

# HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL



## ***Family Handbook and Directory 2019-2020***

*We hope that the information in this book will help make your year at Hilltown informed and enjoyable. Please come in at any time to clarify or to ask questions. Translations of this or any other school documents are available for families who need it.*

*(Si usted desea una copia de este manual - o de cualquier otro documento de la escuela - en español, por favor comuníquese con Dan Klatz, Director Administrativo.)*

***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 available on our website: [www.hilltowncharter.org](http://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 added the 7th and 8th grades in 2000 and 2001 respectively and have now grown to 12 classrooms with 218 students. The state reviews of the school have been most favorable and in 2015 we received our fourth charter renewal.*

*Congratulations Hilltown for twenty-four 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*  
*Cyndy Sperry, Atelierista (K-1)*  
*Laurel Loomis, Atelierista (2-6)*  
*Joy Kinigstein, Atelierista (7-8) / Atelier TA*  
*Grace Mrowicki, Technology Coordinator*  
*Cait Browne, Special Education*  
*Gaby Blaustein, Special Education*  
*Emily Lees, Special Education*  
*Andrea Hearn Reading Specialist*  
*Juan-Carlos Carpio, Spanish (7-8)*  
*Alex Niemiec, Physical Education, Head Coach*

### **Teaching Assistants, Instructors and Specialists:**

*Christcyra Sok, Indigos graduate intern,*  
*Zoe Klatz, Blues TA*  
*Seana Lamothe, Greens TA*  
*Rashida Krigger, Greens TA*  
*Tonya Andrews, Yellows TA*  
*Sam Schoenberger, Oranges TA*  
*Madeline Neill, Reds TA*  
*Athena Giles, Purples TA*  
*Casey Armanetti, Prisms TA*  
*Tanisha Lopes, Prisms TA*  
*Talya Lercari, Prisms Special Education TA*  
*Kelsey Furey, Prisms Special Education TA*  
*Carolyn Ketcham, K-5 Special Education TA*  
*Penny Giguere, K-1 Atelier TA*

**Student Support Team**

*Deb Haas; Nurse, Health Ed.  
Mary Price; Nurse, Health Ed.  
Emilie Woodward, School Counselor  
Amy Linnell, Speech Therapist  
Jeanne Schubmehl, Occupational Therapy  
Jody Kinner & Sara Harvey, Physical Therapy*

**Administrative Staff**

*Lara Ramsey, Director of Teaching and Learning  
Dan Klatz, Director of Administration, Civil Rights Coordinator  
Deirdre Arthen, Director of Community and Family Engagement  
Kate Saccento, Coordinator of Student Services  
Monique Bourgeois, Administrative Assistant  
Carla Clark, Bookkeeper / Purchasing Agent  
Nicole Grinaski, Kids Club Coordinator, Administrative Support  
Meghan Suidzinski, Program Support & Community Service Learning*

\* \* \* \* \*

**Hilltown Board of Trustees**

*Tim Reynolds, President  
Matthew Dube, Vice President  
Noelle Stern, Clerk, Governance Committee chair  
Rich Senecal, Treasurer, Finance Committee chair  
Joe Wyman, Facilities Committee chair  
Liz Preston, Personnel Committee chair  
Paula Ingram (faculty)  
Kelly Woods (parent)  
Dawn Reesman (parent)*

**Friends of Hilltown Board of Directors**

*Myssie Casinghino, President  
Maryellen Rousseau, Clerk  
Dawn Graichen-Moore, Treasurer  
Lei Fay  
Carol McMurrich  
Kim Sager-Cutt*



## **MISSION**

*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**

*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 HCCPS, 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.*

*HCCPS 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 2019-2020 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. Parents of prospective students should contact the school for an application or download one from our website: [www.hilltowncharter.org](http://www.hilltowncharter.org) . 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**, Dan Klatz, is responsible for much of the reporting that goes to the state. He 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 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 at least 40 hours per year as they are able. 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 between once and three times a year, depending on the need. Parents are strongly 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. Almost everyone meets that expectation - many reaching or exceeding the household goal of 4 hours (or more) per month. These hours are recorded using the parent portal or paper forms.*

