX Biodevelopmental Technology. Given its importance, APEX is described in far more detail in Section 2. At this point, however, it is important to describe the four major features of APEX, which impact every student every day of their enrollment.

First, every action, every event, and every situation is viewed as a treatment opportunity. APEX does not start and stop as a discrete course or program might. Rather, it is woven seamlessly into the fabric of every student experience.

Second, APEX is flexibly adjusted to meet the needs of all students. The student population of Lighthouse School is highly diverse. Through planning, discussion, and consultation, both within our staff and with families and other parties working with the student, we are able to develop a treatment plan that addresses the unique strengths and needs of each and every student.

Third, APEX Biodevelopment requires a very strong interdisciplinary approach to education. Lighthouse School has assembled a highly skilled group of team members who deliver clinical, educational, vocational, medical, neuromotor, and communication services in an integrated manner.

Fourth, APEX is a comprehensive services model that addresses and integrates home, school, and community. It is not limited to what happens at school.

In conclusion, Lighthouse School has operated under the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as an approved private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) school serving in excess of 100 communities in the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine for over five decades. Over these years, Lighthouse School staff have worked diligently to develop effective technologies that address the needs of students and their families and the communities that Lighthouse School is so privileged to serve.

## THE NECESSITIES OF DAILY LIFE AT LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

### **Student Service Hours of Operation**

We provide services to our students from 8:25 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

### **Transportation**

Transportation to and from Lighthouse School is door-to-door and is provided by the student's local school system.

### **Contacting Lighthouse School**

Our corporate hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday. We can be reached at 978-251-4050 during these times.

### **Family Contact Information**

Please be sure to communicate any changes to your family's contact information, especially telephone numbers to be used in an emergency. It is essential that up-to-date contact information be maintained.

**Lighthouse School Website:** [www.lighthouseschool.org](http://www.lighthouseschool.org)

### **Breakfast**

All students are offered a supplemental breakfast between 8:25 and 9:00 consisting of cereal, yogurt and milk.

### **Lunch**

Students do not have access to microwaves or ovens and therefore should bring a lunch that does not require heating. While most students bring a lunch from home every day, there are times when this is not possible. In these cases, we will provide them with lunch options.

### **Snacks**

Snacks are dependent on the age and needs of the student. Speak to your Family and Outreach Therapist to determine what is best for your child. Snacks are provided by the family.

### **Birthdays**

Birthday parties and other celebrations may occur, depending upon the age of the student. Ask your Family and Outreach Therapist for more details.

### **School Supplies**

Everything that students need to complete schoolwork and assignments is provided for them by Lighthouse School.

### **Visits**

Parents are always welcome; however, scheduled appointments are preferred. Visitors will be accompanied by their Family and Outreach Therapist or other designated staff.

### **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

Report Cards with grades, along with progress reports, are mailed to families on a quarterly basis. Credits towards high school graduation requirements are granted by the student's sending school system.

### **Homework**

Homework is assigned based upon the student's age and programming requirements. All homework protocols may be modified based on collaboration with the family. Typically, there is no weekend or vacation homework.

### **Student Personal Items**

All personal items are to be kept in student lockers. Lighthouse School is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items. What may be allowed on the bus is the decision of individual transportation providers and does not involve Lighthouse School. **Particularly problematic are electronic devices such as cell phones and devices that can access the Internet. Students cannot use or keep these devices with them during the school day. Violations of this school rule may lead to the device being confiscated and/or student suspension.** We ask for parental assistance and support on this issue.

### **Nicotine products**

The use of nicotine in any form, including vaping is prohibited.

### **Student Absences**

Students are expected to attend every day. If students are going to be absent, we ask families to call Lighthouse School at 978-251-4050 and notify the receptionist of the reason for the absence (illness, appointment, etc.). Families should call between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Excessive absenteeism could jeopardize a student's placement at Lighthouse School.

### **Student Consents**

Every year, students and families are required to sign a series of consent forms. These consents include, but are not limited to, medical and major treatment issues.

## **SECTION 2: OUR SCHOOL AND ITS' UNIQUE FEATURES**

### **LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL AS A SAFETY NET**

Lighthouse School considers itself a "safety net" for its students. The diversity of programs and services offered, our experienced staff, and the dedication that characterizes the team, means that we are able to effectively serve students who often have few alternative placements. Families who have been ready to give up hope that their children can make progress have found

Lighthouse School to be a safe, well-structured, and nurturing environment within which students have been able to learn and develop. Families are crucial members of the treatment team here and together with the staff make up the “safety net” that helps students build the skills to achieve *optimal life success*.

## WE DON'T GIVE UP ON KIDS

A carefully designed, team-driven process is utilized at Lighthouse School to demonstrate to students and families that staff are committed and follow through in their efforts to meet student needs. At Lighthouse School, students experience unconditional acceptance. Through repeated experiences involving staff commitment, students come to feel that they are valued for who they are and that their self-worth is separate from their deeds. Lighthouse School believes that most problems are surmountable. Working together and confronting situations as they arise or preventing them before they occur increases the possibility that problems can be resolved.

## DURABILITY

If effectiveness were measured by a business' years of service, then Lighthouse School has successfully withstood the test of time. Since its inception in 1967, Lighthouse School has had industry-low staff turnover and a steady growth rate. Throughout the years, the school has maintained its commitment to its original founding principles by continually expanding the array of services it provides for students. Early on, Lighthouse School established strategic goals that have been consistently met or exceeded. Committed partnerships with an impressive number of school systems throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine have been established. Lighthouse School's roots are in the Chelmsford/Lowell community, dating back to 1997. Breakwater House, which opened for the 2024-2025 school year, continues this commitment to the area and the region.

## COMPREHENSIVE BIODEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Academic education is certainly important; however, for the students at Lighthouse School it is not enough. At Lighthouse School, there are a broad range of curriculum-based, interdisciplinary programs that include clinical, educational, vocational, communication, neuromotor, and medical services. These services do not simply work alongside each other; rather, they are integrated into a centralized treatment philosophy called APEX Biodevelopment. The goal of APEX Biodevelopment is not to just produce positive cognitive development, but also to help students progress across multiple dimensions of human experience. Lighthouse School believes that children need to grow in many dimensions of human development and APEX Biodevelopment incorporates a creative approach to learning, one that is aimed at meeting real needs that are basic to all individuals, whether they are challenged by disabilities or not. At Lighthouse School, services for all these needs are available under one roof.

## STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGIES

Appropriate use of cutting-edge technologies has always been a hallmark of Lighthouse School's commitment to its team members and students, and staff have access to technology resources to help them develop effective interventions. However, “state of the art” at Lighthouse School does not apply only to computer hardware and software. APEX Biodevelopmental Technology,

Lighthouse School's treatment philosophy and application programs, is an exciting technology developed here and in use for over thirty-five years. It combines traditional education with positive developmental life experiences. The Comprehensive APEX Biodevelopmental Services Model used at Lighthouse School guides programming designed to integrate and energize home, school, and community experiences.

## APEX BIODEVELOPMENT

APEX is the foundation of Lighthouse School as a treatment center. APEX is a unique biodevelopmental program that promotes positive biodevelopment (life development). Life development, the growth of an individual's inherent capabilities, is defined as the ability of an individual to successfully respond to life challenges. A person experiencing advanced biodevelopment is objective, balanced, integrated, self-aware, interpersonally proficient, socially responsible, highly motivated to pursue productive goals, and very capable of successfully negotiating the broad spectrum of life's diverse challenges.

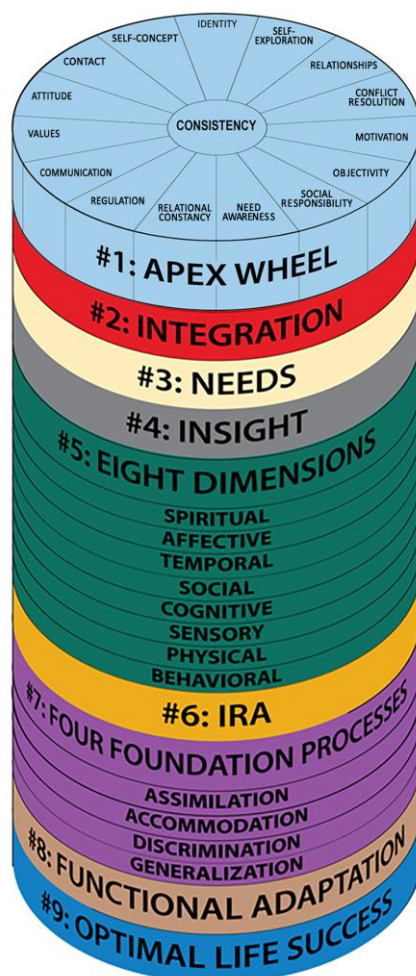
APEX Biodevelopment is the experiential process that facilitates positive biodevelopment. APEX provides an alternative frame of reference, a treatment context where students can safely explore and work through the thematic issues and struggles that have interfered with their success and that have led to their enrollment at Lighthouse School. At the heart of APEX is the bond between student and staff. Every student develops relationships with staff that are based on mutual caring, trust, respect, and most importantly, emotional accountability. These relationships are the foundation for APEX treatment interventions and experiences that instill new beliefs about self, other people, and sustained, meaningful life success.

APEX Biodevelopment is based on a set of core principles that underlie all actions and interventions. An understanding and acceptance of these principles is a fundamental necessity of our working together to advance student well-being.

Core principles of APEX include:

- APEX is delivered holistically. It is not possible to pick and choose aspects of the model to either include or exclude from the treatment of any student.
- APEX is expansively focused on life success rather than narrowly focused on academic achievement.
- Our functioning is determined by thematic experiences, that is, experiences that happen over and over.
- It is more effective to treat the factors that underlie symptoms, rather than focusing on the symptoms themselves.
- Positive interventions designed to teach insights and skills are far more effective than negative approaches designed to eliminate or reduce actions.
- All treatment is based on interpersonal relationships.
- Needs are a major determinant of our actions.
- Conflict is an inevitable component of life and conflict resolution is a crucial skill.
- A united team approach is the most effective means of treatment.

# APEX MODEL



For a far more in depth understanding of APEX, please see the APEX Biodevelopmental Technology brochure. In addition to the one you received during the referral process, you may access this information from our website, [www.lighthouseschool.org](http://www.lighthouseschool.org), or speak to your Family and Outreach Therapist for a copy of this information. In the event that participation in any aspect of APEX Treatment infringes upon a student's or family's personal beliefs, it is incumbent upon those individuals to immediately notify Ms. Anna Fitzgerald, Director of Clinical Services, so that Lighthouse School can determine if a reasonable accommodation can be made.

## FUSION BIOMANAGEMENT™

Just as Lighthouse School has a philosophy and a methodology for life education, we also have a philosophy and a methodology for management. This philosophy is expressed in the applications of biomanagement, or life management, and reflects the goals and practices of FUSION Biomanagement Technology.

Biomanagement refers to the idea that effective management of any organization must focus not just on organizational structure, but also on the people who work in the organization and on the important needs in their working lives. It does not refer only to what supervisors do, but what everyone in an organization does to ensure that the organization reaches its goals. People who work in any organization, including a school system, have two fundamental sets of needs: personal needs and professional needs. Effective management must take both into account if the organization is to encourage motivation and investment on the part of team members to accomplish the organization's mission. At Lighthouse School, our mission is to help students develop to the highest level of life success and accomplish everything that they can. To the extent that the personal and professional needs of staff members can be accurately identified, mutually addressed, and kept at the focus of the management system, motivation and commitment are maximized. The motivation and investment of team members are instrumental to the success of any organization. FUSION Biomanagement Technology fosters work experiences, relationships, and structures that help staff work together to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of our students and their families.

