

HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL



Family Handbook 2020-21

We hope that the information in this book will help make your year at Hilltown informed and enjoyable. Please contact us to clarify or to ask questions.

*To request a translation of this or any other school documents
please email info@hilltowncharter.org*

*(Si usted desea una copia de este manual - o de cualquier otro documento de la escuela
- en español, por favor comuníquese con info@hilltowncharter.org)*

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School is committed to maintaining a work and learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status.

The complete text of this handbook and related material is also available on our website: www.hilltowncharter.org

In 1993, the Massachusetts Legislature passed an education reform act that included provisions calling for the development of charter schools. Five local parents, artists and educators from the rural communities of Hampshire County set out to create a partnership of teachers, students, families, and community members to establish a creative learning environment for elementary school children. A child-centered approach, focusing upon the needs of individual children and following their creative impulses, was the backbone of the educational philosophy alongside a commitment to governance by a consensus-model parent cooperative.

Support for the vision was overwhelming as many talented community members offered their expertise for the project and joined the founding coalition. On Dec. 9, 1994, the Massachusetts Secretary of Education granted Hilltown a five-year charter to begin operation in Williamsburg in September 1995 and the school opened its doors in the Brassworks building with 3 classrooms and 40 students.

We have now grown to 12 classrooms with 218 students - adding the 7th and 8th grades in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The state reviews of the school have been most favorable and in 2020 we received a fifth renewal of our charter.

Congratulations Hilltown for twenty-five successful and creative years!

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HILLTOWN PERSONNEL 2019 - 2020

Teachers

Kerri Simonelli, Blues (K-1)
Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Indigos (K-1)
Nan Childs, Greens (2-3)
Paula Yolles, Yellows (2-3)
Gina Wyman, Oranges (4-5)
Alec MacLachlan, Reds (4-5)
Paula Ingram, Purples (6)
Peter Kennedy, Purples (6)
Beth Adel, Prisms (7-8)
John Van Beckum, Prisms (7-8)
Rachel Merrell, Prisms (7-8)
Joanna Morse, Prisms (7-8)
Marguerite Durant, Music & Movement K-5
Aram Rubenstein-Gillis, 6,7,8 Music
Laurel Loomis, Atelierista (2-6)
Joy Kinigstein, Atelierista (6-8)
Grace Mrowicki, Technology Integration Specialist
Cait Browne, Special Education
Sam Schoenberger, Special Education
Emily Lees, Special Education
Andrea Hearn Reading Specialist
Juan-Carlos Carpio, Spanish (7-8)
Alex Niemiec, Physical Education, Head Coach

Teaching Assistants

Nellie Rogers, Indigos Graduate Intern
Tonya Andrews, Blues TA
Seana Lamothe, Greens TA
Zoe Klatz, Yellows TA
Madeline Neill, Oranges Graduate Intern
Grace Tiso, Reds TA
Athena Giles, Purples TA
Casey Armanetti, Prisms TA
Jenny Robinson, Prisms TA
Lucy Slate, Prisms TA
Rashida Krieger, Prisms TA
Meghan Siudzinski, Atelier TA

Student Support Team

Amy Linnell, Speech Therapist
Emilie Woodward, School Counselor
Jeanne Schubmehl, Occupational Therapy
Marina Donnelly, School Psychologist
Mary Price; Nurse, Health Ed.
Sara Harvey, Physical Therapy
Stella Metzger, Social Work Intern

Administrative Staff

Lara Ramsey, Director of Teaching and Learning
Kate Saccento, Director of Administration, Civil Rights Coordinator
Deirdre Arthen, Director of Community and Family Engagement
Gaby Blaustein, Education Team Leader
Monique Bourgeois, Administrative Assistant
Carla Clark, Bookkeeper and Purchasing Agent
Nicole Grinaski, Program and Administrative Support

* * * * *

Hilltown Board of Trustees

Matt Dube, President
Dawn Reesman, Vice President
Noelle Stern, Clerk, Governance Committee chair
Rich Senecal, Treasurer, Finance Committee chair
Joe Wyman, Facilities Committee chair
Kelly Woods, Personnel Committee chair
Liz Preston, Long-range Planning Committee chair
Chris Korczak Finance Committee member
Sara Schiefflin (parent member, GABS committee)
Jen Matos (parent member)
Paula Ingram (faculty member)
Jill Richmond (parent member)
Tala Elia MD (parent member)
Dr. Kathleen Szegda (parent member)

Friends of Hilltown Board

Myssie Cassinghino, President
Carol McMurrich, Clerk
Dawn Graichen- Moore, (Interim Treasurer)
Lei Fey, member
Kim Sager Cutt, member



MISSION STATEMENT

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter School was founded in 1995 as a Massachusetts Public Charter School. Our mission is:

- To engage students in a school that uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.*
- To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, which guides and supports the school and its educational program.*
- To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.*

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS) was founded in 1995 as Massachusetts Public Charter School. Inspired by the preschools of Reggio Emilia in Italy, our educational approach is grounded in knowledge of children's development and in a commitment to teaching creative, critical thinking skills and strong basic skills.

At Hilltown, we believe that children construct their understanding of the world through direct experience, with teachers serving as guides and resources. We create an engaging and joyful learning environment using an interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum. Emphasis is placed on asking children and adults to reflect on and document the learning process. The expressive arts play a critical role in the academic and social curriculum, and create a common language that brings our community together in meaningful ways.

Hilltown welcomes and relies on family involvement. Children, families, school and community form an integrated, interdependent system, which operates through an inclusive, consensus-based governance structure. Beyond the academic curriculum, children learn essential life skills through participation in an intimate and inclusive whole school cooperative. Involvement in the local environment and its communities inspires learning and encourages social and civic responsibility as well as stewardship for the earth.

Parents and teachers help children to care for and respect themselves and each other. We strongly believe that the cultivation of each individual voice within a community leads to inclusion of and respect for differences and multiple perspectives.

ADMISSIONS

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter School is a public K-8 school and is open to all children of appropriate grade levels from any Massachusetts town on a space available basis, with priority given to siblings of current students and applicants from Hampshire and Franklin counties. No tuition or application fee is required. Charter schools are funded by the per pupil expenditure from each student's home school district. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School is committed to maintaining a work and learning environment free from discrimination on the

basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status. Our enrollment for the 2020-21 school year is 218 students, kindergarten through grade 8, in twelve mixed-age classrooms.

In January each year, the school advertises and holds an Informational Open House and then conducts an admissions lottery in February to assign students to a waiting list for the following September. As openings occur, the top person on the list is offered the slot. Following the admissions lottery, parents are notified of acceptance or waiting list status. Prospective Parents should log in through the Admissions page of our website at www.hilltowncharter.org to complete an online application. Our complete Enrollment Policy is also posted there.

Once a student is enrolled at Hilltown s/he has a secure space for subsequent years and all siblings gain admission priority. School meetings orient families to the cooperative structure of the school and help welcome them into the school community.

THE ADMINISTRATION

Hilltown has a collaborative administrative structure, rather than hierarchical one with a principal, vice-principal and so on. Three Directors share the responsibility of guiding and operating the school and work together to ensure that the school is viable and stays true to its mission. They each report directly to the Board of Trustees.

***The Director of Teaching and Learning**, Lara Ramsey, is responsible for overseeing the educational program of the school, leading and supervising the educational staff, developing curriculum and coordinating hiring committees for teaching positions.*

***The Director of Administration**, Kate Saccento, is responsible for much of the reporting that goes to the state. She manages the facility, admissions procedures and school finances, hires and supervises the office staff, school nurse and custodial crew, and is the School's Civil Rights Coordinator.*

***The Director of Community and Family Engagement**, Deirdre Pulgram-Arthen, bridges the line between inside and outside of school, developing systems for parent and community volunteers and institutional partnerships, scheduling and facilitating Coop meetings and family events, coordinating the school's event and fundraising calendar, leading events and overseeing the Community Service Learning program.*

THE COOPERATIVE and PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Hilltown School is structured as a cooperative. We believe that education is enhanced by strengthening the ties between school and home, so parental involvement is an essential factor in the school. We ask families to volunteer 40 hours per year, as they are able - even

from a distance. Parent contributions also help us to keep costs down and allow a flexibility, richness and diversity in the school, which we might otherwise not achieve.

Membership and voting

All parents, legal guardians and staff at school are considered members of the Cooperative and are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting at which we conduct the business of electing new members to Hilltown's Board of Trustees and vote on any updates that are needed to the school's by-laws. Grandparents, friends and outside community members who invest at least 40 hours of volunteer work per year (4 hours/month) to benefit the school are also considered voting members.

Parents make up most of the membership of the major decision-making bodies of the school, including the Board of Trustees along with its policy-making committees. They also comprise the board of The Friends of Hilltown (see below).

CO-OP meetings are held several times a year, depending on the need. Parents are encouraged to attend. These meetings are a chance for members to hear from the Board of Trustees and the school administration about current happenings at the school and discuss relevant community issues such as school culture, structure and educational philosophy. Elections of new Board of Trustees members occur in the spring at the Annual Meeting.



Volunteering at school

Participating in the activities of the school is a wonderful way for parents to support their child's learning, feel informed and connected, and also get to know other parents. At Hilltown we rely on volunteers to help us create the richest possible learning environment. There are many ways for parents (and grandparents or other care-givers) to participate in this

cooperative community and we encourage every parent to volunteer for the school in some way every year. This year, since we are remote, parents are already stretching to support their children's learning so volunteering will look quite different from in years past.

All parents are asked to complete an individual Volunteer Resource Form at the beginning of the year, and the questions asked there this year will reflect the times. These give us information about how you would most like to participate as well as your skills and interests. Parents who eventually want to spend time with students in the classroom or driving on field trips must give permission for a state CORI check as well.

THE PARENT PORTAL

One of the main ways that we share information is through a secure portal system, where you can log in to find general information about school and class activities, such as the school's ongoing Google calendar, as well as information specific to your child(ren) such as what classes they are in and their attendance. You will also find forms to complete on-line and forms you can download, including school lunch orders and after-school program sign-ups. Later in the year, student progress reports will be distributed to parents via the portal. We will generally email you when key items are posted, but it would be helpful to check for updates and developments periodically throughout the year.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication among parents, staff and the Board is essential. Upcoming events are posted in the main entry way and there are also mailboxes there for each family (see below). In the main entry way you will find a case where announcements and agendas from Board and committee meetings are posted.