*All parents are asked to complete an individual Volunteer Resource Form at the beginning of the year. These give us information about how you would most like to participate as well as your skills and interests. Parents who 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 ways we share information is through a secure portal system, where you can log in to find general information about school and class activities, 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 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 carpool 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 account in the 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.*

***Family Mailboxes** are located in the main entryway and parents are asked to check them every week. Although most communication is done through email, some important materials are distributed here, sometimes with short notice, of upcoming events or changes in plans. You may miss something if you are not on top of your mail. The mailboxes are for official school communications only. Please do not use the mailboxes for distributing non-school-related information.*

### **Communication with Teachers**

*While teachers welcome greetings during drop-off and pick-up times, they are generally unable to discuss individual concerns with parents at that time. A written message left for the teacher in the Main Office, an email or a phone call is a better 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 check their messages until the end of the day. 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 for students in the office 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 have an open door policy and are always glad to converse with parents.*

***Board of Trustees** meetings are open to everyone and have room for public comment period during its meetings. Many committees have open membership and participation in the work is a great way to have input into how things happen.*

**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 HCCPS 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 Community Team and Class Parents**, a group of active parents and staff members, can be a good resource when you have general questions. They host parent gatherings and morning coffee hours that are open to all and can be a good place for informal conversations. Parents with questions about the school and its policies may also turn to the Director of Community and Family Engagement. She will do her best to provide an answer and can also schedule a Coop Meeting to discuss particular issues when a group conversation would be beneficial.

### **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](http://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. The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School expects students to attend school daily to receive the maximum benefits of our program. Our attendance policy is included in the Appendix; please look at it to familiarize yourself with the limits on absences and tardiness.*

### **Arrivals, Departures and Attendance**

***Classroom doors open and school begins at 8:15. Students should be in their classrooms at that time. Attendance is taken at 8:20 and timeliness is key. Drop off is permissible at the playground at 8AM when staff supervision is provided.***

*Stragglers arrivals and departures create disruption, distractions and chaos in the classroom. We prefer that parents walk young children into the school. After 8AM you may wait together either outside or in the Family Corner until classroom doors open at 8:15. The school's main entrance, which is the only one that will be unlocked for entry into the building, is at the center of the building facing Industrial Pkwy. Please use the sidewalk from the parking lot to the front door and the crosswalks for safety. **Young children should never walk alone in the parking lot at any time.***

*Please cross the street carefully with your child. Use the crosswalks, the walkways and follow the marked parking and traffic pattern to prevent accidents. Students who need to be dropped off early may arrive any time after 8:00 and play on the playground, which will be staffed (or in the Family Corner during inclement weather) until 8:15 when classroom doors open. The school has a designated drop-off lane in front where no parking is permitted.*

*The doors are locked between arrival and dismissal times and no child may leave without an adult or written permission.*

*The school day ends at 3:00, except on Wednesdays when grades K-5 end at 12:30 and only the Purples and Prisms (6-8th grades) continue until 3:00. Parents of K-5 students come into the building to sign out their children. 6-8 students may be collected at a drive-up pick up lane outside. Please be prompt at pick-up times and make your way out of the building as calmly and quickly as possible. With written parental permission, students may leave school on their own to walk home, or take the PVT bus.*

### **No Idling**

*When waiting to 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**

*If your child will be absent due to illness or for any other reason, a parent must either email [attendance@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:attendance@hilltowncharter.org) by 8:20am (preferred). After 9:00, please call the main office: 413-529-7178 option 0. See Attendance Policy on page 22 for more information.*

**Late Arrivals**

*If a child arrives after 8:20, they will be tardy and will find the door to the building closed. Before entering, they will need to pick up a "Late Pass" from the office in order to be admitted. 5 "tardies" equal one unexcused absence. (See Attendance Policy in appendix) Persistent tardiness will result in a telephone call from a teacher or an administrator and may necessitate a meeting between parents and the administration.*