Each team member hired to work at Lighthouse School comes with a wide variety of personal and professional skills and an inherent capability to contribute to the organization's success. Applying and expanding these skills for the benefit of students requires a strong organizational culture that fosters consistency, respect, and a sense of the value of each person to the work we all share. FUSION provides staff with opportunities to better understand their own and their colleagues' needs, and to develop supportive and positive supervisory and peer relationships. Staff members come to understand the value of being part of a caring and professional organizational culture, and to share the pride that comes from being part of a team that is strongly motivated and committed to the organization's mission.

## EXPERIENCED AND MOTIVATED TEAM MEMBERS

### ***We Are an Invested Team***

The team members at Lighthouse School are invested in the welfare of their students, and strive to ensure that they place the students' needs first. The direct service team members, including teachers, therapists, and medical staff, are all certified, licensed or accredited when required, or working diligently to complete their licensure and/or other professional requirements in their respective fields of specialty. Although team members are experienced, Lighthouse School places a strong emphasis on ongoing training and development to ensure that a qualitative, professional service is provided. Human service corporations often have high staff turnover rates; Lighthouse School has historically enjoyed a low rate of staff turnover, with many staff having substantial longevity.

## PHILOSOPHY AMPLIFICATION PROJECT

We at Lighthouse School are invested in continuing to improve all aspects of the services that are offered to students, families, and team members. For the past several years this has included what we call the Philosophy Amplification Project. This project involves using the actual physical spaces of the building as a means to enhance and positively amplify the unique features of Lighthouse School. The physical spaces of the building thus become a means of treatment and experiential enhancement. By using artwork, interactive displays, student-generated projects, and other multimodal displays, we hope that everyone, from one-time visitors to our regular team members, will experience our core beliefs in a deeper, more meaningful, and richer manner.

## SECTION 3: THE TEAM: FAMILY, SCHOOL SYSTEM, and LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

### COMMITMENT TO THE TEAM: COLLABORATION AMONG LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL, FAMILIES, AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Lighthouse School works in coordination with over 100 public school districts to ensure that all enrolled students are provided access to the same general education programming that is provided to students remaining in district. We also work to ensure that students are given opportunities to return to less restrictive educational programs when appropriate, as outlined in their Individualized Educational Program. Lighthouse School staff collaborates extensively with public school district representatives at Team meetings and any other meetings, regulatory or otherwise, provided for each student throughout the year.

### PLACEMENT PROTOCOL

It is the policy of Lighthouse School not to take sides with respect to a local school system, parent(s), or legal guardian(s) desire to maintain a student's placement at Lighthouse School. After close review of a student's history and current needs, a Lighthouse School representative will present to all parties the services that Lighthouse School has available and will indicate whether or not Lighthouse School can meet the needs and provide appropriate services for that student.

### STUDENT ADMISSIONS

#### **Impartiality Policy**

Lighthouse School practices impartiality in its process of accepting students. This means that Lighthouse School does not discriminate in the enrollment of students on the basis of age, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. This policy also applies to the employment of team members working at Lighthouse School.

#### **Admissions Procedures**

Referral of a student to Lighthouse School is made by the school district in which the student resides. After obtaining the necessary permission from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), the school system forwards information about the student to Lighthouse School.

If the parent or guardian and school system are in agreement that a referral visit is appropriate, Lighthouse School receives authorization from the school system and then calls the parent or guardian to arrange a visit. The purpose of this visit is to assess whether the programs and services offered by Lighthouse School can meet the needs of the student.

Both the student and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are individually provided with the opportunity to see the program, meet other students and team members, and to receive answers to their questions about Lighthouse School. At the same time, our team will be meeting with you and your child to learn about the circumstances that bring you to Lighthouse School. This can be a difficult and emotional process. As difficult as it can be to share with virtual strangers the intimate details of your child and family, it is essential that we begin our relationship with absolute openness and candor. This includes both issues and conflicts from the past, as well as explicit expectations for the future.

At the end of the visit, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are advised that, after conducting their appraisal of schools they wish to consider, they should notify their local school system as to their interest. At the same time, Lighthouse School's Enrollment Team reviews all available information, considers the student's needs, the appropriateness of Lighthouse School programs, and the availability of openings. An essential component of this process is a review of the student's complete medical record.

If acceptance is appropriate, details and necessary placement meetings are worked out by the school system, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are notified, and an Intake Meeting is scheduled between Lighthouse School and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). At this meeting, programs and policies are reviewed and all necessary enrollment documents are completed and signed. If the Intake process is completed to the satisfaction of all parties, a date is then determined for final acceptance and a start date is scheduled for the student.

Throughout this process, appropriate Lighthouse School staff members are available to both the school system and the family to answer questions and keep track of the referral and enrollment process.

## COMMITMENT TO THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROTOTYPE

Lighthouse School regards the transitioning of students to less restrictive environments as a mainstay of its philosophy. At each annual Team meeting, the criteria for movement to a less restrictive environment are reviewed by parent(s) or legal guardian(s), local school system personnel, and Lighthouse School staff. Criteria are defined according to the needs of the student. Once agreed upon transition criteria are accomplished, parents are encouraged to explore all potential program options. An individualized transition plan for the student is then developed and collaborative meetings are scheduled. Students typically make an initial visit to a new program and then are integrated into the program during a period of time determined by the Team. Scheduling is flexible, highly individualized, and is always designed to meet the needs of each specific student and his or her unique transitioning requirements.

## INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

The IEP is the blueprint for each student's programming at Lighthouse School. Staff members view the IEP as a dynamic document and work with all members of the team to construct an IEP that captures a student's individuality and accurately reflects the programming that optimizes their success. At a minimum, IEPs are reviewed and revised at the student's annual Team meeting. If at any time the IEP requires modification due to a change in student features, team goals, services or interventions, any member of the Team may request that the Team reconvene in order to meet and make collaborative and collective decisions.

## PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS

Each quarter, families and students receive two documents that describe the student's progress: a progress report that reports on performance in terms of IEP annual goals and benchmarks, and a report card that describes the student's status in the courses in which they are enrolled. For high school students, information from report cards is critical, as Lighthouse School works with each local school system to determine credits necessary that meet that district's graduation requirements.

When you receive your student's report card, you may see different grading scales used depending on different student factors (age, state assessment format, course). Clinical and Allied courses (Group Therapy, Individual Therapy, Health, Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy) are graded as pass (P) or fail (F). Academic courses are graded with standard grade scales of A, B, C, D, and F. Our youngest students in grade K-2 and students that take the Alternate Assessment for MA or NH are graded using our portfolio grade scale given the focus on foundational and life skills. Portfolio grades are as follows Advanced (ADV), Proficient (PRF), Progressing (PRG), Emerging (EMG), and No Progress (NP). In the event a student is unable to attend school due to a recent enrollment, termination or hospitalization, they may receive an Incomplete (INC) or No Grade (NG). Students who receive an Incomplete have the opportunity to make up assignments through a structured plan. High School courses that have an Incomplete at the end of a school year will be rewarded no credit.

Student grades are generated as an accumulation of their performance on both small group and whole group lessons throughout the reporting period. Grades are derived by their engagement and demonstration of understanding the content as well as their bioeducational participation during the lessons. Bioeducation is the integration of our therapeutic focus into their academic environment through understanding of self and other. This can be demonstrated in a number of ways such as appropriate participation, sharing their thoughts and listening to the thoughts of others respectfully, sharing materials, taking risks, asking for and/or accepting help, gaining attention appropriately, waiting appropriately, socializing respectfully, etc.

## STATE-MANDATED TESTING

All students participate in state-mandated testing as determined by their local school system. In accordance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requirements related to grade and subject area, testing occurs within small groups and with the accommodations outlined in each student's IEP.

With the most recent 2024 November vote, the previous requirement of a passing score on the MCAS as one of the High School graduation requirements is no longer valid. Participation in the MCAS is still a federal and state law, and students participating and receiving a score on the MCAS tests is the current state assessment criteria to be met.

If a student is unable to participate in one of more components of the MCAS in grade 10, subsequent opportunities to participate in MCAS Retests are available in the spring of grade 11, fall of grade 12 and spring of grade 12. Similar to High School course/credit requirements, individual districts do have the opportunity to develop their own requirements around state testing. Any individual district requirements in addition to the state or federal law will be communicated with the family by the team.

New Hampshire and Maine students participate in the equivalent of the testing described above and meet all of the requirements mandated by the New Hampshire and Maine Departments of Education.

During the Team meeting process, the Team may determine that your student should take the MCAS Alternate assessment. Students participating in the alternate assessment would not participate in the computer-based standardized MCAS, and would compile work samples across the school year targeting different skills in the different content areas to show their increased understanding over time.

Along with the MCAS and MCAS-Alternate assessment, we assess students that are identified as English Language Learners in the WIDA ACCESS for ELL. This assessment occurs once a year, in addition to MCAS, and assesses language development in the areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

## STUDENT TRANSCRIPTS AND HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS

Lighthouse School works closely with each public school district regarding student academic performance. Lighthouse School does not grant credits or high school diplomas. Rather, we communicate closely with local school systems that, in turn, grant credit. High school transcripts are generated at least once per year at the end of the school year, or upon request, and are sent to the public school district as part of the quarterly progress report cycle. Beginning in Grade 9, additional attention is paid to communicating grades as they relate to credits towards graduation requirements. The student's credit status becomes an increasingly important aspect of Team discussions beginning in Grade 11.

## HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION

Students who fulfill the graduation requirements of their local school system earn a high school diploma granted by that school system. For Massachusetts students, this currently means taking the MCAS and completing all course and credit requirements as outlined by the individual district. The diploma earned is equivalent in every respect to that of students who physically attend their local school district.

For some students, the Team reaches a consensus that, at the end of their tenure as high school students, a certificate of completion is more relevant to the student's needs and capabilities. These students also receive this certificate from their local school system.

## STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN TEAM MEETINGS AND TEAM DECISIONS

Lighthouse School encourages parents to collaborate with their public school district and all members of the Team to determine the level of participation in the Team meeting process that will most benefit their child. Students older than age 14 are encouraged to attend at least some portion of their Team meeting. Students attending their Team meeting are expected to act in an appropriate and considerate manner. If participation is not appropriate, it is important that the Team considers the student's preferences and interests.

## CONSENT AT AGE OF MAJORITY

One year prior to a student reaching age eighteen, Lighthouse School works collaboratively with the public school district to ensure that consent is obtained from the student to continue receiving special education services or:

- The parent receives guardianship from a court of competent jurisdiction.
- The student chooses to share decision making with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- The student chooses to delegate continued decision making to his or her parent(s), legal guardian(s) or other willing adult.

## TRANSITION SERVICES

As students enter their high school years, a shift occurs as they complete academic credit requirements, allowing for more time spent preparing for their adult years. Applied Life Skills as well as additional vocational experiences may occur on school grounds and/or in the local community through course work. In addition, students may also have off-site opportunities to learn and practice life skills, explore vocational interests, participate in job training skills, and access community resources.