*The **Hilltown Newsletter** is our other main method of communication. It is distributed to staff and families via email once a week. It contains an updated calendar, information about various special activities, meeting summaries from the Board of Trustees, and other announcements and articles from the school. There is a Community Section where we list programs and activities that are happening at Hilltown but organized and managed by parents or other entities. Parents may also use this section to request help or offer give-aways. We try to minimize ads, but sometimes they are of interest to our families, so anything profit-making, like sales of items by families or advertisements for classes require a small fee. Contact Deirdre Arthen about this. The Newsletter is sent by email via Constant Contact. Make sure that your in-box is ready to receive it so it doesn't go to SPAM. Please be sure to give the main office any address, email or phone number changes throughout the year so that we can stay in touch with you.*

*A **Family Directory** is available through your Parent Portal and may also be obtained in a paper version to help parents and students stay in touch with one another by phone and email. This*

information is confidential and must not be passed along to anyone outside the school or used for group mailings. You may update and control your own directory listing in the Portal if your contact information changes or for desired level of visibility.

*Parents may also communicate with each other in private community **Facebook groups** which are created by the school for grade-level parent cohorts. These are our substitute for the hallway conversations that we cannot have this year and can be a good place for making connections around podding, transportation, outdoor adventures etc.*

Communication with Teachers

For most teachers this year, an email is the best way to set up a time for uninterrupted discussion. Please include your telephone number and the times you are most easily reached. The teacher will contact you to discuss the issue or set up a time to meet, if necessary. If you call the school to leave a message for a teacher, please be aware that they may not be in the building and will not check their messages until the end of the day if they are. Leave all urgent or time-sensitive messages with the Administrative Assistant to pass along in person. Teachers are not expected to be immediately available to parents and students at night or on the weekends.

Communication with Students

During the day you may leave messages in the office for students who are in the building, and they will be delivered when time allows. Students will be called from class only for emergencies. No student cell phone or smart-watch use - text or voice - is allowed during the school day or after-school activities. (see policy below)

Addressing Concerns, Getting your Voice Heard

We encourage everyone in the school to go directly to the person involved to resolve problems as they come up. Educational or classroom concerns should first be addressed with the teacher involved. The three school Directors are always glad to converse with parents. Make arrangements through email, or attend one of their Office Hours which are posted in the newsletter.

***Board of Trustees** meetings are open to everyone and have room for a public comment period during every meeting. Some of the Board committees have open membership and participation in the work is a great way to have input into how things happen. Committee meetings are also open to the public. Times and links are posted in the Newsletter and the school's online google calendar.*

***The Hilltown Special Education Parent Advisory Committee** is a parent-run organization directly liaised with the Coordinator of Student Services and the Director of Teaching and Learning. The Hilltown SEPAC mission is*

- To provide a network in which parents/guardians/advocates of children with special needs have access to relevant information, training and support
- To encourage an atmosphere of effective open communication, understanding, and mutual respect among all students, parents, educators and the community-at-large about issues relevant to Hilltown's Special Education.
- To provide advice and recommendations to school leadership and the Board of Trustees regarding special education programs and policies

Meetings are monthly, noted on the school's Google calendar, and are announced in the newsletter.

The Parent Resource Group and Class Parents, all active community members, can be a good resource when you have general questions or need to check in. Class Parents assist teacher with materials and communications and also work to strengthen the sense of community among parents.

Dissemination

Sharing our best practices with the larger community is a goal at Hilltown. You can find the full details of our dissemination efforts in our Annual Report (www.hilltowncharter.org)



SCHEDULES AND DAILY LOGISTICS

Massachusetts General Laws require children to attend school regularly. Parents and guardians are essential to good attendance and are responsible for ensuring that children attend school regularly and on time. Hilltown expects students to attend school daily to receive the maximum benefits of our program. Our attendance policy for 2020-21 is included in the Appendix; please look at it to familiarize yourself with the limits on absences.

Arrivals, Departures and Attendance

Arrival and departure times and procedures will change during the year. Please read your Newsletter regularly to stay up to date.

The doors are locked between arrival and dismissal times and no child may leave without an adult or written permission. Most visitors are not permitted at this time for health reasons, but parents who have a scheduled meeting with a staff member may be admitted.

No Idling

When waiting to drop off or pick up your child after school, please turn off your engine if the line is not yet moving. Massachusetts law states that: "No person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the unnecessary operation of the engine of a motor vehicle while said vehicle is stopped for a foreseeable period of time in excess of five minutes."

Attendance

We need to keep track of who is here and who is not. If your child will be absent due to illness or for any other reason, a parent must either email attendance@hilltowncharter.org by 8:20am (preferred) or call the school and leave a message on the attendance voice mail: 413-529-7178 option 2. See Attendance Policy on page 22 for more information.

Absence and Illness

If your child will be absent due to illness or for any other reason, please email that information to attendance@hilltowncharter.org before 8:30am. If you really need to speak with someone, please call the main school number, 413-529-7178, and press "0". See Attendance Policy on page 22 for more information about non-illness-related absences.

PLEASE SEE PARENT SAFETY PROTOCOLS IN APPENDIX FOR ABSENCE AND ILLNESS POLICIES RELATED TO COVID-19.

Children with a fever over 100 degrees should stay home until there is no fever for 24 hours without fever medication. Children with one event of vomiting or diarrhea should stay at home until at least 12 hours have passed without any further events. Children diagnosed with strep throat must be treated with antibiotics for 3 doses and be fever free before returning to school. If your child is not feeling well in the morning and stays home from school, but seems better after a few hours, please call and check in with the nurse before bringing the child in late.

Early Pick-up

In the event that you need to pick a child up from school early, please tell the Main Office and the teacher in advance and check the child out in the office when you leave. It is important that we have an accurate count of students actually in the building in case of emergency.

Carpools

Please visit your portal to list the people who are authorized to pick your child up, including carpool drivers.

Snow Days

Hilltown chooses its own snow days. We do not follow Easthampton or any other district, though we are usually similar. When school is closed or delayed, the school sends an email to all parents; and a text and/or automated phone call to parents who wish to receive either or both. For the wider community we also post closings at www.wwlj.com (Channel 22) and www.wqgb.com (Channel 40).

A FEW SCHOOL POLICIES

Visiting the School

Our building is closed to all visitors. We look forward to the time when we can welcome parents again.

Student Clothing Guidelines

Students are expected to wear clothing that is safe/appropriate to the weather and expected activities. Weather-related guidelines include jackets or coats when the temperature is 32 degrees or colder.

- To play in the snow, snow boots are required for all ages. Snow pants and gloves are also required K-5.*
- Sneakers are required for PE (no boots, sandals or heels).*
- No hate speech or hate symbols are permitted on clothing (we refer to the ADL for clarification on what constitutes hate speech and hate symbols).*
- 6th-8th graders are permitted to wear hats in school as long as eyes and ears are not covered .*

No Cell Phones, Smart-watches, IPODs or MP3 players

Personal electronic devices may not be used by students during the school day or after school activities. Neither outgoing or incoming calls or texts are permitted.

We ask that parents and other caregivers keep all cell phone use away from the building.



Recess Snow Rules

All students K-5 must wear boots and snow pants at recess if there is snow on the ground. If they don't wear these items, then they are restricted to the blacktop. While we don't advise it, older students are exempt and can suffer with wet clothes if they want to.

Pet Policy

Due to student and staff allergies, and health concerns, family pets are not allowed in the school at any time unless specifically pre-approved by staff for educational purposes.

Lost Book Replacement

In many classes, students will be issued at least one text or workbook and will often borrow reading books from the class library. These books are costly and are important to the program. If a student loses a book, that student and his or her family are expected to pay at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cost of replacing it.

For more policy information, please visit your Hilltown portal or contact Kate Saccento, Director of Administration, Lara Ramsey, Director of Teaching and Learning or Deirdre Arthen, Director of Community and Families.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS and ACTIVITIES

Snack / Lunch

This year we have a school lunch program available only to families who are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches. Applications may be found in the portal.

Community Service Learning

Hilltown is committed to bringing CSL into every classroom every year as a way of helping students engage with the world around them and feel their efficacy in addressing the needs of the community. This year we will be exploring ways that we can take action remotely and support those causes and institutions that students value.

Field Trips

We will have no field trip for at least the first half of this year.

Lost and Found

Please label children's clothing, especially outerwear. It will be challenging to find things in a Lost and Found, but we will collect items and attempt to return them to their proper family.



SCHOOL-WIDE ACTIVITIES

All activities of the school, except where restricted by age, are open to all students regardless of race, color, sex, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or ability.

All-School

Hilltown sustains its strong sense of school community by holding a weekly All School gathering of all the classrooms each Friday at 2:20pm. This year, of course, these will happen online on Zoom. Content varies from week to week and involves some combination of singing, announcements, birthday celebrations and sharing of something learned during the week. Parents and families are encouraged to attend and join in the singing whenever they can. Specifics and time changes are published in the weekly newsletter.

"Il Teatro"

Several times a year, students are encouraged to share music performances, poems that they write or love, dance, skits or other self-initiated creative performances with the entire student body at a designated All School. These productions are rehearsed (and this year also recorded) outside of school hours and the performances are greatly anticipated within all of the classes. Parents and other family members are invited to perform with their children. Due-dates for performance proposals, screening schedules and performance times are included in the newsletter.

Celebrations / Holidays

Hilltown holds three special school-wide celebrations: The Welcome Ceremony at the beginning of the year, a secular Winter Solstice Celebration just before break in December and a Summer Celebration just before the break in June. Other than these, and recognitions of Martin Luther King Jr Day and Earth Day, the school does not celebrate holidays in any organized way, although classroom sharing of diverse family traditions is encouraged.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special occasions and are celebrated by the whole community with a song at the "All-School" closest to the actual day. Summer birthdays are celebrated during the months of June and September. Each classroom teacher will determine if and how other in-school birthday celebrations might happen this year. Please check with your child's teacher.

Mini-Courses

Wednesday is Min-Course day! Mini-Courses are an opportunity for students to explore an activity with students of all ages, and with an adult other than their own teacher. Students select from the options offered by teachers, parents or community members. This year looks a little different, though, with Mini-Courses being offered remotely! In the past, choices have included play-writing, drumming, mural painting, nature studies, newspaper production or yoga.

Special Events

School-wide events that include whole families are one of the ways that our community grows and stays strong. They are a great opportunity to make connections with other parents and get involved in the school community. This year we will create new events that will maintain safe distance and health precautions. Parent ideas, suggestions and assistance remain always welcome! Please be in touch with Deirdre Arthen, director of Community and Family Engagement.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Hilltown has always offered several after school enrichment and childcare options for a minimal fee. This year those will be significantly reduced, though some may be re-shaped to match the current situation. Some ongoing programs may cost a flat "activities fee" for a

semester's participation. All of the specifics and sign-up forms will be available in your Portal. Families entitled to free or reduced lunch may be entitled to fee reductions or waivers and those applications are available in the office or online as well.

Hilltown Sports - Tuesday and Thursday afternoons

Cross Country Running Club serves students in grades 4-8 in the fall, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Be on the lookout for enrollment forms with pertinent dates & fees. Forms are available in the portal.