**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](mailto: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.*

*Children with a fever over 100.5 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 and Playdates**

*Please visit your portal to list the people who are authorized to pick your child up, including carpool drivers. If you need to make an early pick-up or if a child is leaving with a friend's parent, please fill out an Attendance/Pick-up memo in the main office. Students may not use office phones or personal cell phones to make social plans. Please arrange playdates ahead of time and keep us informed.*

**Snow Days**

*HCCPS 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 a text and or automated phone call to parents who wish to receive either or both, an email to all parents; and posts on the "closings" page at [www.wwlp.com](http://www.wwlp.com) and [www.wggb.com](http://www.wggb.com) (channel 40).*

## **A FEW SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Visiting the School**

*Parents are welcome at Hilltown at any time, and in the classrooms at any time except during active test hours. We regularly have parents in the building. Many other visitors come as well, including educators, grandparents and community volunteers, so students are used to seeing many adult faces throughout the day. Family visitors are asked to wear a special sticker, which is available in the office, when they are here at times other than drop-off and pick-up so that staff and students can recognize that you belong here. Other visitors sign in at the main office and wear a Visitor Pass while they are in the building.*

*Please be aware that if you want to have a discussion with a teacher, it is important to make an appointment with them in advance to ensure that they will have plenty of time available for your conversation.*

### **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. Should you need to get a message to your child during the day, please call the main office and we will either relay the message or, in an emergency, bring your child to the phone in the office.*

*Students who need to bring in their devices for after-school communication must turn them in at a Director's office upon arrival and retrieve it when they leave. Students found in possession of a device during the day for the first time will have the device taken away, will receive a warning and the parents will be informed. If it happens again, the device may only be retrieved by a parent. Any subsequent offense will result in an in-house suspension. Any cell phone or iPod found in use will be taken to a Director's office and may be retrieved from there at the end of the day by the appropriate person - parent or student.*

*This policy also applies to evening events held at school, including, but not limited to, the all-school sleepover and 6,7,8 dances.*

***We ask that parents and other caregivers keep all cell phone use outside of the building.***



### ***Other things to leave at home***

*Hilltown policy prohibits electronic games and equipment, pocket knives, and weapons of all kinds - toy or actual (see weapons policy in appendix). The limitations of our space require that yo-yos only be used outdoors. Skateboards and bikes are only permitted when used as transportation to and from school.*

### ***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 most 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 Dan Klatz, Director of Administration, Lara Ramsey, Director of Teaching and Learning or Deirdre Arthen, Director of Community and Families.*

## **SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

### **Snack / Lunch**

*Most children bring their own snack and lunch each day. We encourage you to pack plenty of healthy low-sugar items. It is a long day and snacks are essential. We recommend that you use re-closable, re-usable and non-glass containers as well as silverware that can be taken home and washed. Students are expected to rinse and recycle any disposable containers, and disposable plastic utensils create needless waste and damage the environment. No refrigeration or warming facilities are available. We encourage students to bring home all trash and uneaten food.*

*We have a school lunch program, including pizza on Fridays, provided by Papa George, a local restaurant. Order forms can be found in your portal or picked up at school. They should then be printed and dropped off with payment at least one school day in advance. Those eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches can get applications from the "Blank Forms" file box in the Main Office or 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. We currently have local partnerships with All About Children, the Lathrop Home, Soldier On and Arcadia, as well as partnerships with international organizations including UNICEF and Amnesty International.*

### **Field Trips**

*Parents of new students are asked to sign a blanket permission slip at the beginning of their first year here authorizing their child to participate in local field trips during their time at Hilltown. At the beginning of each year families are asked to contribute a modest sum to cover fees for field trips for the entire year. Subsidies are available for those who need them.*

*The Prisms and Purples classes each take an extended field trip each year, which are funded separately through fund-raising, the school budget, parents and student effort. Parents are notified in advance of upcoming trips and sometimes are required to sign an additional form for a specific trip.*