Beginning at 14 years of age, Team meetings include discussions related to adulthood and transition planning, including guardianship and adult services as needed. If appropriate, Chapter 688 referrals are made by the sending LEA to the Bureau of Transitional Planning, which would then identify appropriate agencies, such as the Department of Developmental Services, Department of Mental Health, or MassAbility. Lighthouse School is typically the host for agencies who are responsible for transition planning meetings and adult services meetings. It is at these meetings where Individual Service Plans are created for students transitioning to adult services.

## ACCESS TO OFFICIAL RECORDS

Lighthouse School provides the parent(s) and guardian(s) of students, as well as the student themselves, access to all records pertaining to that specific student. These documents are available upon request of the parent(s), guardian(s), or student for review, with photocopies of any Lighthouse School generated documents available as requested.

## STUDENT/FAMILY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

Lighthouse School prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of age, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, marital status, parental status, veteran status, and physical or emotional disability. Lighthouse School policies extend to all practices and programs.

## SECTION 4: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

### COMMUNICATION WITH LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

Communication is an essential component of maximizing student gains. We want to hear from you when things are going great, when there are questions or concerns, and when conflicts arise. Talking and working together will only continue to help students through their treatment and education.

#### Communication Essentials

- Lighthouse School's telephone number is 978-251-4050. Our fax number is 978-251-8950.
- Corporate Hours with reception coverage are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday.
- The Family Support Line is available to students and families 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at 978-821-1351, Line 1 and 978-821-0316, Line 2. Please note that during open school hours, these support lines are not accessible and calls should be placed directly to Lighthouse School's main phone line at 978-251-4050.
- Your Family and Outreach Therapist is your main means of communication.
  - You have access to all team members, working through your Family and Outreach Therapist to facilitate the process.
  - To the extent possible, we ask that you minimize calls to any team member between the hours of 8:25 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.
  - Family and Outreach Therapists may also be contacted through email for brief, non-urgent communication.
- All members of the Lighthouse School Administrative Team may be contacted at the main school number.
- Students are not typically allowed to call parents or outside individuals.
- In most cases, daily communication is not practical and significantly interferes with our ability to deliver services to all the students.
- Parents are notified as soon as possible in the event of a major issue or unusual incident.

### FAMILY AND OUTREACH THERAPISTS AS THE MAIN COMMUNICATION BRIDGE

At Lighthouse School we accept families, not just students. As part of that commitment, every family has a Family and Outreach Therapist assigned to them. This person is the primary

communication bridge or liaison between your family and the Team at Lighthouse School. This does not mean that you cannot speak with other members of the Team. It simply means that it has been our experience that given the needs of the students, the most effective and efficient person to maintain communication is your Family and Outreach Therapist.

## STAFF AVAILABILITY

**To the extent possible, please do not call during school hours (8:25 a.m.-2:30 p.m.) unless there is an emergency or the need for immediate communication.** During the time the students are with us, the receptionist will handle incoming calls. While we welcome these calls, we ask you to be sensitive to their impact on daily programming and to staff availability to all students. Family and Outreach Therapists have assigned responsibilities throughout the school day and any time spent on the telephone is time away from these other responsibilities. Students are with us for approximately 12% of their week and we strive to maximize this time and have staff working closely with students for as much of this time as is possible.

If you wish to speak with your Family and Outreach Therapist during the school day between 8:25 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., please call, but if you can simply leave a message or speak with staff after the students have left for the day, it would be appreciated.

## EMAIL

Using email to contact your Family and Outreach Therapist can be efficient and helps to reduce interruptions during the school day. We offer the following table as a guide to help you decide how best to communicate with us.

| Issue                                                                                          | Email | Telephone | In Person |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Brief update about home/Home Plan                                                              | X     |           |           |
| Communicating about upcoming attendance issues (doctor's appointments, etc.)                   | X     |           |           |
| Single questions to which you would like your Family and Outreach Therapist to find the answer | X     |           |           |
| Changing scheduled meetings or appointments                                                    | X     |           |           |
| Requesting that your Family and Outreach Therapist call you                                    | X     |           |           |
| Transportation issues that do not require immediate action                                     | X     |           |           |
| Updates about major or unusual clinical/behavioral issues                                      |       | X         |           |
| Details about more typical clinical issues                                                     |       |           | X         |

|                                                                        |  |  |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Feedback about student's IEP or TEAM meeting                           |  |  | X |
| Questions about services, goals, objectives, student functioning, etc. |  |  | X |
| Problems, complaints, conflicts                                        |  |  | X |

- Please only use email to communicate important information. Do not email jokes, photos, recipes, or anything but information directly related to working together on behalf of your child.
- Family and Outreach Therapists will check their email after 3:00 p.m., when students have left for the day. Email may not be checked or responded to between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:25 a.m., during school vacations, closures, or over the weekend.
- Email should not be used to communicate issues of an urgent nature or those that require a more immediate response. Please call Lighthouse School directly during school hours, or access the Family Support Line after hours, to communicate about these matters.
- Email is for parents/guardians and should not be used by students for any reason.

## STUDENT ACTIONS, INCIDENTS AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION

The majority of students who attend Lighthouse School have features of their personality that result in a range of behavioral difficulties, including aggression. While we certainly understand these difficulties, we view their occurrence as opportunities for students to gain insights about underlying feelings and to learn more adaptive ways to handle these feelings and needs. We want families to be informed about their child's actions, but at the same time, we do not want to focus on the negative. It is our practice not to call families for 'routine' issues and incidents. Certainly, anything unusual is communicated as soon as possible and in detail. This practice may be different from what families have experienced at other schools. This practice can, at times, lead to conflicts and thus, it is critically important that if you have questions or concerns, you share them with us.

## COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

When coming to Lighthouse School, many families are accustomed to relying on daily notes or a notebook that goes back and forth between school and home. Certainly, this may have been helpful in prior settings. However, at Lighthouse School, we try to minimize this means of communication for several reasons. First, as stated earlier, your Family and Outreach Therapist is your main communication link with school. Second, the end of the day is a very busy time and team members writing in notebooks would not be available to students to help them make the transition home successful. Finally, we strive to focus on the major themes that capture the unique features of each student and have found that discussions about themes of experience are, in the long term, far more effective in advancing student outcomes than debates about minor details.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY COMMUNICATION

Lighthouse School values home-school communication as one way to foster student success across settings. Monthly newsletters are sent to families of all students. This communication is intended to provide information about school-based, Bioeducational events, activities, and lessons that can serve as a catalyst for parent/child discussions. It is not intended to be comprehensive, or to include information about a student's behavioral regulation or clinical presentation.

In addition to newsletters, students are also encouraged to share samples of their classwork with their families. These work samples will be representative of a wide range of topics and learning modalities, and may or may not include traditional worksheets, tests, or projects.

## LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL'S ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY TEAM

The following is offered to provide you with information about the team of people who are working 'behind the scenes' to advance your child's well-being.

| <b>Name</b>             | <b>Position</b>                               |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Ms. Dorothy Pepin       | Chief Administrative Officer                  |
| Mr. John Tarmey         | Senior Director of Operations                 |
| Ms. Anna Fitzgerald     | Director of Clinical Services                 |
| Ms. Emily Hack          | Director of Education                         |
| Ms. Jen Kamin           | Director of Program Administration            |
| Mr. Peter Lang          | Director of Program Operations                |
| Mr. James Dalton        | Senior Coordinator for Program Services       |
| Ms. Carla Berge         | Coordinator for Elementary Education Services |
| Ms. Lara Finn           | Coordinator for Resource Administration       |
| Dr. Lauren Galonski     | Coordinator for Elementary Treatment Services |
| Ms. Patti Hirst         | Coordinator for Regulation Services/Principal |
| Ms. Sara Hohenberger    | Coordinator for Bioeducational Services       |
| Ms. Tara Hynoski        | Coordinator for Secondary Education Services  |
| Mr. Frederick Kilmartin | Coordinator for Treatment Amplification       |
| Ms. Mary Lee            | Coordinator for Program Operations            |
| Ms. Kerry McNeal        | Coordinator for Secondary Treatment Services  |
| Ms. Sandra Muldowney    | Coordinator for Family and Outreach Services  |
| Ms. Amy Bassett         | Supervisor for Team Meetings                  |
| Ms. Natalie Beaudette   | Education Supervisor                          |
| Mr. Cory Byrd           | Supervisor for Regulation Intervention        |
| Ms. Lisa Callaghan      | Education Supervisor                          |
| Ms. Ann Chaffee         | Supervisor for Family and Outreach Services   |
| Mr. Adam Cunningham     | Education Supervisor                          |
| Ms. Kristine Gorski     | Supervisor for Regulation Logistics           |
| Ms. Susan Hagel         | Supervisor for Technology Services            |
| Ms. Patricia Kilmartin  | Supervisor for Human Resources                |
| Ms. Shannon Laferriere  | Supervisor for Enrollment Services            |
| Mr. Christopher Linskey | Supervisor for Treatment Amplification        |
| Ms. Christine McDonald  | Education Supervisor                          |
| Ms. Brittani Murphy     | Supervisor for Family and Outreach Services   |
| Mr. Douglas Orlando     | Supervisor for Regulation Intervention        |
| Mr. Ryan Parzych        | Education Supervisor                          |
| Ms. Jessica Perkins     | Supervisor for Regulation Intervention        |
| Dr. Paula Rock          | Supervisor for Medical Services               |
| Ms. Heather Sheppard    | Supervisor for Targeted Intervention          |
| Mr. Richard Sullivan    | Supervisor for Treatment Application          |
| Dr. Diane Weaver        | Supervisor for Regulation Process             |

## VISITING LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

Families are always welcome at Lighthouse School. It has long been our belief that the closer the ties between families and Lighthouse School, the better the experience for all concerned. Families are encouraged to learn about all aspects of the program and to know the members of our team. In order to ensure the most productive use of our time together, we ask that you schedule any visits at least one week in advance. Typically, visits are scheduled for one hour. While an extended visit may seem appealing, they often strain the resources of the team trying to advance the needs of a complex group of students. Therefore, we strive to balance the individual needs of each family with those of the program as a whole.

During your visit, you will be accompanied by a member of our Family and Outreach Therapy Services (most likely the Family and Outreach Therapist working with your family) or another designated team member. This procedure is not meant to limit your interactions in any way, rather it has been designed to maximize the information available to you during your visit.

## PROBLEMS/COMPLAINTS/CONFLICTS/GRIEVANCES

In any relationship, conflicts arise. While we would rather this not happen, it is an inevitable aspect of working with challenging students, that members of the team will disagree and experience a wide range of conflicts. Every day we emphasize to students the importance of resolving conflicts. We cannot ask students to engage in the emotionally demanding work of conflict resolution if we ourselves do not model this process for them.

**If there is a concern, problem, or conflict, please call us, or better still, come in so that we can meet, share perspectives and come to a resolution that is acceptable to all parties.** We all wish everything would go wonderfully every day. We hope there are never hard feelings or points of dissatisfaction. We wish things would just work themselves out over time all on their own. While these are all understandable thoughts and feelings, they are not always the best way to handle conflict. Your feedback, positive and constructive, is important to us. Communication will help not only your child, but others as well. We want to hear it all from you directly, rather than from a well-intentioned, well-meaning third party. This isn't always easy to do, but we believe that this kind of communication benefits all, and has historically been an important contributor to Lighthouse School's success.

Lighthouse School provides parents, guardians, and students the opportunity to formally register grievances with Lighthouse School if they believe that their or their child's civil, gender, or disability rights have been violated. If there is a belief that these rights have been violated, there are procedures for resolving this concern and an appeals process, if an individual believes that the initial resolution process was not satisfactory.