*The school's **Ultimate Frisbee** team usually meets twice a week in the spring, after the snow melts. It is coached by teachers but it also relies heavily on the parents of the players for support during the season. We pride ourselves on good sportsmanship. Students from the Prisms, Purples, Reds and Oranges may participate. Watch the newsletter for updates.*

Ski Club is a 5 or 6 week program during the winter for students in grades 1-8. It takes place at the Berkshire East Ski Area. Parent participation is mandatory for safe transportation and supervision. This is a fee-based program with financial aid available. More details will be available in the later part of the fall.

Other Programs

Any parent-sponsored or other after-school clubs or programs, such as fiddle lessons, Environmental Club, Bike to School, Math Club or Girls on the Run will be announced in the Community Section of the Newsletter as they are scheduled.

FUNDRAISING

*Like most public schools, Hilltown relies on fundraising to help it cover some of the wonderful programs that we offer. **Friends of Hilltown**, our affiliated 501-c3 non-profit organization, is a valuable resource to us as it organizes fundraising for the school with a special focus on the **Annual Fund**.*

*Our major annual fundraising usually includes fun events like a **Scholastic Book Fair** in the fall, a family **Winter Fair** including craft-making and performances in early December and **Art Spark**, an adult evening event in the spring, including an auction. This year, though we may devise some interesting online events, we will be relying heavily on our Annual Fund and monthly donations by families who can afford to make them. Hilltown also participates in ongoing school-wide efforts including, monthly Dean's Beans coffee sales and purchase programs at Target, Big Y and Stop and Shop.*

The Friends of Hilltown organizes a successful annual fundraising appeal to raise money both for operating expenses and to fund a rolling arts grant program available to teachers throughout the year.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A Healthy School Environment

No smoking by adults or students is permitted in or around the school building.

We ask that community members refrain from using "added scents" at school and at school functions in deference to those with chemical sensitivities and allergies.

Health and Immunization records

All new students, and all students in grades 4 and 7, need to have an updated physical exam form and immunization record on file at the beginning of the school year. In accordance with Massachusetts Law, your child must have written proof of required immunizations as part of their school health record in order to attend school.

The only exemptions from this regulation are if you choose to not vaccinate your child for religious or medical reasons. A medical exemption must be documented by your healthcare provider. If there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease such as chickenpox or measles, students who have not been vaccinated may need to be excluded from school for a certain period of time.

Medication

Students may not carry any sort of supplement or medication (including homeopathic, over-the-counter, herbal or prescription) with them at school. The school nurse may dispense prescription or over the counter medications to children during the school day only if a specific permission form has been filled out by the parent and the prescribing physician. These forms are available on the portal and in the office or from the nurse. Medications, labeled and in their original packaging, must be left with the nurse and may be refrigerated if needed. The only medications that students are permitted to carry are inhalers. Health care provider and parent consent forms must be on file in the nurse's office to allow students to carry inhalers.

Life-Threatening Food Allergies

There are some students that have severe peanut, tree nut, or other food allergies. Strict avoidance of these foods is the only way to prevent a life threatening allergic reaction. Since we do not have a cafeteria and the students rotate lunch rooms we have put in place strict guidelines so that our community remains safe for students with food allergies

These guidelines include:

- No sharing of food is permitted in the K-6 lunchrooms.*
- Hand washing will occur before eating.*
- A peanut-free/allergen-free table will be SET UP in applicable classrooms if necessary.*
- We encourage that food for class celebrations/community events be nut-free. If not, then all ingredients must be listed and the food will be placed in a separate area.*
- Eating is not allowed on the play structure.*

**** We are NOT a nut-free institution ****

Screenings

At this time ALL mandatory screenings have been suspended per the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Regular state mandated health screenings, including vision, hearing, and postural screening are generally conducted yearly. In addition, the nurse administers SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment) for the 8th grade. This is an approach to screening and early intervention for substance use disorders and students at risk for developing substance use disorders. SBIRT emphasizes combined effort of screening and treatment services as part of a cooperative system of early intervention.

Parents will be notified when screenings are scheduled and will be alerted of any out-of-range findings. Parents who want to opt out of any mandatory screenings are asked to communicate with the nurse directly.

Lice Protocol for Parents

Lice are a fact of life in most schools these days. We do our best to avoid problems and prevent stigmatization of children that have lice via education. It should be remembered that in most cases when lice are found, the child has likely had them for about a month. If a child is found to have lice while at school, a parent will be called to notify them of the issue so that treatment can be started that day after school. The nurse will inform the parents of the classrooms involved and will perform a head check on the student's classmates in both mixed classrooms to determine the extent of children infected. Prior to returning to school, the child will be checked by the nurse for any lice or nits. The parent and child should report to the nurse for this check before heading to the classroom.

As per the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, "No healthy child should be excluded from school or allowed to miss school time because of head lice or nits". If active lice remain, the nurse will work with the family/health care practitioner to identify barriers to the adequate treatment of lice.

There is much overlap of children in our community with lunch rooms and siblings. It is incumbent upon parents to communicate with the school nurse, as well as with other parents. This is the only way that we can control the problem. Feel free to discuss this further with the nurse or your healthcare provider.

Infectious Diseases Protocol

The school nurse will notify parents by email if an infectious disease is found in a classroom, i.e. strep throat, pink eye, ringworm. If there are numerous cases in the school, an all-school alert will be sent via email. If your child has an infectious illness please let Nurse Mary know so that she can inform classroom parents and they can monitor their children for symptoms and follow up as necessary.

Returning to School after an Injury

Students who require the use of crutches and/or orthopedic devices should report to the school nurse following injury and/or upon returning to school following a surgical procedure. When the student reports to the nurse, the nurse will review with the student crutch usage within the school building. Safety will be stressed including stairs, hallways, school entrances, floors, seasonal issues, etc. Accommodations (early classroom dismissal, assistance with books, assistance in the hallways between each class, premium classroom seating assignments) will be assessed to determine need for each student requiring crutches. Additional accommodations (medications, icing, elevation orders, dress code exceptions) may be implemented based on need and physician/parent permission.



Community and Behavioral Expectations

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School is built on a strong sense of community and the success of our efforts has been consistently remarked upon in state reviews. All members of the school - students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members - are encouraged to develop strong communication skills and respect for each other. From this community base, children learn to respect their peers, teachers, and school environment. Treating others as they want to be treated and taking care of "our" school helps children, parents and teachers define appropriate behaviors that meet those ends. We expect relations between adults within the community - parents, teachers, staff and volunteers - to be respectful and provide a model for the students.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School is committed to maintaining a work and learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status. Questions and concerns should be directed to our Civil Rights Coordinator, Kate Saccento.

Community Compact

The Community Compact (see appendix) is a formalization of the commitment that we have to one another to build an environment for learning filled with respect, responsibility and openness. This agreement, along with clear definitions for students of its meaning, is reviewed with students by teachers in each classroom at the beginning of the year and is sent home for parents to read as well. Each year parents, students, teachers and administrators at Hilltown are all asked to sign the Community Compact as a way of showing that they have read and understood the basic ways that each of us can contribute to maintaining our cooperative school.

Student Behavior

In our classrooms, regular meetings provide forums for students to identify problems, work to resolve conflict in a positive manner, and develop strong listening and speaking skills.

Teachers and children identify behaviors that foster a safe and productive school.

Group discussions and talking individually with children at the time of difficult incidents help children identify alternative solutions to problems. In some situations a neutral third party is needed to peacefully resolve a conflict. The goal at Hilltown is to empower students to mediate such conflicts whenever possible. Such incidents are used as learning opportunities for clear communication of feelings and handling conflict in a safe way. Maintaining the self-esteem of each child is paramount. Under no circumstances is it permissible for any student to intentionally harm any other person in the school.

At the beginning of the school year teachers and students discuss the Community Compact and our "Code of Cooperation", pointing out the ways that we make the school a safe place.

When needed they remind each other of the rules and the reasons behind them and request that they be followed.

Guidance is consistent and based on the needs and development of each child and the group. If a child behaves in a way that is disruptive or disrespectful, teachers will bring behavior back within safe limits, provide logical consequences, and may send the child to a Director's office.

Parents will be asked to come to school midday and meet with the Director and any child who has been intentionally violent toward any other person in the school. Consequences for serious behavioral issues may also include suspension or ultimately, expulsion.

Learning

Teaching Staff

We are fortunate to have a strong, stable and highly qualified teaching faculty at Hilltown. More than half of our teachers have been here over five years and their collective experience shows in the quality of their work. Parents may request to see information about any teacher's credentials at any time by asking Lara Ramsey, the Director of Teaching and Learning.

Curriculum

As a public school we are obligated to integrate the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks with our pedagogy. We balance this requirement with our core philosophy to create our own approach to curriculum. (See Critical Elements of Classroom Practice in the Appendix) These elements come together in the integration of arts across all subjects; strong parent involvement; careful documentation of students' work and processes and projects that draw from the interests of the students.

Whenever possible, Hilltown students explore subjects in depth using a particular theme as a point of departure for an integrated curriculum. They develop skills in art, math, science, reading, writing, problem solving, and critical thinking as they work with central themes.

Through teaching problem-solving and critical thinking strategies that can be applied in all disciplines, problem solving becomes a thread that weaves all subject areas together. It creates a standard for questioning and seeking answers whenever a new topic is approached.

The curriculum also includes the social aspects of life. A cooperative environment is created out of mutual respect and problem solving when differences arise. Skills are explored and practiced to achieve these goals.

Learning Challenges

If you are concerned that your child may have a disability that is affecting his or her ability to make progress in school, you can first speak with the classroom teacher. As you speak with the teacher, explain your concerns and ask the teacher to share his or her concerns. As part of your conversation, it may be decided that a Response to Intervention (RTI) team will be

convened to discuss your concerns, increase monitoring of the situation, and plan classroom accommodations to address concerns for a designated period of time.

If your child continues to have difficulty with schoolwork, you may, at any time, make a request in writing to Kate Saccento, the Director of Administration, for a special education evaluation. This evaluation involves a range of testing and assessments conducted by our special education staff. When complete, the results of the evaluation are distributed to the relevant parties and are discussed at a Team Meeting, which includes the parents, where a plan is developed collaboratively.

Classroom Assignment

Classes at Hilltown are mixed age in nature and students stay in the same classroom for two years except for one year in the transitional sixth grade. The process for placing students entering 2nd, 4th, and 7th Grades is as follows: each spring Directors and educational staff meet to discuss each student individually and plan the make-up of each classroom for the following year. This is a thoughtful, time-consuming process, which includes input from parents. If after serious consideration of all factors, the wishes of parents and the judgment of the Education Domain differ and resolution is not possible, the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Director of Administration make the final decisions. Only in very rare circumstances will the staff consider moving a student to a different classroom for the second year in a two-year sequence.

Evaluation

Evaluation of a student's progress is multi-faceted. Teachers use observation and discussion in combination with developmentally appropriate assessments to identify student strengths and next steps. Drawings, written work samples, and other types of student work are used to measure growth and development. The school uses its own developmental academic competency standards and performance based assessment system in addition to an externally developed reading assessment. Third through eighth graders take the SAT 10 test of basic skills in language arts and math and participate in the MCAS as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Progress Reports are provided to parents three times a year and parent conferences occur in the fall. Parents may request additional conferences at any time.