### **Lost and Found**

*The main lost and found is located on the 2nd floor stair landing. During the winter it quickly grows out of control. **Please label children's clothing, especially outerwear,** and check the lost and found frequently. Every couple of months, a volunteer will put out a notice, bring out the contents and display all unlabeled items in the all-school space for four school days. After those four days, unclaimed items will be donated to charity.*



### **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.*

### **Lunchrooms**

*Each month K-6 students are assigned to a new lunchroom where they eat with students from all the other classes. This way they get to know students of all ages. Children are expected to sit, eat and converse with table-mates for 20 minutes before returning to their own classrooms. If a child wants to request a special "lunch buddy" for the coming month, he may make a written request to the Director of Administration (Dan) one-week before the start of the new month.*

### **Recess**

*All students have recess daily, outside whenever possible. Two classes generally go out together. We go out in all kinds of weather, and appropriate clothing is essential. Boots, gloves and snow pants are required during the winter and sturdy shoes are recommended all year. It is important that young children keep an extra set of clothing and socks stored in their cubby at school.*

### **Mini-courses**

*Mini-courses are a wonderful opportunity for students to explore an activity in depth, with students of all ages, and with an adult other than their own teacher. All students select from the options offered by the teachers, parents or community members. In the past choices have included playwriting, drumming, mural painting, nature studies, newspaper production or yoga. Mini-courses take place three times a year on Thursdays from 1:30 - 2:50. They generally run for 4 weeks and are often followed by presentations to the school community at All School. If you are interested in teaching or helping with a mini-course, contact the Director of Community and Family Engagement (Deirdre).*

### **All-School**

*Hilltown supports the sense of school community by holding a weekly All School gathering of all the classrooms each Friday at 2:10pm. 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 8:30 on a Friday morning. These productions are rehearsed outside of school hours and the performances are greatly anticipated within all of the classes. Parents are invited to attend or 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 smaller recognitions of Martin Luther King Jr Day and Earth Day, the school does not celebrate holidays in any formal way, although classroom discussions of diverse family traditions are 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. Some classes permit a birthday child to bring in a special snack to share with the class. Please check with the teacher and keep food sensitivities in mind. Please keep invitations and conversations about birthday parties outside of school and be sensitive to the feelings of children who aren't invited when transporting groups from school to a party.*

## **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. **The Winter Fair**, an annual family event including craft-making tables, performances and a book sale, is held at the beginning of December. **Art Spark**, in the spring, is an all-adult event, usually featuring performances, an auction and always great food. The Prisms students host a **Coffeehouse** in February with dinner for all and student performances. **The Family Dance and Cakewalk**, a **Science Fair**, **Grandparents' Day**, the spring **Music Festival** where all of our students perform, and **8th grade Graduation** round out the year's big events.*

*Community events of all sorts are scheduled throughout the year. Look for: classroom orientation meetings, potlucks, parties, dances for older students, games nights, movie nights, parent workshops, student performances and the Coop meetings. These will be posted on the school's Google calendar announced in the weekly newsletter.*

*During school events outside of normal school hours, the school's basic policies regarding student behavior - no running, shouting, climbing or going outdoors without an adult - and no cell phones remain in effect.*

***Staff members are not on-duty after hours during family events.** Parents are responsible for supervising their children at all times. In the event that students' behaviors become dangerous or distracting during an event, the activity will be stopped and parents will be asked to re-establish order before it resumes.*

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS**

*Hilltown offers several after school enrichment and childcare options for a minimal fee. Some ongoing programs, like our music groups and sports teams, cost a flat fee for a semester's participation; others, like Kids' Club (see below), charge by the session and offer discounts for multiple children. All of the specifics and sign-up forms are available both in your Portal and in the Main Office. 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.*

### ***Kids' Club***

*The Hilltown Kids Club Program is a daily after-school offering for students of all ages, running from 3:00-5:00 (Mon, Tues, Thur., Fri) and 12:30-5:00 on Wed. It is a combination of indoor and outdoor activities including snack, games, arts and crafts, cooking, theater, music, and quiet, supervised space for home study or reading. Registration forms are available in the main office or online and prepayment is required. Same day-sign up is possible on a space available and pre-pay basis.*