Lighthouse School also provides parents, guardians, and students the opportunity to formally register complaints if they believe that their or their child's educational program is not being properly addressed. The process for resolving this is outlined in the next section. In order to activate this process, the parent, guardian, or student should contact their Family and Outreach Therapist. A student may also speak to their teacher, therapist, or a Program Supervisor.

## PROCEDURES FOR REGISTERING A FORMAL COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE

- Lighthouse School's Policies and Procedures Manual is also available to all parents, guardians, staff and the public for review at any time.
- Formal complaint/grievance forms are made available to all parents and guardians:
  - Upon admission
  - In the Policies and Procedures Manual
  - Upon Request
  - Through Family and Outreach Therapists, who can make them available at Family meetings
- If a parent or guardian remains dissatisfied at the conclusion of the complaint/grievance process (not to exceed 10 working days) they have the right to pursue a formal appeal. Please refer to Formal Appeal Process Forms.
- If a parent or guardian remains dissatisfied at the conclusion of the appeals process (no longer than 15 business days after the process), the parent or guardian has the right to further appeal, which will be chaired by the sending school district.

## 24-HOUR FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEM

Families of students at Lighthouse School face many challenges and these challenges don't begin and end during traditional school hours. Our 24-hour support system is a unique feature of our program and much appreciated by families and students. Members of Lighthouse School's Family and Outreach Therapy Services Team staff this support service 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. All families have access to a family support line that, when called, will result in a Lighthouse School team member responding. Please note that during open school hours, these support lines are not accessible and calls should be placed directly to Lighthouse School's main phone line at 978-251-4050.

It is important for families to understand that this is a **support** system and that it does not take the place of those community services typically accessed in emergencies, such as police, fire, and ambulance.

In a typical support call, Lighthouse School therapists will work with the family in order to first understand the nature of the problem, and then to discuss possible solutions. The goal during the telephone call is to lessen the urgency of the problem or situation, but not necessarily solve it completely. The "solving" of the problem may require follow-up during upcoming days when all of Lighthouse School's resources can be accessed.

Although the therapist on call may not work directly with the family or child, they will try to manage those typical difficulties that families often experience during unpredictable hours of the day and night, when it seems that nothing is working and a family needs additional support.

### **To access the Family Support System:**

Dial *Family Support Line One* at 978-821-1351. A Family and Outreach Therapist should answer the call to offer you immediate support. It is possible that you will hear a message indicating that you have reached Lighthouse School's Support Line. If that is the case, please leave a message with your name and phone number and the therapist will return your call as soon as possible. If,

for any reason, you do not receive a return call within 15 minutes, please access *Family Support Line Two* at 978-821-0316. Again, your call should be answered immediately by a Family and Outreach Therapist. Please refrain from calling both numbers at the same time or one immediately after the other.

If you have an emergency requiring immediate attention, please call **911** and alert your local authorities.

## SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

We are all too familiar with the reality that schools are not perfect sanctuaries and immune to perfectly protecting students from disasters-natural and/or manmade. Extreme weather, environmental events, and random acts of unspeakable violence are all unfortunate aspects of modern life. The safety of our students is an issue of the utmost importance to us at Lighthouse School. We have spent many hours developing plans and procedures to address potential safety issues. Throughout this process, we continue to work closely with local first responders and with a range of skilled experts in this area.

A copy of the entire School Safety Plan is available for review at any time. Throughout the school year, we practice safety drills in order to help staff and students become more familiar with the procedures. These include Medical, Student, Evacuation, Shelter in Place and Lockdown Codes.

Another part of this plan includes security procedures. This allows us to monitor the presence and appropriateness of all guests during school hours. Guests are defined as any person other than Lighthouse School personnel and students.

All entrances to Lighthouse School are locked during school hours. Visitors are directed to enter only through the main entrance of Beacon building. Visitors then use the security intercom to contact the receptionist. The receptionist will inquire as to your business at Lighthouse School and will then unlock the door for you. At reception, all guests, including parents and guardians, are required to sign our Guest Log upon entering the building and sign out upon leaving. In addition, all guests are required to wear an identification badge, provided by reception. All Lighthouse School team members are required to immediately report any visitor in the building not wearing an authorized identification badge to a supervisor.

We are confident you share our concern for the safety of all students and staff and the value of having these procedures in place.

## STUDENT ILLNESS AND ABSENTEEISM

We recognize that sick children can represent a significant challenge to working families and that it is tempting to send children to school even when they are ill. Please balance the need to send your child to school with the risk they may present to other children and to our team members. If your child, or any member of your immediate family, has any symptoms of a contagious illness, or if you are uncertain about their health, please contact the Supervisor for Medical Services, and together we can arrive at a decision that will maximize the health and well-being of all.

Students who present with flu or flu-like symptoms during the school day may be quarantined. In the event that this occurs, you will be contacted and asked to immediately come to Lighthouse and pick up your child. Therefore, it is essential that we have current telephone numbers and contact information for you.

If you know that your child is ill or will be absent from school for any other reason, you may call us at 978-251-4050 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Unless you have provided us with information regarding your child's absence prior to 9:00 a.m., families of absent students can expect a telephone call between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. This communication is critical, both in the short and long term, interest of your child. In the short term, it allows us to be clear about the status of every student. In the long term, higher numbers of unexplained absences may result in students having their credits or even their placement status jeopardized.

## GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE MEDICATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The administration of medication is only done by Lighthouse School with consent derived under the following conditions:

- For students over the age of 18, Lighthouse must receive a copy of the court-approved treatment plan, proof of parental guardianship, and documentation of a Rogers hearing, in addition to a valid physician's prescription.
- For students under the age of 18, parents/guardians must complete and return the Parental Consent to Administer Medication Form. Include your child's name, medication name(s), dosage(s) in milligrams, time(s) administered, signature, and date.
- The prescribing physician will need to complete and return the Physician's Medication Consent Form. Ask the physician to include all information required, sign, date, and stamp with the physician's name and address.
- Send a month's supply of medication to school in a **pharmacy labeled container** with your child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage to be administered and the time of administration via a parent or other responsible adult. **DO NOT** send medication to school in baggies, envelopes, or improperly marked, unmarked, or mismarked containers. **DO NOT** send medication to school in your child's lunch box or backpack. Your pharmacist will supply you with a pharmacy labeled bottle(s) for medication which requires dispensation during school hours.
- Should your child's medication be increased, decreased, or discontinued, contact the Supervisor for Medical Services at Lighthouse School by telephone and send the instructions **in writing** to the school nurse prior to the medication change. It is also required that the prescribing physician forwards a Physician's Consent Order.
- When the supply of medication is not sufficient to complete a full week of school, the empty medication bottle will be sent home, most often on Friday. Please send another one-month supply of medication to school, following the procedures and protocols outlined above.
- If your child is just starting a medication or adding a new medication, do not send that medication to school without first contacting the Supervisor for Medical Services via telephone.
- Should your child require short term administration of a medication, such as an antibiotic or an as-needed medication, contact the Supervisor for Medical Services by telephone

and send the instructions in writing. It is also required that the prescribing physician forwards a Physician's Consent Order.

## TRANSLATION OF INFORMATION

When enrolled students' parents or guardians have limited English language skills, Lighthouse School ensures that all Progress Reports, Bioeducational Newsletters, the Family Newsletter and the Family Handbook are made available to them in the primary language of the home.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CANCELLATION

Lighthouse School cancellations, delayed openings, and/or early dismissals will now be considered and announced separately from Chelmsford Public Schools announcements. In the event of a cancellation, delay, or early dismissal, Lighthouse School will use the automated system, NOTIFY, to send phone calls and email notifications to staff, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), transportation companies, and school districts. In addition to the NOTIFY announcement, notifications will now be posted on WBZ (Channel 4) School Closing System and WCVB (Channel 5) School Closing System. If Lighthouse School is open and your child's district is closed, you have the option to send them to school, but you will need to provide transportation due to the district not doing so. If Lighthouse School is open (or delayed due to inclement weather), please use your own judgement concerning the conditions in your city or town when deciding whether or not to send your child to school.

## PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEOTAPE/WEBSITE/PUBLICITY INFORMATION AWARENESS

Lighthouse School occasionally encounters circumstances where students are included in a public interest piece (television, newspapers, etc.). Lighthouse School makes every effort to be sensitive to confidentiality issues regarding students, parent(s) or guardian(s), but events that involve other parents, the public, or the media are generally beyond our control.

Lighthouse School takes pride in its website at [www.lighthouseschool.org](http://www.lighthouseschool.org). We take advantage of this medium to share some of the information and programming that makes our school so unique and successful. School events that capture students engaged in their daily routines are posted on the website.

Students are also involved in many program events that take place throughout the year. In order to maximize the efficacy of this rich programming, Lighthouse School develops extensive video presentations that are very beneficial when utilized to facilitate staff training. Some of these are also available for the students and/or guests to enjoy.

## DOOR-TO-DOOR TRANSPORTATION POLICY

In the interest of safety and consistency, it is Lighthouse School's policy that all students are transported directly to and from home via the transportation provider or a parent and/or guardian.

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of each student's city or town and a part of each student's IEP.

Lighthouse School cannot, for any reason, release a student to any person other than an approved adult. Students are not allowed to take any other modes of transportation to or from school (e.g., walking, being picked up by a friend, a municipal bus, ridesharing service, etc.).

## STUDENT ARRIVAL POLICY

From time to time, students are transported to school by parents, family members, or other individuals. We want every student to attend school every day and welcome these efforts to ensure consistent attendance, but ask for your assistance to help us maintain an orderly and safe school.

If you do not regularly transport your child to school, please escort your student into the building via the front door and check in with the receptionist. Please **do not** drop the student off at the front door and allow them to enter the building by themselves. This procedure helps us to know who is in the building and how they will be transported home at the end of the day.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ISSUES

Once upon a time, concepts such as ‘conversations’, ‘friends’ and ‘relationships’ were easier to describe and simpler to understand. Technology has blurred, and in many respects confused, these important interpersonal experiences. This is neither the time nor the place to comment on these issues except as they directly impact our work together and our collective efforts to advance the well-being of your children. We ask for your support and assistance in maintaining the following policies:

- Students are not to share personal contact information directly with other students. We ask that they work with their Family and Outreach Therapist if they are interested in connecting with a peer outside of school.
- Team members are prohibited from communicating with students via texting, email, or social media networking.
- Team members are prohibited from ‘friending’ or maintaining any form of social media connection or relationship with either parents or students.
  - This policy remains in force even after students leave Lighthouse School.

There are no exceptions to these policies and we ask that parents help their children to understand and accept these limitations and to refrain from any attempts to contact team members through any form of technology and social media.

## POST TRANSITION CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION

We treasure our relationships with our students. Change is hard and it can be emotionally difficult to say goodbye to students (and their families) when they transition from Lighthouse School. Our caring doesn’t stop, but our pattern of interaction must reflect new realities. There may be times when intermittent contact, communication, and visits to Lighthouse School are appropriate. At the same time, however, we have to help our students to form new relationships with people that are part of their day-to-day life and to accept that we cannot continue to be in their lives as we once were. Again, this is not meant to diminish the personal attachments that

were formed, but rather to emphasize that part of that relationship was a professional one that must, out of necessity and propriety, change when students and families transition. We cannot continue to offer the support to families and students as we once did and team members are prohibited from establishing contact with families or students once students are no longer enrolled at Lighthouse School.