GOVERNANCE BY DOMAINS (or... who is in charge of what)

The governance and management of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School are arranged into realms of responsibility, called "Domains". All of these groups work together - seeking input and participation from each other in most decision-making processes. The school employs three Directors who work together to ensure that the school is viable and stays true to its mission.

The Education Domain is responsible for the educational program at Hilltown and includes the work of the teachers, teaching assistants, special services providers and the Director of Teaching and Learning, Lara Ramsey, who supervises and develops all aspects of this domain including coordinating the hiring committees for teaching positions.

The Administrative Domain covers the day to day operation at school. The Director of Administration, Kate Saccento, manages the facility, admissions procedures and school finances and hires and coordinates office staff, the school nurse, custodial staff and the bookkeeper. The Administrative Assistant, Monique Bourgeois, and Bookkeeper, Carla Clark, are responsible for staffing the office, answering the phone, and coordinating the day to day procedures in the school office.

The Community Domain is responsible for ensuring full community participation in the school's functioning and governance and for maintaining both the "sense of community" within the school and a school connection with the local community. The Director of Community and Family Engagement, Deirdre Arthen, administers this domain, developing systems to serve and include parents and other volunteers, overseeing Community Service Learning for the students and our partnership with Americorp and other programs, facilitating meetings of the Cooperative, and coordinating the school's event and fundraising calendar. The Community Team and Class Parents work with the CFE Director to ensure that parent voices are heard in decision-making processes.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) is the charter school equivalent of a School Committee. Meeting entirely online this year, it is responsible for the school's overarching philosophies, direction and policies and is accountable for all legal and fiscal issues affecting the Hilltown School. It operates using a consensus model and makes decisions on the hiring of Directors, and contractual relationships. Members of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School elect the Trustees at their annual meeting held each May. Trustees serve a two or three-year term and do not need to be parents at the school. The school's three coordinators attend Board meetings as speaking but non-decision-making members. Schedules of BOT meetings, links to meetings, agendas, and minutes are available to parents in the newsletter on the school website. All BOT meetings are open to the school community and the general public. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please express that on your Volunteer Resource Form or speak with Deirdre Arthen, Director of Community and Family Engagement.

Domain Council meets bi-weekly and is made up of the three Directors and the President and one other member of the Board of Trustees - usually the Vice-President. These Board members serve as the supervisory team for the Directors, and have many opportunities to work closely with the Directors and evaluate their work. Domain Council is responsible for proposing the annual budget, reviewing the agenda for BOT meetings and making policy recommendations to the Board as well as for addressing any emergency needs.

APPENDIX

School Safety Protocols for 2020-21

The Community Compact

Attendance Policy

Computer Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Grade Placement Policy

Harassment Policy

ELL policies

Weapons and Controlled Substances Policy

State and Federal Education Laws

Bullying Prevention Plan

Suspension/Expulsion Policy

Policy Concerning Discipline of Students

Receiving Special Education Services

Physical Restraint Policy

Grievance Procedure

Complaint Procedure



OTHER DOCUMENTS YOU MAY WANT TO READ

(Available on our website: www.hilltowncharter.org or in your Hilltown Portal)

Annual Reports

School By-laws

Long Range Plan for 2014-24

Charter Renewal Application 2019

Hilltown Accountability Plan

Educational Materials selection policy

Board of Trustees officer and committee descriptions

Hilltown Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Hilltown Consensus process description

Hilltown Consensus-process articles

SCHOOL SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR 2020-21:

We can mitigate the risks of virus transmission by engaging in good respiratory hygiene, proper handwashing, maintaining appropriate social distances, wearing a covering on the face to stop the spread of germs, avoiding touching our eyes, nose, mouth or face, and, most importantly, by staying home when we are sick. We expect that all students and staff will incorporate these healthy practices and make them part of their daily routine.

The single most important thing to do if any of the following symptoms are present is to **STAY HOME**. Our collective health relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility. Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. **When in doubt, stay home.**

Daily Symptom Screening:

Please take time each morning before leaving for school to review the symptom screener. If you have even one of the symptoms listed, it is expected that you not attend school that day. Please alert the school nurse if your child is positive for any of these symptoms.

Most common symptoms of COVID-19 and testing requirements:

Please STAY HOME if you have any of the symptoms listed. Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills (CDC has lowered the temperature from 100.4 to 100.0)**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)**
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- New loss of taste or smell**
- Sore throat**
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms**
- Muscle aches or body aches**
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea**
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms**
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms**

If staff or students have any of these symptoms, they must get a test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school.

Please alert the school nurse if you are keeping your child home due to illness.

Mary Price, RN

mprice@hilltowncharter.org

413-529-7178 (Ext. 113)

Mitigation Strategies:

1. **Handwashing**

2. **Face masks or cloth face coverings:**

Face masks will be required to be worn by all students and staff while at school except for scheduled mask breaks. If your child forgets their mask or a mask becomes soiled, the school will provide them with a replacement mask. Gaiters and Bandanas are not permitted. 2 ply masks are recommended.

3. **Practice good sneeze/cough hygiene.**

Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth, where it is easy to spread the virus to yourself.

4. **Physical Distance Measures:**

Physical distancing, sometimes referred to as social distancing, is simply the act of keeping people separated with the goal of limiting spread of contagion between individuals. It is fundamental to lowering the risk of spread of COVID-19, as the primary mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets by persons in close proximity.

We will be maintaining 6 feet distance between individuals during our in-person time.

5. **Cohort Size:**

Maintaining small cohort sizes is another way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within our school community.

ALL members of a cohort will be excluded from school if there is a positive covid test in the group.

Quick reference sheet: Key actions for individual COVID-19 events

Event	Location of Event	Testing Result	Quarantine
Individual is symptomatic	<p>If an individual is symptomatic <u>at home</u>, they should stay home and get tested.</p> <p>If an individual student is symptomatic <u>on the bus or at school</u>, they should remain masked and adhere to strict physical distancing. Students will then be met by the nurse and stay in the medical waiting room until they can go home. They should not be sent home on the bus.</p> <p>If an individual staff member is symptomatic at school, they should find coverage for their duties and then go home and get tested.</p>	Individual tests <u>negative</u>	Return to school once asymptomatic for 24 hours
		Individual tests <u>positive</u>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days <u>and</u> until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
		Individual <u>is not tested</u>	Remain home in self-isolation for 14 days from symptom onset
Individual is exposed to COVID-19 positive individual	<p>If an individual is <u>at home</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.</p> <p>If an individual is <u>at school</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should be masked for the remainder of the day (including K-1 students) and adhere to strict physical distancing. At the end of the day, they should go home and should not take the bus home. They should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.</p>	Individual tests <u>negative</u>	Return to school, if asymptomatic or once asymptomatic for 24 hours
		Individual tests <u>positive</u>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days <u>and</u> until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
		Individual <u>is not tested</u>	Remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from exposure

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Community Compact

At the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School we believe that education works best as a cooperative process among teachers, staff, parents, students and the greater community

This compact is a way of clearly stating our common commitment to collaboration in creating a learning community that nourishes and supports all of its members. It is through this level of commitment and cooperation that we are able to successfully fulfill the school's mission.

The Student will:

- * Do my best to learn while in classes and when doing any home-study I am assigned.
- * Show respect, through my words and actions, for myself, my school, my teachers, other people, and materials.
- * Respect and honor the beliefs and cultures of other students and their families.
- * Be inclusive of others and resolve conflicts in a positive, non-violent manner.
- * Take responsibility for my actions and my safety, including getting to school on time.
- * Believe that I am a person who can learn in many different ways.

The Parents will:

- * Stay informed about policies, guidelines, school news and school events.
- * Participate at school to the very best of my ability by attending parent conferences, class meetings, and family events, and by volunteering in ways that benefit the school.
- * Ensure my child's practical success at school. Arrive at school on time, rested and ready to learn, with the clothing and arrangements for food that they will need to have a successful day.
- * Help my child take responsibility for completing home-study assignments on time.
- * Respect and honor the beliefs and cultures of all students and their families.
- * Through words and actions, support my child, other students and families, the staff and the school.

The Administration and Staff of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School will:

- * Provide a safe, cooperative and respectful environment for learning.
- * Understand that all students can succeed and learn.
- * Nurture each child's creativity and encourage their self-expression in many ways.
- * Communicate and work with each family to support their child's learning.
- * Seek out and value parent participation and input in all areas of the school community.
- * Respect and honor the beliefs and cultures of all students and their families.
- * Work to improve our program through an ongoing cycle of planning, evaluation and refinement.

What the Compact means for students:

The Student will:

*** Do my best to learn while in classes and when doing any home-study I am assigned.**

This means:

I will not refuse to do assignments in or outside of class.

I will not disrupt class with interruptions, side conversations or physically distracting others.

If I take a break, I will come back to my work afterwards.

*** Show respect, through my words and my actions, for myself, my school, my teachers, other people, and materials.**

To show respect for:

The authority of adults – I will respond constructively to adult direction.

Each other– I will not tease or put-down other students.

Equipment – I will not steal, throw or damage objects.

Our community – I will avoid vulgar language.

*** Respect and honor the beliefs and cultures of other students and their families.**

Stand up for anyone who is not being treated well because of something they believe or value.

Stand up for anyone who is not being treated well because of their appearance or customs.

*** Be inclusive of others and resolve conflicts in a positive, non-violent manner.**

This means:

I will not threaten or intimidate others if we disagree.

I will not physically hurt other students or teachers.

I will not exclude others.

*** Take responsibility for my actions and my safety, including getting to school on time.**

This means:

I will be truthful.

I will walk when indoors.

I will stay in the supervised areas of the playground.

I will not wrestle or play in a rough, inappropriate way.

I will do my part to help us get to school on time.

*** Believe that I am a person who can learn in many different ways.**

We want everyone to try – just give it a shot, even if it's new.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular school attendance is the foundation for a student's school success. With regular attendance, students develop a sense of belonging, build strong friendships, and benefit from daily experiences and support in the classroom.

Irregular school attendance can be the beginning of a pattern. The more students miss school, the less they learn. Frequent absences affect not only the individual child but the entire class. Hilltown's project oriented program requires students to work in small collaborative groups and every member is vital to the success of the group. When several children miss school at different times and for different durations, it has a ripple effect on the pacing of the entire curriculum.

This policy details the necessary steps to be taken by parents when attendance is not possible, and the consequences of chronic absences. The school day begins at 8:15 AM. An arrival after 8:20 AM is 5 minutes late and is officially considered tardy unless there is a specific medical appointment. Five tardies (after 8:20 AM), not related to a disability or medical appointments, will constitute one unexcused absence. Students who are absent for non-disability related reasons, whether excused or unexcused, may not participate in any after-school or other extra-curricular activity on the day they are absent.