## **SECTION 5: STUDENTS: EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

### **CODE OF STUDENT BIODEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONING**

1. The two most important categories of Biodevelopmental skills are objective understanding of self and meaningful relationships with other people.
2. People deserve to be treated in a manner that respects their individuality, praises their strengths, and supports their weaknesses.
3. Successful participants in a culture conform and commit to generalized norms of conduct.
4. Biodevelopmental growth is reflected in this willingness and ability to constructively and productively confront and resolve conflicts.

#### **Code of Bioeducational Intervention**

The goal of APEX Bioeducation is to create biodevelopmental experiences that promote growth across all dimensions of human functioning. It is important for staff to have consistent expectations and interventions when working with students. APEX focuses on promoting positive capabilities, not simply reducing or stopping intrusive actions. Reinforcement and other positive interventions are always preferred over a regulation break or a restrictive safety intervention. By focusing on positive interactions and relationship building, Lighthouse School team members and students work together to resolve interpersonal and interpsychic conflicts to provide students with alternatives to behavioral acting out.

**Regulation Break:** Episodes of non-compliance are dealt with as clinical opportunities for the student to gain insight about themselves and others, and to make more adaptive decisions. If a student is asked to take space from positive reinforcement, a regulation break is used as part of a clinical process, and not solely as a consequence for disobeying behavioral rules. An insight building process will follow any use of a regulation break for a student.

**Restrictive Safety Intervention:** Lighthouse School is committed to ensuring the safety of all team members and students. A restrictive safety intervention will be used as a last resort for students that are an imminent danger to themselves and others, and when all other clinical attempts to avoid physical intervention have been exhausted. Once a restrictive safety intervention has begun, every effort will be made to terminate the intervention as quickly as possible.

Lighthouse School uses the Crisis Prevention Institute model of Non-violent Crisis Intervention, and all staff receive a minimum of 12 hours of training as part of their orientation process.

### **RULES, EXPECTATIONS, AND VALUES AT LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL**

At Lighthouse School, we recognize that many of our students experience significant challenges in meeting behavioral and academic expectations. However, we also believe that growth occurs

through guided practice, support, and consistent exposure to the values and expectations of the broader society. As with all social institutions, our community is built upon a shared set of rules and expectations designed to foster safety, learning, and personal development.

Discipline policies and codes at Lighthouse are not punitive in nature, but rather exist to support students in developing the capacity to engage meaningfully with others, function successfully within group settings, and ultimately participate in the world around them. These expectations reflect societal norms for behavior and interaction and are essential for students to achieve long-term success and independence.

The goal of APEX Biodevelopment is to embed developmental opportunities across the school day that encourage students to practice and internalize core functional skills. While students may struggle with these demands at times, our program is rooted in the belief that consistent exposure to structured, supportive environments fosters adaptive growth. Our rules and expectations reflect the values (mutual respect, cooperation, self-regulation, and shared responsibility) that allow communities to function, while providing a framework for helping students move toward societal participation.

## AT LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL, WE VALUE

- COMPLIANCE – Engaging in expected behaviors and routines to develop the skills needed to function within a structured community
- EXPRESSION – Learning to communicate one’s needs and emotions in appropriate and constructive ways
- RESOLUTION – Working through conflict with others using positive and solution-focused approaches
- RESPECT – Demonstrating care, empathy, and consideration toward others
- RELATIONSHIPS – Building healthy, trusting relationships with peers and adults
- STRIVING – Making an effort to understand oneself and others, and to improve across all areas of development
- REGULATION – Managing emotions and behaviors in ways that promote safety, success, and well-being

## LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE

Student rules at Lighthouse are intentionally designed to help students practice behaviors that align with societal expectations and prepare them for participation in educational, vocational, and community settings. These rules are not just school-based. They represent the kind of conduct that leads to success and social integration beyond the school environment.

All students are expected to comply with the following school rules:

- Follow directions from staff members
- Engage in academic and therapeutic work to the best of their ability
- Participate in instructional lessons and activities
- Carry and display a hallway pass when out of class
- Use appropriate language, tone and behavior
- Treat others with courtesy and consideration

- Communicate in ways that build social connection and cooperation
- Maintain safety for themselves and others during moments of dysregulation
- Demonstrate understanding and respect for individual and cultural differences

## SUSPENSIONS

Lighthouse School is committed to working through conflicts that arise during the course of a student's enrollment. Every effort is made to resolve issues and conflicts without resorting to suspension. At the same time, however, circumstances can arise whereby, although problematic in the short term, student suspensions best serve the long-term interests of the student.

Suspension is considered as an intervention option when significant and/or thematic violations of school rules or norms of safety occur. These incidents raise significant questions and concerns about the nature of the student's needs and the ability of Lighthouse School to continue to provide services to address these needs.

Circumstances that may lead to student suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Thematic, persistent, and/or flagrant violations of school rules
- Actions that are highly intrusive to the learning experiences of other students
- Student bringing a weapon to school with intent to harm another student or staff
- Student making credible threats of terrorism (bomb threats, drive-by shootings, etc.)
- Student exhibiting the occurrence of a pattern of extreme violence and assault
- Student demonstrating harassment, bullying, or any form of intimidation or violence directed towards another student or staff
- Student bringing illegal drugs or alcohol and/or medications to school
- Student selling or distributing illegal drugs or alcohol or medications in school
- Student and/or his/her family indicating their unwillingness to participate in APEX Biodevelopment

### **Suspension Procedure**

- After gathering all relevant information, the Management Team makes the final decision about whether or not suspension will occur, and if so, for how long.
- The same day that this decision is made, the student's Family and Outreach Therapist or designated team member will telephone the family to communicate about the incident and the details of the suspension.
- Also, on the same day as the suspension decision is made, the student's LEA will be contacted via telephone.
- A letter describing the suspension will be mailed to the family and LEA within 24 hours.
- The student's programming and services will be reviewed to determine what, if any, changes can be made in order to reduce the occurrence of future suspensions.
  - If noteworthy changes to APEX (clinical) programming occur, these will be detailed in a written specialized plan that will become part of the student record.
- An Emergency Team meeting may be scheduled.
  - The purpose of the Team meeting is to arrive at a consensus about the student's needs, programming, and placement.

- An in-house reintegration meeting will be scheduled for the morning of the student's return to school.
  - The purpose of this meeting is to review and process the incident and the resulting actions. If a specialized program was developed, it will be presented and discussed.
  - To the extent possible, we ask families to drive their child to school on this day.
- All students returning to Lighthouse School will participate in a treatment-oriented process. The purpose of this process is to resolve the initial conflict that led to the suspension and to help the student return to school with a positive attitude.
  - If the suspension resulted from a conflict with a staff or student, a conflict resolution process will occur before the student returns to the mainstream.
  - The student will participate in a therapy session with their Individual Psychotherapist or another appropriate staff.
  - These procedures are not punishment for the incident that resulted in suspension, rather, they are important clinical processes designed to maximize a successful reintegration and to help the student gain valuable insights about their actions and how we can work together to avoid future suspensions.

### **10-Day Suspensions**

If a student is suspended for 10 days cumulatively during the school year, an emergency Team meeting will be scheduled to discuss the reasons for the suspension(s) and the changes in programming that can be implemented in an effort to reduce the occurrence of any further suspensions. NO student will be terminated from Lighthouse School in the absence of this process.

At the Team meeting described above, one or more of the following issues will be addressed:

- The specific actions being demonstrated by the student that led to suspension and the factors (needs, feelings, thoughts, etc.) that underlie overt, problematic actions, and the means by which these two questions will be addressed. Options to address these issues may include a Current Functioning report (CFR), with the specifics to be agreed upon at the Team meeting. A subsequent Team meeting will be scheduled to review the findings of the CFR and to consider programming options that may be implemented as a result.
- The exploration of possible alternative placements, programming options, or agency involvement that may serve the student's long-term interests.
- A manifestation determination in order to explore the factors that best account for the current issues. Specific issues to be considered include, but are not limited to, questions about:
  - The need for outside neurological and/or psychopharmacological evaluation and intervention
  - The appropriateness of the IEP
  - The appropriateness of the placement
  - The services being provided and the need for other/different services to be included to address student needs
  - Other features and interventions that impact the student's functioning

Regardless of the manifestation determination, Lighthouse School will work collaboratively with the school system to determine the course of action, either within Lighthouse School or at another placement, which will maximize the student's long-term interests.

## PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

While students may bring personal possessions with them to school, these items must be kept in the student's locker. Electronic devices, such as gaming systems, iPads, and other devices that can access the internet must be given to a staff member. We ask for parental assistance and support on this issue. Lighthouse School is not responsible for the loss of or damage to belongings that students choose to bring to school.

## STUDENT CLOTHING/DRESS

There is no formal student dress code at Lighthouse School, but this fact does not mean that there are no expectations or standards for how students come dressed to learn.

While supporting the student's (especially those who are teenagers) need for self-expression and style, we maintain basic expectations regarding student dress and clothing. In general, students must come to school dressed in a manner that does not disrupt, interrupt, distract, or threaten the experiences of other students. Students will not be allowed to wear provocative or revealing clothes. Students will also not be allowed to wear clothing or accessories that represent or imitate gangs or other negative images. Finally, chains, spikes, metal shards, or any other items or accessories that could be a weapon or used as such may not be worn or brought to school.

## STUDENT CELL PHONE AND ELECTRONICS POLICY

Cell phones and similar electronic devices used for gaming, communication, etc. are a reality of contemporary society. These devices have many positive uses, but we are all well aware of the issues and problems that, at times, arise from their use. While these issues can occur with anyone, they are most likely to be an issue for adolescents who typically lack the internal controls to appropriately regulate their use. This Handbook is neither the time nor the place to engage in a long discussion of the possible long-term impact of emerging technologies on the developmental experiences of youth. What value or use they may have, within the context of a treatment center/school, their possession and use is distracting at best and intrusive and invasive at worst. As a result, Lighthouse School has developed policies that help structure the use of these devices.

Cell phones are to be placed in a cell phone locker for those students who have one. For all other students, cell phones are to be given to an Education Supervisor during the school day. As one part of our commitment to maintaining a positive learning environment, we ask that all cell phones be turned off, or placed on airplane mode, when they are brought into the building. Some students, and indeed, some families, may disagree with this perspective and policy. While respecting these differences, we believe that an important component of life success is conforming to situational expectations --- whether or not one likes or agrees with that expectation. To that end, this policy on cell phones will be strictly maintained and enforced. We ask for parental assistance and support on this issue. Lighthouse School is not responsible for the loss of or damage to cell phones or electronic devices that students choose to bring to school.

If necessary, students have the ability to contact their parent or guardian, with a staff member, using a landline phone.

In the event of a significant emergency, a NOTIFY message will be sent as soon as possible to outline details.

If a student does not maintain the device in their locker, accesses their device or uses a recording function, the student will be reminded to comply with the rules of electronics. If the student is able to comply with the expectations, it is likely that no further action is necessary.

Continued infractions could result in a change in the student's level, loss of privileges, placement on the contraband search process, or suspension. The student's family will be notified of the continued non-compliance with the school policy.

We look forward to working closely with our families to ensure the success of this policy and know that we can count on family support to help us maintain this policy in the best interests of all students.

## NICOTINE-FREE CAMPUS

Lighthouse School is a nicotine-free campus. Smoking or chewing tobacco is prohibited in school and on school grounds. The use of e-cigarettes or other 'vaping' devices is also prohibited. Students violating this rule may face suspension or other consequences.