Excused Absences

- Illness or chronic health problem
- A death in the immediate family or other significant family crisis
- Court appearances
- Religious Holy Days
- Suspension from school
- Absence related to an ADA defined disability

(If you believe that your child has a defined ADA disability, please contact the school's 504 Coordinator)

Family vacations are not considered excused absences.

In the case of illness/significant family crisis/disability:

1. Parents are expected to call in by 8:20 a.m. to inform school of illness or family emergency. If we have not heard from a parent we will call the home at 9:00 a.m. If we do not hear back from a parent/guardian the absence will be considered unexcused.
2. HCCPS may request from the parent documentation from a healthcare provider if the student is ill for more than five (5) consecutive days.
3. When a student has excessive illness related absences (non-consecutive but frequent) that begin to interfere with a student's education, the appropriate staff will contact the parents/guardians. We will work together to clarify the medical situation, request medical documentation and make reasonable accommodations to provide appropriate supports if consistent attendance is not possible. Parents/guardians will be expected to help with make-up work. Significant interference to a student's educational progress may result in grade retention. Students with disability-related absences shall be allowed the opportunity to make up missed work prior to grade retention or summer school.

Religious Holy Days: Parents/guardians must inform the school in advance.

Failure to provide such notice will result in the absence being deemed as unexcused.

Unexcused Absences

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School strongly discourages unexcused absences. Family vacations resulting in student absence from school creates significant disruption to the educational process. Unexcused absences have consequences for the student, the class and the teacher and create additional responsibilities for

parents/guardians. In the event of a planned, unexcused absence parents/guardians must understand and comply with the following:

1. Parents should inform teachers and administration, in writing, at least two weeks in advance of a planned unexcused absence.
2. Teachers are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences. Parents/guardians are responsible for overseeing the student's educational progress during the unexcused absence.
3. All parents/guardians are informed of their child's attendance record on each progress report.
4. If unexcused absences (more than 5) occur one or more of the following steps may be taken.
 - Phone call to parent
 - Community compact meeting with parents/guardians
 - Referral for counseling
 - Grade retention
 - Summer work
 - Exclusion from any or all afterschool and extracurricular activities

In extreme cases where these steps have not been successful HCCPS may, in its sole discretion, pursue the following actions:

- File a "Failure to Send" complaint with the District Court
 - File a "Child Requiring Assistance" complaint with the District Court
 - File a 51 A with Department of Children and Families
5. In rare circumstances when a parent/guardian is required to be out of the immediate Pioneer Valley area for career related purposes, parents/guardians may formally request absence from school for up to 20 school days. HCCPS will consider, among other things, the following:
- The impact on a student's academic progress.
 - Duration of the absence.
 - Frequency of previous absences, especially unexcused absences.

Requests in writing must be submitted to the Administrative and Director of Teaching and Learnings at least one month in advance. The Coordinators, following consultation with teachers, will make decisions within ten (10) calendar days of the request. The Coordinators retain sole discretion to make the determination and their decision is not subject to further review.

If approved, the family will be responsible for developing a school work plan. The family will take responsibility for overseeing their child's educational progress.

If the request is not approved and the family removes the child from school, the absence will be considered unexcused.

Approved by the Board of Trustees 7/29/2015

Attendance Policy and Practices During Hybrid and Remote Learning Models (9/10/2020)

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) issued attendance guidance to schools on August 28th. The document provided this guidance for taking and reporting attendance in hybrid and remote learning models;

“When taking attendance, schools should track time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or learning assessments within the curriculum for study of the ‘core subjects’ and ‘other subjects’.”

For the 2020-21 school year, core subjects are taught on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Attendance will be taken at Morning Meetings and during the following remote times:

K 2 distinct morning synchronous classes (M, T, Th, F)

1 3 distinct synchronous classes throughout the day (M, T, Th, F)

2-8 4 distinct synchronous classes throughout the day (M, T, Th, F)

Wednesday is not a day for synchronous learning. Attendance to independent work is assumed (all students are marked as present).

If a student is sick and cannot attend in-person or synchronous classes, a parent must contact the school as soon as possible by emailing attendance@hilltowncharter.org. If emailing is not possible, a parent should call the school office at: 413-529-7178 option 0.

If a student does not attend Morning Meeting or does not attend an expected on-site session, and if their parent does not call the school, someone from the school will call the parents to follow-up. The school nurse will make follow-up calls to students who are out due to illness.

STUDENT COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Technology provides tools and connections to other computer systems located worldwide. Parents of students who are users must understand that neither the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School nor its staff controls the content of the information available on these other systems. The school will make an effort to restrict access to sites it considers inappropriate for HCCPS students. Students must agree to follow the rules of this Acceptable Use Policy. The nature of this technology provides many educational opportunities, but also necessitates personal responsibility for its use.

Students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Follow directions from HCCPS staff about computer use during classes/directed study.
2. Not use computer for socializing, e.g., personal email, instant messaging, chatting, etc.
3. Only use my @hilltowncharter.org email account that has been provided. I understand that the staff at Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School reserves the right to inspect any documents and electronic mail sent from or stored within the HCCPS domain.
4. Use language on-line which is consistent with school policy.
5. Not tamper with equipment or software, nor alter the network interface, nor attempt to gain access to the data and files or others, nor violate any copyright laws, log on only under my own user name, nor attempt to represent myself as someone else.
6. Not use my school account to subscribe to any platforms or services (ex. Apple ID, Instagram, Instructables) unless with explicit permission by an HCCPS teacher.
7. Not reveal personal information such as home addresses or phone numbers of self or others.
8. Not transmit or download material in violation of state or federal regulations.

If a student uses computer technology inappropriately and in a way to violates these guidelines, I understand that this behavior may result in these consequences:

- Limited access to computer/online resources
- Being subject to disciplinary measures under HCCPS policy and/or
- Being referred to the appropriate legal authorities, if warranted.

If I use computer technology inappropriately and in a way that violates these guidelines, I understand that my behavior may result in these consequences.

Student signature _____ Date _____

As a parent/guardian of this student, I have read the above contract and I agree that my child may use the on-line resources provided by the school if they follow the rules of the contract. I understand that any conduct by my child that is in conflict with the contract will result in the consequences listed above as well as possible disciplinary action under our Code of Conduct.

_____ I have read this policy and understand the expectations of my child.

Parent/Guardian signature _____ Date _____

GRADE PLACEMENT POLICY

Overview:

We generally believe it is appropriate for students to follow the typical K-8 sequence of grades and the accompanying curriculum through the school. Children vary considerably in their academic, social, physical, and emotional development. Therefore our instructional program in each class is adjusted to meet the needs of all students. However, under some circumstances, it may be appropriate to consider repeating or skipping a grade. In these cases, we will use a combination of factors to consider grade placement including chronological age, academic achievement, and social and emotional maturity.

For teacher initiated requests:

Teachers will complete a Request to Change Grades Form, and then discuss issues regarding grade placement with the Director of Teaching and Learning. If the teacher and Director of Teaching and Learning agree, these questions will be shared with parents before January 31.

For parent initiated requests:

Parents requesting a change in grade placement for the following year should complete a Request to Change Grades Form and return it to the Director of Teaching and Learning before the February vacation. The form asks parents to address the needs that are not currently being met, and why a change in grade placement would help meet these needs. Forms are available of the school office

Process:

Following the initial request, the Director of Teaching and Learning will form a staff committee comprised of the classroom teacher, Director of Teaching and Learning, one other teacher who works directly with the student, and a teacher who does not work directly with the student. The Committee will meet with the family to discuss issues related to the child's grade placement. Staff and parents will have the opportunity to comment on specific aspects of the child's academic, social, emotional, and physical development, which relate to questions of grade placement. The committee will review all academic records including progress reports, standardized test results, internal assessment results, any related special education documentation or other relevant materials, if available. The committee will also speak with the previous year's teacher when possible. If deemed appropriate by parents and staff, a staff member will meet directly with the student to discuss relevant issues, and obtain feedback from the student.

The committee will present information from the parent meeting at a subsequent staff meeting. The purpose will be to allow all staff to ask questions and share insights related to the student and the grade placement.

Following the staff meeting, the committee will meet with the parents to share information obtained in the process. Parents will have the opportunity to discuss this information, as well as provide additional information, ideas, and opinions. This will be the last meeting before the committee makes its decision. Parents will have up to 14 calendar days following the meeting to provide any additional input.

Decision:

After all above steps have been completed, the committee will decide on the grade placement of the student for the following year. This decision should be made no later than April 15. The committee will make the decision by consensus, and this decision will be final. If the committee is unable to reach consensus, the Director of Teaching and Learning will make the final decision.

Harassment Policy

It is HCCPS policy to strive for an environment free of discrimination, which includes freedom from harassment of any kind. HCCPS prohibits harassment in any form, by anyone who may be present at the school. Respect for dignity is expected under all circumstances.

Specifically, no individual or group shall threaten or insinuate threats either explicitly or implicitly whether physical, verbal or electronic. This includes: slurs, jokes, or degrading comments of any nature. Such conduct will result in disciplinary action.

Any member of the community should report complaints to the Director of Administration who will conduct an investigation into the alleged offense. The investigator will gather all relevant facts by talking with the complainant and the accused party or parties, reviewing any relevant documents, and interviewing any witnesses. The process will be confidential except that information may be shared on a need to know basis. The investigation will be concluded as promptly as possible.

The sanctions for harassment and discriminatory conduct are dependent on the severity and frequency of the conduct. Anyone engaging in harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

English Language Learners Policy

Hilltown has an instructional program in place for students at all levels who have a primary language other than English. The school uses standardized assessments to identify these students and then provides the necessary services.

Weapons and Controlled Substance Policy

The HCCPS Weapons and Controlled Substance Policy conforms to state law:

According to Massachusetts Law Chapter 71: Section 37H ” Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

STATE AND FEDERAL EDUCATION LAWS

Special Education Laws and Principles

Special education is specially designed instruction and related services that meet the unique needs of an eligible student with a disability or a specific service need that is necessary to allow the student with a disability to access the general curriculum. The purpose of special education is to allow the student to successfully develop his or her individual educational potential. Along with providing services to the child, if necessary, services are provided to parents and to teachers for the student to benefit from special education. Special education is provided by the school district at no cost to parents.

In Massachusetts, the special education system is based on the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in combination with the state's special education law (MGL c. 71B). These laws protect students with disabilities who are eligible for special education and guarantee them an Individualized Education Program (IEP) designed to meet their unique needs.

Teacher Qualifications

Federal law requires that teachers must demonstrate subject matter competency in the areas they teach. You may request information about the qualifications of their child's teacher and teachers:

- * Whether your child's teacher has met State qualification for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- * Whether your child's teacher is teaching under an emergency license or waiver through which the State qualifications or licensing criteria have been waived.
- * The baccalaureate degree major of your child's teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field or discipline of the certification or degree.
- * Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, give their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for your child's teacher, please contact Lara Ramsey, Director of Teaching and Learning.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records.