## SUBSTANCE USE: PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

At Lighthouse School we are committed to addressing the devastating issue of substance use and, more importantly, treating the features underlying it as a means to advance the long-term well-being of America's youth.

In March 2016, Governor Baker signed into law a bill designed as a comprehensive response to the deadly drug crisis resulting in a reported 100 deaths a month across the state. While focusing specifically on opiate abuse, the law addresses the broader issue of substance use and abuse. The issue of substance abuse is a painful and tragic reminder of the challenges confronting today's youth and the devastating consequences that can result.

During our over 50-year history, we have confronted many different issues and symptoms reflective of underlying clinical issues. In terms of substance abuse and addiction, it is clear that mental health issues and serious emotional disturbance issues that are all too familiar to our students, can heavily influence the likelihood of abuse and addiction. At the heart of our perspective on the issue is the belief that when one looks beyond presenting symptoms there are clear yet often unrecognized and under-appreciated affective issues, conflicts, and needs that underlie these overt symptoms. It is this perspective that guides our approach to the treatment of substance use and abuse.

Long-term clinical growth generalized across life contexts is our highest priority. This priority can only be advanced through addressing the factors underlying overtly problematic patterns of functioning. At Lighthouse School this happens through a student's experience with APEX Biodevelopment. APEX is a unique biodevelopmental, or life developmental program that all

team members are trained in and that forms the foundation of our services. Lighthouse School is a corporation dedicated to helping students overcome the dysfunctional patterns of social/emotional/behavioral functioning that brings them to us and to helping them to acquire the skills and insights that will allow them to be successful in life.

Safety is our highest priority. As one component of creating a safe and positive treatment and learning environment, Lighthouse School strictly enforces policies regarding the use, possession, distribution, and/or abuse of drugs or alcohol and controlled substances.

Any student suspected of being under the influence of an illegal substance will be evaluated by a member of the Medical Services division. The Supervisor for Medical Services, in collaboration with all relevant supervisors and managers, will determine the course of action needed to maximize safety. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of any student found to be under the influence of an illegal substance will be contacted and informed of the incident and related issues (including consequences). Consequences may include: removal from the mainstream of the school to a setting with greater structure/supervision, suspension, termination, or other consequences determined on a case-by-case basis. The details of the case may be communicated to the Chelmsford Police Department and the student may face legal charges and/or consequences.

Any student found in possession of any drugs or alcohol or related paraphernalia faces severe consequences that may include: emergency medical intervention, suspension, termination of placement, arrest and legal consequences. Similarly, any student determined to be distributing or attempting to distribute drugs or alcohol faces similar consequences. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of any student found to be in possession of or attempting to distribute any illegal substance will be contacted and informed of the incident and related issues.

Lighthouse School has a long history of addressing the issues of substance use/abuse with its students and staff. These issues are part of the health curriculum taught to high school students. Given the current circumstances, these historic actions have been expanded to include:

1. Expansion of our Health and Group Psychotherapy curricula.
2. Designation of a week in March as Substance Abuse Awareness Week.
3. Enhanced communication with families about this issue and our actions and interventions.
4. SBIRT screenings

As stated throughout this document, substance use/abuse is globally addressed from the perspective of APEX. In other words, intervention and treatment certainly addresses the overt behaviors of the use and abuse of drugs or alcohol. At the same time, central to our belief in biodevelopment is the idea that the features, reasons, or factors that underlie or contribute to the use of drugs or alcohol are the best targets for treatment and intervention. When students gain a deeper and more objective understanding of who they are and the thematic needs underlying their actions, they are able to make better and more positive and healthy decisions.

## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

All students participate in Lighthouse School's positive reinforcement system. Goals and objectives are based on the student's IEP and their unique needs and features. For most students,

reinforcement comes in the form of tokens. Younger or more developmentally delayed students may receive stickers or stars instead of tokens. Finally, a small number of students' needs are such that the use of primary reinforcement (food items) is the most efficient and effective means to help them acquire more adaptive patterns of functioning.

## **SPECIALIZED PLANS**

We want students to be successful at school, at home, and in the community. Based on their actions, and to assist them in this process, students may be placed on a number of different programs that include: a Home Plan, an Attendance Plan, a Bus/ Plan, and/or an Enhanced Motivation Plan.

## **SAFETY CHECK/CONTRABAND SEARCH PROCESS**

From time to time, situations arise that require staff to search students. Reasons for this may include, but are not limited to:

- A history of bringing contraband to school
- Credible reports of a student being in possession of contraband
- Direct statements about bringing contraband to school
- A history of stealing
- A pattern of actions that indicate the student is at a heightened risk to engage in illegal, dangerous, or unsafe actions

### **Safety Check Process**

- Students on the safety check list are escorted to the Student Regulation Center at the beginning and/or end of each day.
- The student will be asked to empty and turn their pockets inside out by assigned staff.
- All bags and lunch boxes will be checked.
- Should any contraband be found, a Case Management decision will be made to determine the course of action, up to and including the possibility of suspension. Any confiscated contraband will not be returned.
- Refusal to participate in this process may result in the student remaining in the Student Regulation Center until the situation is resolved.
- Families will be notified when their student is involved in this process.
- Students will be on the Safety Check Process for a period of time, as determined by relevant supervisors.
- Students involved with the Safety Check Process may have other consequences including: change in Student Level, limited or no access to athletics and/or offsite activities, and other consequences as determined by supervisors.

## **SPECIALIZED SUPPORT HOMEROOM**

We want students to attend school every day and strive to minimize suspension or actions that remove them from school. At times, students demonstrate actions that require a more restrictive environment. The Specialized Support Homeroom is a room with a very high student-to-staff

ratio. Assignment to this room is not a punishment, but rather recognition that the student needs more external structure in order to be successful. There are two categories of action that result in assignment to the room: a thematic pattern of violations of school rules and/or actions that are highly intrusive to students and staff, or a return from a hospitalization or suspension. Each situation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and families are informed of all aspects of this programming.

## “AT RISK” INCIDENTS

The students who attend Lighthouse School are entrusted to our care. No priority supersedes that of safety. During times of extreme emotional distress or for other reasons, a student may demonstrate “at risk” actions. These actions include, but are not limited to: threatening to hurt self/another person; an extended period of time of being out of control and unable to demonstrate basic self-regulation; possession of a weapon; possession of drugs or alcohol; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol; running away or threatening to do so; biting or approximating biting; or any other action that is considered to represent a risk. The occurrence of any of these actions is taken with the highest degree of seriousness. While each case is evaluated individually, responses to these actions may include: an immediate, onsite family services session; contacting police, probation or other involved legal entities; contacting involved social service agencies or individuals; calling an ambulance in order to have the student taken to a local hospital where he/she can be evaluated by a Crisis Team for potential hospitalization; or hospitalization for medical treatment. To the extent possible, parents, guardians, and other involved parties will be included in the discussion about intervention options, but Lighthouse School reserves the right to decide how to best maximize the safety and well-being of all involved.

## STUDENT LEVEL SYSTEM

Lighthouse School employs a Student Level System for Elementary and Secondary school-aged students, with each system designed to efficiently differentiate and track student performance to determine a level of autonomy that students are capable of while at school.

Unlike traditional level systems, Lighthouse School does not look solely at behavioral compliance and safety as mechanisms for movement throughout the system. Important values such as trust, dependability, honesty, consideration and respect are given great weight in decisions regarding levels.

The level system is not designed to provide a judgement about a student, but merely reflects where the student is currently functioning, just as a child playing in Little League is not judged because he/she is not playing American Legion baseball. It is simply a reflection of his/her current set of skills.

At Lighthouse School, there are four levels for Elementary aged students and five levels for Secondary school-aged students, all with varying opportunities for independence at each level. Although the levels are somewhat sequential in nature, the system is designed to take students’ treatment needs into consideration, even before they are ready for higher levels of independence. Therefore, the Lighthouse School Level System does not employ numerical labels, but rather, labels that clearly describe a student’s current capability. For the Elementary school-aged students, the four levels are: Escort, Initial, Opportunity and Independence. For the Secondary

school-aged students, the five levels are: Escort, Initial, Opportunity, Independence and Expansion.

Frequent discussions take place between staff and students about their goals and how they can work to earn more autonomy. The focus is less on progression through the system, and more on where students see their skills in terms of principles we value so highly. Movement within the system provides feedback to staff, students, and families about a student's current capabilities.

Finally, although not designed as a reinforcement instrument, many students are motivated by the chance to earn increased independence and autonomy.

## **BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, and HAZING**

**Bullying:** Consistent with M.G.L., c.71 §37O, Lighthouse School has a comprehensive program to address all aspects of bullying. From the perspective of APEX, there are two objectives with any incidents that may involve bullying: first, to maximize the safety of all concerned and to address the overt, unacceptable actions directly and immediately; second, to understand the features and factors underlying these overt actions and to focus treatment on these more covert issues.

**Education about bullying:** One of the significant benefits of APEX is its functional utility. That is, because, as noted above, the focus is on both overt action and on underlying causal factors, APEX is relatively easily applied to any number of dysfunctional, inappropriate, and/or intrusive actions exhibited by students. Thus, it is a fairly straightforward process to treat bullying from the perspective of APEX. Student education regarding bullying is addressed in three major forums with students: Individual Psychotherapy, Group Psychotherapy, and school-wide APEX applications.

**Reporting of incidents:** If a student or their family feels that they may be involved in bullying they are encouraged to immediately report their concerns. These reports can be directed to any Lighthouse School staff or to Mr. Rick Kilmartin, Coordinator for Treatment Amplification, who is the Manager responsible for handling bullying.

**Initial bullying investigations:** All reports of bullying will be investigated. The purpose of this initial investigation is to determine if a full-length bullying investigation is warranted or if the incident involves inappropriate action that does not meet the definition of bullying, but that nonetheless needs to be addressed and resolved. If a full bullying investigation is warranted, families will be formally informed of both the start and the completion of the investigation.

**Safety Plans:** Any reports of potential bullying will be examined to determine if there is an immediate risk to student safety. If it is determined that there is a safety risk, Lighthouse School staff will implement a Safety Plan.

**Consequences of bullying:** Students determined to have been the aggressor in an incident of bullying face a range of consequences that may include suspension, termination, and criminal charges.

**Cyberbullying and Social Media:** We need your help in addressing the very serious issue of cyberbullying. Please communicate with us regarding any information or concerns you have. In

particular, we ask for your help in addressing cyberbullying. As noted earlier, many students who are enrolled at Lighthouse School struggle with social interaction and social isolation. This difficulty often makes social media very attractive. Unfortunately, unsupervised social interaction of any form often leads to unforeseen and undesirable consequences. For these reasons, we ask families to carefully weigh the pluses and minuses before they allow their child to participate in any social media. If you choose to allow your child to participate, we ask that you closely monitor their activity and report any concerns or issues. Please be aware that we have a legal obligation to investigate allegations of bullying and cyberbullying that impacts our students even if the alleged actions happen outside of school.

**Sexting:** Sexting refers to text messages containing written or visual content of a sexual nature. Unfortunately, such content is becoming increasingly common among teens and tweens and we ask for your help in monitoring your child's use of the internet either through a computer or cell phone. Although Lighthouse School has implemented policies regarding the use of cell phones in school, students often have access to devices during non-school hours that enable them to transmit inappropriate content. Students are also often unaware of the consequences of sending such material and lack a clear understanding of how quickly images and other content can be shared. Lighthouse School will treat incidents of sexting in a similar fashion and with the same level of seriousness as any incident of bullying or hazing.