Parents have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;

- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. If you do not want your directory information shared, contact Kate Saccento, Director of Administration.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Revised 8/2019

Hilltown (HCCPS) is committed to creating a safe, caring, respectful learning environment for all students and strictly enforces a prohibition against bullying, including without limitation, cyberbullying, of any of its students by anyone and also strictly enforces a prohibition against retaliation of any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses, or has reliable information about bullying. Site based initiatives, developed collaboratively between school administration and personnel, students, families and community members will seek to: (1) help students of all ages and abilities stay safe, act wisely, and believe in themselves; and (2) help adults respond effectively to students' reports and their own observations.

1. Definitions

Bullying is defined as 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 target/victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target/victim or damage to the target/victim's property; (ii) places the target/victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target/victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target/victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For purposes of this policy, bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is further defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer or 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. **Cyberbullying** 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. **Cyberbullying** 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.

Aggressor or Perpetrator is defined as a student or a member of 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, school volunteer or a vendor, contractor or other person working under a contract with the school who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Hostile environment is defined as a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

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

School is defined to include the school, school grounds, travel to and from school and/or school sponsored events or functions, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school sponsored or school-related activities, functions, programs whether on or off school grounds (such as social events, trips, sports events, or similar school sponsored events and functions), at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school, on the way to and from school or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school and at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school, if the act creates a hostile environment at school for the target/victim or witnesses, infringes on the rights of the victim or witnesses at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Target or Victim is defined as a student or an adult against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

2. Prohibition

Bullying of students occurring in schools is prohibited by law and will not be tolerated by [insert school name]. Bullying can take many forms and can occur in any setting. Bullying can include, but is not limited to, intimidation such as name calling or threatening; social alienation such as shunning or spreading rumors; or physical aggression such as assaults on a student or attacks on a student's property. Bullying can create an atmosphere of fear for all members of the school community. It also can create unnecessary and unwarranted anxiety that affects the ability of a student to attend school, learn in school, walk in school corridors, eat in the school cafeteria, play in the school yard or recreation areas, participate in or attend special or extracurricular activities or travel to and from school. Bullying behaviors that are not addressed can lead to devastating consequences for young people, including depression, drops in school performance and attendance. The failure to address bullying behaviors also gives other students the message that it is permissible to engage in negative behaviors.

Consistent with state law, HCCPS recognizes 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 one (1) or more of these characteristics.

3. Process and Response

HCCPS takes allegations of bullying seriously and will respond promptly to complaints and allegations of bullying. Additionally, allegations of retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying also shall be taken seriously and HCCPS will respond promptly to such complaints and allegations.

If any student, parent/guardian of a student, staff member or other community member believes that a student has been subjected to bullying, or to retaliation for reporting bullying, providing information during an investigation of bullying or witnessing or having reliable information about bullying, he or she should bring the matter to the attention of the Director of Teaching and Learning of the school where the child attends. This may be done verbally or in writing. Reports of bullying and/or reports or retaliation for reporting bullying, providing information during an investigation of bullying or witnessing or having reliable information about bullying also may be made anonymously to the Director of Teaching and Learning where the child attends. Please note; however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report having been received. Where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, HCCPS will act promptly to eliminate the

conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, which may range from requiring the aggressor to work with school personnel on better behavior, the recommendation for the provision of counseling or other therapeutic services and/or disciplinary action where appropriate, up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or court involvement. Additionally, consistent with state law, if it is determined that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall (i) notify local law enforcement if the Director of Teaching and Learning believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor; (ii) take appropriate disciplinary action; (iii) notify the parents/guardians of the aggressor; and (iv) notify the parents/guardians of the target/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.

Furthermore, if it is determined that a student has knowingly made a false accusation of bullying or retaliation, he/she shall be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or court involvement. All students shall be afforded the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

In notifying the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor, the Director of Teaching and Learning must comply with the confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Record law and regulations and the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and corresponding regulations. More specifically, the Director of Teaching and Learning may not disclose information from a student record of a target or aggressor to a parent/guardian unless the information is about the parent/guardian's own child. The Director of Teaching and Learning may disclose a determination of bullying or retaliation to a local law enforcement agency without consent of a student or his/her parent/guardian but the Director of Teaching and Learning shall communicate with law enforcement officials in a manner that protects the privacy of targets, student witnesses and aggressors to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

Additionally, if the Director of Teaching and Learning has determined that there is an immediate and significant threat to the health or safety of the student or individuals, the Director of Teaching and Learning may disclose student record information about a target or aggressor to appropriate parties in addition to law enforcement in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. In this latter situation, the disclosure is limited to the period of the emergency and the Director of Teaching and Learning must document the disclosure and the reasons that the Director of Teaching and Learning determined that a health and safety emergency exists.

4. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Director of Teaching and Learning will develop and keep updated on at least a biennial basis as required by law, a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention. Such plan shall, as required by law, be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians.

The HCCPS's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will address training and professional development for staff and will also address sharing information with parents/guardians and students about bullying and sharing information with students about bullying, including information on prevention of bullying, reporting of bullying and the potential legal consequences of engaging in bullying. Additionally, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will include specific steps that schools will take to support vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying and harassment.

HCCPS BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: _____

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the: _____ Target of the behavior Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a: Student _ Parent

Staff member (specify role) _____

Administrator Other (specify) _____

Your contact information/telephone number _____

4. If student, state your classroom: _____ Grade: _____

5. If staff member, state your position: _____

6. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): _____

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): _____

Date(s) of Incident(s): _____

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: _____

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): _____

6. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____

Date: _____ (Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10. Form Given to: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

**HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL
DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS**

NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), HCCPS shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the Education Director concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The Director of Teaching and Learning shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the Director of Teaching and Learning must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the Director of Teaching and Learning sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the Director of Teaching and Learning and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from HCCPS premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of HCCPS year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Director of Teaching and Learning Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the Director of Teaching and Learning is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the Director of Teaching and Learning will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The Director of Teaching and Learning will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall send his/her determination to the Director of Administration and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and Director of Teaching and Learning determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the Director of Teaching and Learning and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from HCCPS premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the Director of Teaching and Learning is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Director of Teaching and Learning will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Director of Teaching and Learning may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
2. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
3. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
4. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by HCCPS district;
5. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Director of Teaching and Learning. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the Director of Teaching and Learning shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what

remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the Director of Teaching and Learning decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the Director of Teaching and Learning;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the Director of Teaching and Learning's decision to the Director of Administration or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Director of Administration decides to reverse the Director of Teaching and Learning's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall send his/her determination to the Director of Administration and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and Director of Teaching and Learning determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the Director of Teaching and Learning and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the Director of Teaching and Learning's decision to the Director of Administration if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the Director of Administration shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension Director of Teaching and Learning hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the Director of Administration shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the Director of Teaching and Learning's determination. If the Director of Administration determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Director of Administration may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the Director of Teaching and Learning. The Director of Administration's decision shall be final.

EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of HCCPS and, in the Director of Teaching and Learning's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

The Director of Teaching and Learning may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

During the emergency, removal the Director of Teaching and Learning shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable, within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Director of Teaching and Learning, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a Director of Teaching and Learning's determination in a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not HCCPS premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of HCCPS year.

The Director of Teaching and Learning may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The Director of Teaching and Learning shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the Director of Teaching and Learning determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the Director of Teaching and Learning is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The Director of Teaching and Learning shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the Director of Teaching and Learning for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the Director of Teaching and Learning and the parent.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H & 37H½

The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of staff

A student may be subject to expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff, and the Director of Teaching and Learning determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of HCCPS.

The Director of Teaching and Learning shall notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After said hearing, a Director of Teaching and Learning may, in his/her discretion, decide to levy a suspension rather than expulsion. A student expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Director of Administration. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Director of Administration of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the hearing before the Director of Administration. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense.

Felony complaint or issuance of felony delinquency complaint

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Director of Teaching and Learning may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the Director of Teaching and Learning if the Director of Teaching and Learning determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of HCCPS.

The Director of Teaching and Learning shall notify the student in writing of the charges, the reasons for the suspension (prior to such suspension taking effect), and the right to appeal. The Director of Teaching and Learning will also provide the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) the process for appealing the suspension to the Director of Administration. The request for appeal must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days. The hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the request. The suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing before the Director of Administration. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel. The Director of Administration has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Director of Teaching and Learning. The Director of Administration shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Felony conviction or adjudication/admission in court of guilt for a felony or felony delinquency

The Director of Teaching and Learning may expel a student convicted of a felony, or has an adjudication or admission of guilt regarding a felony, if the Director of Teaching and Learning determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of HCCPS. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for the proposed expulsion. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal the decision to the Director of Administration, as well as the appeal process. The expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Director of Administration.

The student shall notify the Director of Administration in writing of his/her request for an appeal the decision no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the expulsion. The Director of Administration hearing shall be held with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the

expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and shall have the right to counsel. The Director of Administration has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Director of Teaching and Learning. The Director of Administration shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

Policy Concerning Discipline of Students Receiving Special Education Services

Disciplinary Actions and Due Process

Whether or not a student receives special education, HCCPS shall comply with its discipline policy if and when a student misbehaves and violates the school code of conduct. In all situations, discipline must be fair and even-handed.

In general, any student may be suspended or removed from school for disciplinary reasons for a short time, which is no more than 10 days. Before any removal or suspension the Director of Teaching and Learning shall inform the student of the accusations against him/her. The student shall also provide the student with the opportunity to provide his/her side of the story. Unless an emergency situation that may affect the safety and well-being of the school, prior to any meeting with a student concerning disciplinary action, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall attempt to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student, both orally and in writing, of the disciplinary meeting and shall invite the parent/guardian to attend the meeting.

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense; consider ways to reengage the student in learning; and avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports

All notices to parent(s)/guardian(s) concerning short-term (less than 10 days) suspensions, shall be in the primary language of the home, if other than English and shall set forth:

The disciplinary offense;

- The basis for the charge;
 - Potential consequences, including potential length of a suspension;
 - Notice of the opportunity of the student to have a hearing with the Director of Teaching and Learning concerning the proposed suspension or disciplinary action;
 - Notice of the date, time, and location of such hearing; and
 - Notice of the right to have an interpreter service attend the hearing
- If a student may receive a long-term suspension (more than 10 consecutive school days or a suspension that would amount to the 11th non-consecutive day of suspension during one school year), the notice must include those items listed above, **and** the following:

Notice of the following rights at the hearing:

- Opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Director of Teaching and Learning may rely upon during the hearing, prior to the hearing;
- Right to be represented by counsel or a lay person chosen by the student during the hearing (at the student's or parent/guardian's expense);
- Right to produce witnesses on behalf of the student and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
- Right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school; and
- Right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Director of Teaching and Learning and to receive a copy of the record
- Notice of the right to appeal the Director of Teaching and Learning's Decision to the Board of Trustees

All disciplinary determinations shall be made in writing and sent to the parent(s)/guardians.