**Hazing:** Consistent with M.G.L., c.269 §17-19, Lighthouse School prohibits the use of hazing. Hazing is any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

All reports of, or concerns about, potential hazing will be thoroughly investigated. Students determined to have organized or participated in hazing activities will be subject to a range of disciplinary actions that may include suspension, termination, and legal consequences.

All full-time, secondary school-aged students will review the relevant Massachusetts General Law (MGL) and sign a form documenting their receipt and understanding of these laws, and their commitment to refrain from hazing. Any student participating in athletics will also be required to review the Massachusetts General Laws related to hazing and sign an anti-hazing pledge form at the beginning of the season for each sport in which he or she participates.

## A NOTE ON BULLYING TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The safety and well-being of the children entrusted to our care is a responsibility that each member of the Lighthouse School team takes very seriously. Long before Massachusetts enacted the Bullying Prevention statute in 2010, Lighthouse was dedicated to creating a culture of safety and acceptance for our students. In accordance with the best practices of bullying prevention, we encourage meaningful relationships between students and staff members, promote conflict resolution processes and focus on treating others with consideration. We strive to instill character in our young men and women by including processes such as Values and Social Responsibility in our treatment model.

Every report of bullying we receive is followed up on to determine if a formal bullying investigation is warranted. Staff members are trained to access a supervisor immediately if they receive a report of bullying from a student, parent, bus driver, or other source. A Clinical Coordinator, receives every complaint or concern that is raised. We have also worked closely

with our liaisons at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Chelmsford Police Department to ensure that we are being fully compliant with the law, but also doing everything we can to proactively make the school safe from bullying.

We encourage students and staff not to use the word ‘bullying’ lightly, as it is a word with a specific legal meaning and consequences. There are also specific criteria that must be met in order for a conflict to meet the definition of bullying, including the notion of repetitive or thematic actions, and the existence of a clear imbalance of social or physical power. Sometimes, what a child may report as bullying, such as being cut in line, or not having a turn on the swing, can be better defined as conflicts between two students that we aim to assist students in resolving.

As a parent or guardian, you may disagree with the school’s finding on a bullying accusation. As always, we welcome feedback and encourage parents and guardians to come in and discuss these conflicts at any time. We can assure you that we make every effort to be thorough and fair in our investigations. We also have the advantage of having multiple perspectives when parents and guardians may only hear the perspective of their child.

What has become the largest and most vexing issue in recent years is the prevalence of inappropriate online behavior and comments, particularly on social media apps. Many of our students struggle with the social dimension. Developmentally, they are at an age where social experiences are enormously important, but are increasingly complicated, confusing and emotionally charged. We are contending with an enormous amount of communication that is taking place electronically, where tone and affect can quickly become so easily confused. We work hard to guide our students and instruct them in social nuance and manners. Family therapists can also be a tremendous resource to help families limit, block and monitor questionable internet sites, including social apps that you may wish to monitor more closely.

We greatly value our partnerships with the parents and guardians of our students. Whatever the outcome of an investigation, we always strive to include the families in our treatment strategies going forward. Whether the student is identified as the aggressor, or the target of the bullying behaviors, the best outcomes result from the united efforts of the school and our families. We look forward to working closely with you in this upcoming school year and, as always, encourage you to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

\*For the complete Lighthouse School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, please visit our website: [www.lighthouseschool.org](http://www.lighthouseschool.org)

## ATTENDANCE

One of Lighthouse School’s core beliefs is that we are a “Corporation for Kids”. Everything we do focuses on promoting life success and is driven by engagement in our treatment. Consistent school attendance is crucial in order for students to be available for treatment opportunities and begin to make biodevelopmental changes that will generalize beyond their enrollment at Lighthouse. We partner with parents, legal guardians and school districts, to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with state laws and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations. A student who is thematically absent or truant from school, with or without a valid reason, for 10% or more of the available school days, may be subject to the following:

- Emergency Family meeting
- Emergency Team meeting with the LEA Representative
- All future absences could be subject to verification through formal documentation (i.e., doctor's note)
- Filing with The Department of Children and Families in Massachusetts, The Division for Children, Youth and Families in New Hampshire, or the court system
- Working with the LEA to involve a truancy officer
- The student's placement may be in jeopardy
- Lighthouse School will work with the LEA to determine the next possible steps which may include being removed from our roster with the option of being re-referred at a future time

Each day a student is absent, a phone call home will be made, unless we have received notification prior to the absence. If we are unable to reach a parent or guardian, the absence will be considered unexcused.

## HOMework

Homework is a challenge that all students must confront. It is our intent to utilize homework to help teach responsibility and foster independence within our students. Homework is also important preparation for students considering a return to public school. Homework at Lighthouse School is designed to allow students to practice skills they have already learned and practiced, in order to promote success, pride, and academic confidence. Homework is not intended to introduce new concepts or "challenge" students to complete tasks to which they have not yet been exposed.

## TERMINATIONS

Lighthouse School will not terminate the enrollment of any student, even in emergency circumstances, until due process is satisfied and the enrolling public school district is informed and assumes responsibility for the student.

Lighthouse School has a termination policy that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- At the request of the public school district, Lighthouse School will delay termination of the student for up to two (2) calendar weeks to allow the public school district the opportunity to convene an emergency Team meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination.
- With mutual agreement between Lighthouse School and the school district, termination of enrollment may be delayed for longer than two calendar weeks.
- For planned terminations, Lighthouse School will notify the school district of the need for an IEP review meeting and provide notice of this meeting to all appropriate parties ten (10) days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to develop a clear and specific termination plan for the student that shall be implemented in no less than thirty (30) days unless all parties agree to an earlier termination date.

- For emergency terminations in which there are circumstances where the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/herself or others, Lighthouse School will follow the procedures required under 603 CMR 28.09 (12)(b) and immediately notify the Department of Education (via Form 2 as required).

## **SECTION 6: COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS**

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND POSTINGS**

Lighthouse School maintains onsite, and makes available to the public for review upon request, the following documentation:

- Current approval and Intake status issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- First aid, medical, and emergency procedures, the location of the nearest telephones within each building, and emergency telephone numbers (must be posted in each room)
- Evacuation routes and procedures posted in each room
- Program information including a statement of purpose, general description of educational program, and an organizational chart
- A notice that use of nicotine products is not permitted on school property or at any school related function
- Current tuition rate for students
- Evidence of authority to operate the private school, including documents that identify ownership and as applicable, partnership agreements, the names of officers, boards, charters, articles of organization and by-laws

### **PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION**

Lighthouse School has in-place the following policies and/or appropriate documentation:

- Valid safety inspections by the Town of Chelmsford
- Health inspections
- Fire safety inspection from the Chelmsford Fire Department
- Asbestos inspection
- PCB inspection
- A report demonstrating compliance with childhood lead poisoning prevention and control law and regulations
- Lighthouse School's Policies and Procedure Manual. This manual, in its entirety, is available for review upon request by parents at any time

### **INTERNET ACCESS TO STATE REGULATIONS AND FEDERAL LAWS**

Procedures for viewing state and federal special education laws via the internet are as follows:

- In the address field, type in [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

- Click on the Menu Button in top left corner
- Click on Legal
- Click on State Regulations
- Click on Federal Laws

## ACCESS TO PROGRAM REVIEWS

Lighthouse School makes available to staff, parents, and the general public the findings of scheduled program reviews conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In the event that the program review finds any aspects of the program requiring corrective action by Lighthouse School, that corrective action plan is also available.

These documents are the methods by which the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ensures feedback and compliance for its program review system.

If anyone is interested in reviewing these materials, please contact:

Scott Bartis, Ph.D.  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 Lighthouse School, Inc.  
 25 Wellman Avenue  
 North Chelmsford, MA 01863-1334  
 (978) 251-4050

## REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

In response to both regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its own desire to always provide the highest level of care for enrolled students, Lighthouse School takes very seriously its obligation to monitor and report suspected neglect or abuse of any student.

Any observation or suspicion of abuse or neglect is reported to Lighthouse School supervisors and medical staff for monitoring and investigation. When abuse or neglect are suspected, Lighthouse School complies with all mandatory 51-A/DPPC reporting procedures and works closely with the designated authorities.

All team members at Lighthouse School receive annual training regarding their responsibilities as mandated reporters, the indications of abuse and/or neglect, the process of reporting abuse and/or neglect, both within Lighthouse School and to appropriate outside agencies, and the family follow-up processes.

Lighthouse School also notifies the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the event that a 51-A alleging abuse or neglect is filed against the program or any Team member.

## LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL AS A NONSMOKING ENVIRONMENT

Lighthouse School operates in compliance with the Federal Pro-Children Act of 1994 (Section 1041 of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, P.L. 103-227, 20 USC 6081 and prohibits smoking inside the facility and on school grounds.

## SECTION 7: SERVICES

### COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

#### *Everything Under One Roof*

Traditional academic education is certainly important. However, for the student population at Lighthouse School it is not enough. At Lighthouse School there is a broad range of curriculum-based, interdisciplinary services which include educational, vocational, communication, clinical, neuromotor and medical services. These services do not simply work alongside of each other. Rather, they are integrated into an approach called APEX Biodevelopment which produces a more powerful technical intervention resulting in more positive biodevelopment than any service alone could produce.

The goal of APEX Biodevelopment is not just to produce positive or cognitive development, but also to help students progress socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. Lighthouse School believes that children need to grow in all of these dimensions; APEX Biodevelopment incorporates a comprehensive approach to learning, one that is aimed at meeting real needs - needs that are basic to all individuals whether they are limited by disabilities or not. We strive to address the major needs of our students and to provide services in the three major areas of: School, Home and Community. At Lighthouse School, services for these needs are available under one roof.

**Interdisciplinary Services:** Lighthouse School utilizes a highly structured Interdisciplinary Services Model designed to maximize student gain across all dimensions of functioning. Communication and coordination are at the heart of this model and together serve to meet the goal of maximizing experiential consistency, resulting in long-term benefits to our students. The specific disciplines, departments, and divisions of our dedicated and trained staff are necessary and convenient organizational distinctions; however, students receive maximum benefit when all members of the treatment team work collaboratively and cohesively, utilizing specific, common techniques, to achieve collective goals and objectives. Consider, for example, a Speech Therapist who is working with a student to expand his conversational skills. The therapist addresses this goal by utilizing specific techniques during weekly speech lessons with the student. Although the goals and techniques are appropriate and achievable, opportunities for the therapist and student to work together are necessarily limited. However, if every other staff member who interacts with the student throughout his day is aware of the goal of improving conversational skills, and incorporates the same techniques into their lessons, activities, and interactions with the student, there is a fundamental change in the quantity, quality, and texture of the student's experience. Suddenly, the goal of "improving conversational skills" transforms from a narrow and artificially isolated and time-limited experience with one staff member, to a naturally-occurring experience of everyday life.

**Instruction:** Educational services and instruction at Lighthouse School are based upon the student's individual and specific needs as identified in their IEP. Services are delivered through courses that

vary in length from one quarter to one school year, and instruction occurs within small groups of four to six students of similar age and functioning. Individual courses and their content are aligned with Common Core State Standards. All academic lessons, activities, class assignments, and homework are differentiated to meet the unique needs of each student and address their specific learning styles.

**Curriculum:** Lighthouse School provides a vast array of services to address the educational needs of our students. Many of these services are similar to those provided within a public-school setting, as we believe it is important to address the educational needs of our students and ensure that they are able, to the best of their ability, to continue to make appropriate academic progress, while still having their clinical needs met.