Manifestation Determination

HCCPS shall follow the special disciplinary rules for students with disabilities who have been found eligible for special education. These special disciplinary rules apply as soon as a student is removed from his or her current education placement (whether at HCCPS or off the premises) for more than 10 days in a row, or if a student is removed for disciplinary reasons for more than a total of 10 days in any school year and there is a pattern of removal for comparable behaviors. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall notify the student's parent/guardian as soon as the decision is made to remove the student from his or her education placement for more than 10 days.

Thereafter, the student's IEP Team shall meet within 10 days of the school's decision to impose the discipline. At this meeting, called a "*manifestation determination*," the IEP Team, including the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall determine if the misbehavior was caused by or had a direct relationship to the student's disability, or was the direct result of the school's failure to provide the services required by the student's IEP.

In making the manifestation determination, the IEP Team must consider relevant information from student's file, including the student's IEP, your and the teachers' observations of the student's behavior, and any relevant information that the parent(s)/guardian(s) provide.

If the IEP Team determines that the student's behavior **was not** caused by or directly related to the student's disability or the failure to properly implement the IEP, then a student with a disability can be disciplined in the same manner and for the same length of time as other students are disciplined for the same offense.

The IEP Team, however, must determine the interim alternative educational setting ("IAES") where the student will be placed and the educational services that will be provided. An IAES is a setting other than the student's current placement that enables the student to continue to receive educational services according to his or her IEP. School personnel may consider the student's unique circumstances in determining whether a change in placement is appropriate for a student with a disability.

If IEP Team determines that the student's behavior **was** caused by or directly related to the student's disability or the failure to properly implement the IEP, then the student must be returned to the last approved IEP placement unless the IEP Team decides on a different placement. The student shall also undergo a functional behavioral assessment. A functional behavioral assessment is a comprehensive assessment of behavior that provides the IEP Team with information about the student's behavior and identifies behavioral intervention services and program modifications that are designed to address the behavioral violation so it does not recur.

If the student has already had a functional behavioral assessment and has a behavioral intervention plan, then the IEP Team shall determine if any changes should be made to the behavioral intervention plan. If the behavior was caused by the failure to properly implement the IEP, the school shall immediate steps to remedy the deficiencies.

If the student possessed or used a weapon or drugs, or caused serious bodily injury to another person on school property or at a school event, the student may be placed by the Director of Teaching and Learning in an IAES for up to 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability. The IEP Team will determine the IAES and the appropriate educational services that will be provided to the student while he or she is in the IAES.

Instruction Provided to a Student Removed from School

During a short disciplinary removal, the school is not required to provide instruction to a disabled student unless it does so for non-disabled students.

However, once a student with a disability has been removed from the school or from his/her placement for more than 10 cumulative days during the school year the student must receive educational services that will allow the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward the goals set out in his or her IEP. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall consult with at least one of the student's teachers to determine what services are necessary. These services shall begin on the 11th school day of a student's disciplinary removal during the school year and continue during the disciplinary removal.

Appeal of a Disciplinary Decision

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the Director of Teaching and Learning's decision, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall hold a hearing within three (3) school days upon receipt of the notice of appeal, unless the parent/guardian/student requests an appeal of up to 7 additional calendar days. The Board of Trustees shall send written notice of the time, date, and location of the hearing parent(s)/guardian(s).

During the Board of Trustees' hearing, the student shall all of the same rights and due process as enumerated in Section 1 of this Policy. The Board of Trustees shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the Board of Trustee's decision regarding placement of his or her student under the disciplinary provisions or disagrees with the manifestation determination, or if HCCPS believes that maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in an injury to the student or to others, either the parent or HCCPS may appeal the decision by requesting a hearing with the Board of Special Education Appeals ("BSEA").

The BSEA will convene a hearing on a disciplinary placement or manifestation determination on an expedited schedule. During the appeal of a disciplinary placement or manifestation determination, the student must remain in the IAES until the hearing officer makes a decision or the disciplinary period is completed, unless the parent and the school district agree to a different placement

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education has issued specific regulations concerning the use of physical restraint on students at publicly-funded elementary and secondary education programs, found at 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. These regulations apply to all students, including regular education students and students with disabilities. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS) is committed to ensuring that the use of physical restraint with students strictly adheres to these regulations.

The purpose of 603 CMR 46.00 is to ensure that every student participating in a Massachusetts public education program is free from the use of physical restraint that is inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

- (a) To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and
- (b) To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

Definitions:

1. Physical restraint may be defined as “the use of bodily force to limit a student’s freedom of movement.”
2. Extended restraint may be defined as a physical restraint which lasts for more than twenty (20) minutes.
3. Physical escort may be defined as “touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student.” Physical escort is not physical restraint.
4. Other restraints can include placing a student in seclusion in a limited space or location without access to school staff. The use of “time-outs” where a staff member is present or accessible by the student does not constitute seclusion restraint. The type of physical restraint used is dependent upon the special training of staff members in specific kinds of such restraints.

Specifically, as outlined in 603 CMR 46.03: Use of Restraint:

- (1) Prohibition.
 - (a) Mechanical restraint, medication restraint, and seclusion shall be prohibited in public education programs.
 - (b) Prone restraint shall be prohibited in public education programs except on an individual student basis, and only under the following circumstances:
 1. The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
 2. All other forms of physical restraints have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others;
 3. There are no medical contraindications as documented by a licensed physician;
 4. There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
 5. The program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and such use has been approved in writing by the principal; and,
 6. The program has documented 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b) 1 – 5 in advance of the use of prone restraint and maintains the documentation.
 - (c) Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted, shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited in public education programs except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive

to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

- (d) All physical restraints, including prone restraint where permitted, shall be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.05.
- (2) Physical restraint shall not be used:
 - (a) As a means of discipline or punishment;
 - (b) When the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;
 - (c) As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or
 - (d) As a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.
- (3) Limitations on use of restraint. Physical restraint in a public education program shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
- (4) Referral to law enforcement or other state agencies. Nothing in these regulations prohibits:
 - (a) The right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual;
 - (b) Law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or
 - (c) The exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to G.L. c. 119, § 51A. 603 CMR 46.00 shall not be used to deter any individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency.

In accordance with state and federal law, nothing in the regulations precludes school personnel from implementing physical restraint contained in an agreed-upon Behavioral Intervention Plan. A Behavioral Intervention Plan is the result of a Functional Behavioral Assessment and may be found in an Individual Educational Program, Section 504/Accommodation Plan, or on its own. A Behavioral Intervention Plan informed written consent by the student's parent/legal guardian.

It should also be noted that nothing in the regulations precludes a teacher or other staff member from using reasonable force to protect students, themselves, or other persons from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.

Staff Training:

All administrators, faculty and other program staff will receive annual training regarding this policy. Training will include the use of interventions to de-escalate problem behavior in order to avoid the use of restraints; the types of restraints and related safety issues for each; employing physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans for individual students; and the staff member(s) who have received in-depth training with whom they may consult as needed.

Additional in-depth training for designated staff members will include:

1. Appropriate procedures for preventing the need for physical restraint; de-escalation of problem behaviors; relationship building; and the use of alternatives to restraint;
2. Description and identification of dangerous behaviors by a student which may indicate the need for physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations to determine whether restraint is warranted;
3. Simulated experiences in administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effects upon the person restrained, including the monitoring of physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance.
4. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and the investigation of injuries and complaints; and
5. Demonstrations by participants showing that they are proficient in administering physical restraint.

Faculty and staff will review any behavior plans pertaining to special techniques to be use with identified students.

When Physical Restraints is Used:

1. Physical restraint may be used when non-physical interventions have been attempted without success or when it is apparent that they would not be effective. It may only be used when a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to self and/or others or when otherwise outlined in a Behavioral Intervention Plan.
2. Physical restraint is limited to the use of such reasonable force as may be necessary to protect a student or other persons from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.
3. Unless specifically indicated in an agreed-upon Behavioral Intervention Plan, physical restraint may not be used as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats which do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm. Physical restraint may never be used as a means of punishment.
4. A school staff member who uses a physical restraint on a student must use the safest method available which is most appropriate to the situation at hand, and the method for which that staff member has been trained. Staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavior intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint upon an individual student.
5. No physical restraint may be used which prevents a student from speaking or breathing, and must be used in such a way as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during the restraint, the student demonstrates significant physical distress, the restraint shall be removed immediately.
6. A physical restraint must be discontinued as soon as possible when it has been determined that a student no longer poses a risk of harm to self or others.
7. Following the use of a physical restraint, either the education or Director of Administration and the staff member involved in the restraint will meet with the student to address the behavior which prompted the restraint. The coordinators will also review the incident with the staff members who were involved and determine whether follow-up is needed for students who may have witnessed the incident.
8. Physical restraint regulations do not prohibit any individual from reporting a crime committed by a student to local law enforcement or other state agencies. Law enforcement officers or judicial authorities are not prohibited by this regulation from the exercise of their responsibilities, which may include the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or who poses a security risk. In addition, an individual who is a mandated reporter under M.G.L., c. 119, & 51A is not prohibited by this policy from complying with their responsibility to report neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency.

Reporting Requirements:

1. A staff member who administers a restraint shall verbally inform the education or Director of Administration as soon as practical that day and by written report no later than the next school day.
2. The education or Director of Administration shall verbally inform the student's parent/guardian of the use of physical restraint as soon as practical and by written report no later than three (3) school days following such use.
3. The report must include:
 - a) The names and job titles or staff who administered the restraint and the person(s) who observed it;
 - b) The date and time the restraint was used, the time it began and ended, and the name of the coordinator who was verbally informed.
 - c) A description of the activity of the restrained student and other students and staff in the vicinity immediately preceding the use of the restraint; the behavior which prompted it; the efforts made to de-escalate; alternatives which were attempted first; and the jurisdiction for resorting to physical restraint.
 - d) A description of the restraint used and the reasons why; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how it ended; and documentation of injury, if any, to the student or staff and any medical care provided;
 - e) For extended restraints, a description of the alternatives that were attempted first; the outcome of those efforts; and the jurisdiction for administering an extended restraint.
 - f) Information regarding any further action(s) taken by school staff, including any disciplinary actions taken toward the student.
 - g) Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent/guardian to discuss the restraint and related matters with the coordinator, as well as their right to file a grievance.

The Director of Administration shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of the use of physical restraint that shall be made available to the Department of Education.

When a restraint has resulted in a serious injury to the student or program staff member Involved, or when an extended restraint has been administered, a written report must be submitted to the Department of Education within five (5) school days of the date of the restraint. The Director of Administration must, at this time, also provide the Department of Education with a copy of the ongoing record of restraints for the thirty (30) day period preceding the date of the reported restraint. The Department will notify the school of any required actions, if warranted, within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of the report.

Nothing contained herein shall relieve staff reporting requirements when a personal injury occurs within the scope of employment.

Individual Waiver of Reporting Requirements:

A school may seek a parent/guardian's consent to waive the reporting requirements for restraints which do not result in injury or extended restraint. Such a waiver should only be sought for students who present behaviors that may require the frequent use of restraints. The parent/guardian must provide informed, written consent to the waiver, which shall specify the reporting requirements that are being waived. The informed, written consent will be kept in the student's file, along with specific information regarding when and how the parent/guardian will be informed of the administration of restraints on their child.

Students with Disabilities:

Restraints which are administered to students pursuant to their Individualized Education Programs, Section 504 Accommodation Plans, or other plans developed in accordance with state and federal law, and which has been agreed upon by both the school and the parent/guardian, shall be deemed to meet the requirements of 603 CMR 46.00. The limitations on chemical, mechanical, and seclusion restraints as specified above continue to apply to students with disabilities, as do the above reporting requirements.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

HCCPS has established an internal procedure in order to provide for prompt and equitable resolutions of complaints regarding the administration of physical restraints.

Definitions:

A “Grievance” is a complaint made pursuant to, and arising out of, HCCPS’ obligation to comply with state regulations regarding the use of physical restraints.

An “Aggrieved Party” is a person or persons making the complaint.

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to secure prompt and equitable solutions to grievances which may, from time to time, arise pursuant to 603 CMR 46.00.

General:

No aggrieved party will be subject to coercion, intimidation, interference, or discrimination for registering a complaint or for assisting in the investigation of any alleged complaint within the context of this grievance procedure.

All documents, communications, and records dealing with the filing of a grievance will be kept confidential to the full extent provided by law.

Forms for filing grievances will be provided upon request by the administrative office.

Procedure:

1. The aggrieved party should complete the Grievance Form and return it to the building principal or his/her designee at the school building in which the alleged grievance occurred. The complaint should be filed within fifteen (15) days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation. Assistance will be provided, upon request, to enable an individual to complete the Grievance Form and pursue the grievance process.
2. Within (10) school days after receiving the grievance, the education or Director of Administration shall meet with the aggrieved party in an effort to resolve the grievance. This investigation into the complaint is contemplated to be thorough, but informal, in nature. All interested persons and their representatives, if any, shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard and to submit evidence relevant to the complaint. If the grievance is not resolved, it will be forwarded to the HCCPS Grievance Committee.
3. Within thirty (30) school days of receipt of an unresolved grievance, the HCCPS Grievance Committee will conduct a hearing to determine what, if any, action shall be taken in response to the grievance. The hearing shall be held at a time and place mutually convenient to all parties. The hearing procedure will follow appropriate due process procedures including:
 - a. the opportunity for the aggrieved party to present the grievance
 - b. in any suitable manner
 - c. the right of the aggrieved party to an impartial hearing officer
 - d. the right of the aggrieved party to be represented by counsel or an advocate at the aggrieved party’s expense;
 - e. the right of the aggrieved party to a prompt decision.

Parents/legal guardians should provide advance notice to the Grievance Committee that they will be represented by counsel or an advocate at the grievance hearing. Failure to provide such notice will likely result in a postponement of the hearing.

4. A written determination of the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued by the Grievance Committee and forwarded to the complainant no later than fifteen (15) working days after the hearing. The determination of the validity of the complaint and the description of the resolution will be provided in an alternate format, upon request) if needed for effective communication.

5. The complainant can request a reconsideration of the case in instances where he or she is dissatisfied with the resolution. The request for reconsideration should be made within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the written determination to the full Board of Trustees of HCCPS.
6. The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution for the complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of an ADA, Section 504 or other complaint with the responsible federal department or agency. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
7. These rules shall be construed to protect the substantive rights of the interested persons to meet appropriate due process standards and to assure that HCCPS comply with 603 CMR 46.00.

Grievance Procedure (Students and/or Parents)

Introduction

HCCPS is a community based on consensus. In that spirit we embrace the importance of open dialogue and communication among the community. Therefore, we strongly support dialogue as the first, and necessary step to our school grievance procedure. If a face-to-face dialogue does not resolve the conflict, then the following process shall be used. HCCPS staff members may not use this process to resolve their grievances.

A. Definition

A "grievance" is a claim based upon an event or condition which affects the welfare and/or education of a student. A "grievant" is defined as a student and/or parent submitting the grievance.

B. Time Limits

The purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, equitable solutions to the problems which may from time to time arise affecting the welfare or education of students. Both parties agree that these proceedings will be kept as informal and confidential as may be appropriate at any level of the procedure. Nothing in this grievance procedure will preclude the parties from resolving issues informally, provided said informal resolution does not violate the policies of the Board of Trustees.

Since it is important that grievances be processed as rapidly as possible, the number of days indicated at each level should be considered as maximum, and every effort should be made to expedite the process.

A "grievance" shall be deemed to have been waived, and shall not be further processed under this grievance process if it has not been presented or pursued within those time limits herein set forth. The time limits specified may be extended by a mutual agreement in writing.

D. Levels/Procedure

Level One

A student and/or parent with a grievance will present it, in writing, to a Domain Coordinator within fifteen (15) school days of the time the student and/or parent knew or should have known of the act or condition on which the grievance is based.

Within ten (10) school days of receipt of the grievance, the Domain Coordinator will meet with the grievant. Within five (5) school days of the meeting, the Domain Coordinator will render a written response.

Level Two

If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant within five (5) school days of the meeting at Level One, or if no response has been made within said time period, the grievant may present the grievance in writing to the Director of Administration within ten (10) school days of the Level One response, or the response due date, whichever is earlier.

Within ten (10) school days of receipt of the grievance, the Director of Administration will meet with the grievant. Within five (5) school days of the meeting, the Director of Administration will render a written response.

Level Three

If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant within ten (10) school days of the meeting at Level Two, or if no response has been made within said time period, the grievance may be presented in writing to the Board of Trustees within ten (10) school days of the Level Two response, or the response due date, whichever is earlier.

The Board of Trustees will schedule a hearing of the grievance at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board of Trustees will render its response, in writing, within ten (10) school days next following the meeting at Level Three. The Board of Trustees' decision is final and binding, and is not subject to arbitration.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Complaint Procedure

This complaint procedure applies to all staff, parents and students.

1. Try to resolve the complaint with person directly involved or with the coordinator responsible for the subject matter of the complaint. For complaints about individuals, contact the supervising coordinator if the complaint is unable to be resolved directly with the individual involved.
2. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Step (1), he or she may request that the Vice President of the Board of Trustees (BOT), who will serve as facilitator, resolve the issue. If the Vice President determines that the issue warrants further review, he/she will discuss the matter with all relevant parties and gather all necessary information to make a final decision in writing and in person. If the VP/Facilitator needs consultation, he/she will seek advice from the Governance and Board Sustainability committee (GABS). The VP/Facilitator will bring the matter to the board for discussion should the complaint warrant it, but if not, will inform the board of the issue and subsequent resolution.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Calendar 2020-2021

SUBJECT TO CHANGE – PLEASE CHECK ON-GOING GOOGLE CALENDAR FOR UPDATES & LINKS

[links to the Hilltown Google calendar can be found in the weekly newsletter, on the portal login page and the school website](#)

	M	TU	W	TH	F		
AUG	24	25	26	27	28	Aug 24	First day for Teachers
0	31	1	2	3	4	Aug 31	First day for TAs
SEPT	7	8	9	10	11	Sept 14	First day for students
13	14	15	16	17	18	Sept 23	Blues and Indigos Orientations
days	21	22	23	24	25	Sept 24	Greens and Yellows Orientations
	28	29	30	1	2	Sept 30	Purples Orientation
OCT	5	6	7	8	9	Oct 1	Prisms Orientation
21	12	13	14	15	16	Oct 5-6	School Picture Days
days	19	20	21	22	23	Oct 8	Oranges and Reds Orientations
	26	27	28	29	30	Oct 12	NO SCHOOL - Indigenous People's Day
NOV	2	3	4	5	6	Oct 29-30	HALF DAYS for students - no programs after 12pm Parent-Teacher Conferences
16	9	10	11	12	13	Nov 3	NO SCHOOL for students - Professional Development for Teachers
days	16	17	18	19	20	Nov 11	NO SCHOOL - Veteran's Day
	23	24	25	26	27	Nov 24	end of Trimester 1
	30	1	2	3	4	Nov 25, 26, 27	NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break
DEC	7	8	9	10	11	Dec 10-11	HALF DAYS for students - no programs after 12pm report writing for Teachers
17	14	15	16	17	18	Dec 23	Winter Solstice Celebration; HALF DAY - no programs after 12pm
days	21	22	23	24	25	Dec 24-Jan 1	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break 1; return to school January 4
	28	29	30	31	1		
JAN	4	5	6	7	8		
18	11	12	13	14	15	Jan 18	NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
days	18	19	20	21	22	Jan 19	NO SCHOOL for students - Professional Development for Teachers
	25	26	27	28	29		
FEB	1	2	3	4	5		
15	8	9	10	11	12	Feb 11	Admissions Lottery for 2021-22
days	15	16	17	18	19	Feb 15-19	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break 2 (Presidents' Day Feb 15)
	22	23	24	25	26		
MAR	1	2	3	4	5		
21	8	9	10	11	12	March 19	end of Trimester 2
days	15	16	17	18	19	Mar 25	NO SCHOOL for students - Report Writing Days for Teachers
	22	23	24	25	26	Mar 26	NO SCHOOL for students - Professional Development for Teachers
	29	30	31	1	2		
APR	5	6	7	8	9		
17	12	13	14	15	16		
days	19	20	21	22	23	April 19-23	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break (Patriots' Day Apr 19)
	26	27	28	29	30		
MAY	3	4	5	6	7		
20	10	11	12	13	14		
days	17	18	19	20	21		
	24	25	26	27	28		
	31	1	2	3	4	May 31	NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day
JUNE	7	8	9	10	11	June 16*	Tentative last day of school for students, <i>if no snow days or other closures</i>
12	14	15	16	17	18	June 22	Tentative last day for Teachers (4 days after students' last day)
days	21	22	23	24	25		



SNOW DAY?

Hilltown families, please check your email, text messages, or voicemail.

For the wider community, we also post closings at

www.wvlp.com (Channel 22) and www.wggb.com (Channel 40).

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

1 Industrial Pkwy., Easthampton, MA 01027

Phone: 413-529-7178, Fax: 413-527-1530

www.hilltowncharter.org e-mail: info@hilltowncharter.org

Attendance / Absences

*If your child will be absent for all or part of the school day,
please email attendance@hilltowncharter.org.*

For time-sensitive messages, please call the main office 413-529-7178 option 0.