In addition to providing the curriculum appropriate for each student based upon both chronological age and developmental needs, Lighthouse School provides a variety of other educational services and supports. These include, but are not limited to, specialized Reading and Writing instruction, via leveled groups, for elementary and middle school-aged students; specialized Math instruction for middle school students requiring remediation; and MCAS preparatory instruction for all grade levels. In collaboration with individual school districts, we are also able to support community service projects and develop independent study courses to meet high school graduation requirements.

High school students also have the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of elective courses ranging from Classic Literature on Film to World Foods. These electives serve to address students' personal interests, as well as help them meet district credit requirements necessary for graduation with a diploma. A number of our electives also provide students with additional vocational training and support, or allow them to address health and wellness issues beyond a weekly gym class. Students choose two electives per year during grades 9 through 12, with each elective covering one nine-week quarter.

High school students also take one semester of Health each year during grades 9 through 12. The Lighthouse School Health curriculum covers topics such as interpersonal relationships, nutrition, safety, emotional health, and human sexuality.

## Services

**Allied:** These services focus on understanding the unique ways that students process their world and their experiences and using this understanding to help the team to implement effective learning strategies. Included are specialists in the areas of Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, and Assessment.

**Community:** These services have a two-fold focus: first, to help students directly acquire skills in “real-world” settings and second, to forge linkages between Lighthouse School and community-based providers.

**Family:** These services focus on building communication bridges and partnerships with parents, guardians and collaterals.

**Regulation:** These services help students to preserve and restore functional levels of regulation across the 8 dimensions of experience.

**Education:** These services focus on helping students acquire the academic skills that will allow them to participate more fully in later grades as well as to meet generalized standards and expectations.

**Health (Physical Education):** These services focus on building skills that help develop and maintain practices that contribute to health and well-being.

**Health (Clinical):** These services focus on helping students gain the skills and insights necessary to be successful in all life contexts. Included here is Individual and Group Psychotherapy.

**Expressive Therapy Services:** These services focus on helping students use their creativity and nonverbal talents to express themselves and their needs to advance biodevelopment.

**Medical:** These services focus on providing students medical and nursing services that facilitate learning to maintain and enhance well-being.

**Psychiatry:** These services focus on working with students and families to determine if medication could play a role in the holistic treatment of the student

**Transition:** These services focus on providing students with opportunities to acquire generalized skills necessary in the world of work.

**Technology:** These services focus on using computer-based technologies to advance learning and treatment.

## LIST OF SERVICES AVAILABLE AT LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

### **Administrative**

Progress Reports/Report Cards (Quarterly)  
Transcripts  
Hospitalization Tutoring Support  
Communication with Community-Based Agencies  
Breakfast Program and Lunch Program  
IEP Development  
TEAM Meeting Process  
Mainstreaming to Less Restrictive Settings

### **Allied Services**

Speech and Communication Services  
Physical Education Services  
Sensory Integration Services  
Occupational Therapy Services  
Athletic Programs

### **Assessment Services**

MCAS On Demand Administration  
MCAS-Alt Portfolio Development  
NH SAS On Demand Administration  
NH DLM Administration  
Computer-Based Technology Services  
Re-evaluation Testing

### **Facilities**

Art Room  
Gym  
Indoor Play Space  
Playground  
Prozone Space  
Student Library  
Sport Court  
33 Acres/Grounds

### **Medical**

Health Screenings  
Oversight of student allergies and food sensitivities  
Management of acute health issues  
Individual healthcare planning  
Planning/treatment of chronic health conditions  
Medication oversight  
Activities of daily living lessons focused on self-care  
Emergency treatment and care  
Consultation/collaboration with community providers

### **Clinical Services**

Community Networking and Referral System  
Expressive Therapy  
Individual Psychotherapy  
Group Psychotherapy  
Psychiatric Consults  
24-Hour Family Support  
Peer Development and Social Skills Training  
Community Safety Training  
Health Education  
Student Level System  
Accessing Community Resources  
Recreational Skills and Opportunities  
Peer Development  
Community Resources  
Student Clubs  
Home Plans  
Regulation Services  
Family and Outreach Services  
Transportation Plans  
Attendance Plans  
Specialized Reinforcement

### **Educational Services**

Life Skills Reading/Life Skills Mathematics  
Applied Life Skills  
History and Social Sciences  
MCAS Tutorials  
Electives  
English Language Arts/Reading/Writing  
Science, Technology and Engineering  
Homework  
Mathematics  
Project Act (In-house Job Training)  
Vocational Skill Development  
Life Skills Development  
Job Training and Exploration  
Transition Services and Planning

## SECTION 8: REFERENCES

### MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW: BULLYING

Section 37O: School bullying prohibited; bullying prevention and intervention plans; reporting of bullying incident date

Section 37O. (a) As used in this section the following words shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meaning:

"Approved private day or residential school", a school that accepts, through agreement with a school committee, a child requiring special education pursuant to section 10 of chapter 71B.

"Bullying", the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional 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 himself or of damage to his 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 or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

"Charter school", commonwealth charter schools and Horace Mann charter schools established pursuant to section 89 of chapter 71.

"Cyber-bullying", 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 identity 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 clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the 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 clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

"Collaborative school", a school operated by an educational collaborative established pursuant to section 4E of chapter 40.

"Department", the department of elementary and secondary education.

"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.

"Plan", a bullying prevention and intervention plan established pursuant to subsection (d).

"Perpetrator", a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

"School district", the school department of a city or town, a regional school district or a county agricultural school.

"School grounds", property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school, or collaborative school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

"Victim", a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

(b) Bullying shall be prohibited: (i) 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 a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or 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 or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

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

(c) Each school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the curriculum of the school district or school. The curriculum shall be evidence-based.

(d)(1) Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall develop, adhere to and update a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The plan shall apply to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals. The consultation shall include, but not be limited to, notice and a public comment period; provided, however, that a non-public school shall only be required to give notice to and provide a comment period for families that have a child attending the school. The plan shall be updated at least biennially.

(2) Each plan shall include, but not be limited to: (i) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation, including procedures for collecting, maintaining and reporting bullying incident data required under subsection (k); (ii) clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians and others to report bullying or retaliation; (iii) a provision that 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; (iv) clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation; (v) the

range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior; (vi) clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection; (vii) strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about an act of bullying; (viii) procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator; provided, that the parents or guardians of a victim shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and provided, further, that the procedures shall provide for immediate notification pursuant to regulations promulgated under this subsection by the principal or person who holds a comparable role to the local law enforcement agency when criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator; (ix) a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action; and (x) a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims and for appropriate family members of said students. The plan shall afford all students the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

(3) Each plan shall recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics. The plan shall include the specific steps that each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall take to support vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. A school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school may establish separate discrimination or harassment policies that include additional categories of students. Nothing in this section shall alter the obligations of a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school to remediate any discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state or federal law.

(4) The plan for a school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall include a provision for ongoing professional development to build the 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. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying. The department shall identify and offer information on alternative methods for fulfilling the professional development requirements of this section, at least 1 of these alternative methods shall be available at no cost to school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools and collaborative schools.

(5) The plan shall include provisions for informing parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum of the school district or school and shall include, but not be limited to: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school district or school plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyber-bullying.

(6) The department shall promulgate rules and regulations on the requirements related to a principal's duties under clause (viii) of the second paragraph of this subsection; provided, however, that school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools and collaborative schools shall be subject to the regulations. A non-public school shall develop procedures for immediate notification by the principal or person who holds a comparable role to the local law enforcement agency when criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator.

(e)(1) Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative 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 relevant student-related sections of the plan.

(2) Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall provide to all school staff annual written notice of the plan. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in a school district or school employee handbook.

(3) The plan shall be posted on the website of each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school.

(f) Each school principal or the person who holds a comparable position shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan at his school.

(g) A member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the principal or to the school official identified in the plan as responsible for receiving such reports or both. Upon receipt of such a report, the school principal or a designee shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school principal or designee shall (i) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against a perpetrator; (ii) take appropriate disciplinary action; (iii) notify the parents or guardians of a perpetrator; (iv) notify the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and (v) inform the parents or guardians of the victim about the department's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system.

(h) If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the school district or school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the school district or school informed of the bullying

or retaliation shall contact law enforcement consistent with the provisions of clause (viii) of the second paragraph of subsection (d).

(i) Nothing in this section shall supersede or replace existing rights or remedies under any other general or special law, nor shall this section create a private right of action.

(j) The department, after consultation with the department of public health, the department of mental health, the attorney general, the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association and experts on bullying shall: (i) publish a model plan for school districts and schools to consider when creating their plans; and (ii) compile a list of bullying prevention and intervention resources, evidence-based curricula, best practices and academic-based research that shall be made available to schools. The model plan shall be consistent with the behavioral health and public schools framework developed by the department in accordance with section 19 of chapter 321 of the acts of 2008. The resources may include, but shall not be limited to, print, audio, video or digital media; subscription based online services; and on-site or technology-enabled professional development and training sessions. The department shall biennially update the model plan and the list of the resources, curricula, best practices and research and shall post them on its website.

(k) Each school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall annually report bullying incident data to the department. The data shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; (ii) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying or retaliation; (iii) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation; and (iv) any other information required by the department. Said incident data shall be reported in the form and manner established by the department, in consultation with the attorney general; provided, that the department shall minimize the costs and resources needed to comply with said reporting requirements; and provided further, that the department may use existing data collection and reporting mechanisms to collect the information from school districts. The department shall analyze the bullying incident data and shall publish an annual report containing aggregate statewide information on the frequency and nature of bullying in schools. The department shall file the annual report with the attorney general and with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives who shall forward the same to the chairs of the joint committee on education, the joint committee on the judiciary and the house and senate committees on ways and means.

(l) The department shall develop a student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in schools. The survey shall be administered by each school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school at least once every 4 years. The survey shall be designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation by students.

The school official identified in the plan as responsible for receiving reports of bullying or retaliation shall verify the completion of the student surveys. All completed surveys shall be forwarded to the department. The department shall use the survey results to help assess the effectiveness of bullying prevention curricula and instruction developed and administered under subsection (c). The department shall collect and analyze the student survey data in order to: compare the survey results with the bullying incident data reported under subsection (k); identify long-term trends and areas of improvement; and monitor bullying prevention efforts in schools over time. The department shall make its findings available to the school official.

(m) Each school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school may adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent the district or school's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention.

(n) The department may investigate certain alleged incidents of bullying. If, upon completion of investigation by the department, a school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school is found to not have properly implemented its prevention plan as outlined in subsection (d), the department may require that school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school to properly implement the plan or take other actions to address the findings of the investigation.

## **MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW: HAZING**

### **MGL c269, s17 Hazing**

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, 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" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

### **MGL c269, s18 Failure to Report Hazing**

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen 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.

### **MGL c269, s19 Schools to Provide Copy of Hazing Law to Students**

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It

shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a fulltime student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

## IN CLOSING

We hope that you will work with us to improve next year's handbook. Please send your feedback to Dr. Scott Bartis, Chief Executive Officer, Lighthouse School, Inc., 25 Wellman Avenue, North Chelmsford, MA 01863. All feedback will be taken seriously and considered as we move forward. From all the team members at Lighthouse School, thank you for entrusting your child to our care and being an important part of the Lighthouse Family.