### **Hilltown Music and Theater Programs - Monday and Wednesday afternoons**

#### ***Chorus (Wednesdays)***

*The Hilltown Chorus, for students in grades 3-5, meets in semester sessions on Wednesdays, from 12:50 - 1:50 pm.. All children must bring or order a lunch for that day. Enrollment forms will be distributed at the start of the year with pertinent dates and fees.*

#### ***Hilltown Harmonies (Wednesdays)***

*This is a vocal group for Purples and Prisms students. There will be two semester sessions that will meet on Wednesdays from 3:15 - 4:30. Enrollment forms will be distributed at the start of the year with pertinent dates and fees. Please send students with extra snacks for the afternoon.*

#### ***Instrumental Ensembles (Mondays)***

*Hilltown arranges rehearsal time for instrumental ensembles and bands as determined by student, staff and parent interest. Information about this year's offerings will be in the Newsletter and registration forms will be available in the office.*

#### ***Kaleidoscope Troupe (Mondays)***

*Theater games and improv group for grades K-5 that meets in the fall. Enrollment forms will be distributed at the start of the year with pertinent dates and fees.*

#### ***Spring Musical (Mondays)***

*A full scale production of an original musical. All grades welcome. Some Saturday rehearsals possible as performance time nears.*

### **Hilltown Sports Programs - Tuesday and Thursday afternoons**

*Cross Country Running Club serves students in grades 4-8 in the fall, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Members may also choose to compete in some local meets. Be on the lookout for enrollment forms with pertinent dates & fees. Available in the main office and the portal.*



*The school's **Ultimate Frisbee** team 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.*

***Ski Club** is a 5 or 6 week program during the winter for students in grades 1-8. Parent participation is mandatory for the youngest students and invited for older ones. 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, Fiber Arts, Girls on the Run or Kung Fu, will be announced in the Community Section of the Newsletter as they are scheduled.*

*The children of parents who volunteer weekly in most specific afterschool programs may participate in those programs for no fee. See the Director of Community and Family Engagement to get involved.*

## **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 events include 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. Hilltown also participates in ongoing school-wide efforts including **Boxtops for Education**, 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.

The Purples & Prisms classrooms also organize fundraising projects during the school year if needed for overnight field trips. All fundraising projects must be vetted through the Director of Community and Family Engagement to avoid conflicts.



## **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 allergic children.

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 established 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**

Regular state mandated health screenings, including vision, hearing, and postural screening are 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 the screenings are scheduled, and afterwards in writing of any problems, and may choose to opt-out of any of the screenings.

### **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 health care provider.*

### **Infectious Diseases Protocol**

*The school nurse will notify parents in writing 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 Deb know so that she can inform parents of other children in the classroom and thus the parents will be able to monitor their children for symptoms and follow up as necessary.*



*Tuesday Bike-to-School Group*

## **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, Dan Klatz.

### **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 Student Services Coordinator, 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 Iowa 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, Dan Klatz, 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, overseeing Community Service Learning for the students, developing systems to serve and include parents and other volunteers, overseeing 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. 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, agendas, and minutes are available for parents to review in the case in the main entry-way and on our 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 someone on the Board

**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 in these frequent meetings, 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.

**The Community Team** is composed of the Director of Community and Family Engagement and volunteer parents. It is responsible for helping to maintain the strong sense of community that is so important at Hilltown. Team members foster the community feeling in the school by hosting morning coffee hours and other special events to help families make connections with each other, by acknowledging and recognizing the contributions that individuals and groups make to the school, and by increasing communication through outreach to parents and staff to engage around current topics of interest or concern.

## APPENDIX

### APPENDICES INCLUDED

(in the print version):

*Home Study Guidelines*

*The Community Compact*

*Attendance Policy*

*Grade Placement Policy*

*Harassment Policy*

*ELL policies*

*Weapons and Controlled Substances Policy*

*State and Federal Education Laws*

*Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan*

*Due Process for Suspension*

*Policy Concerning Discipline of Students*

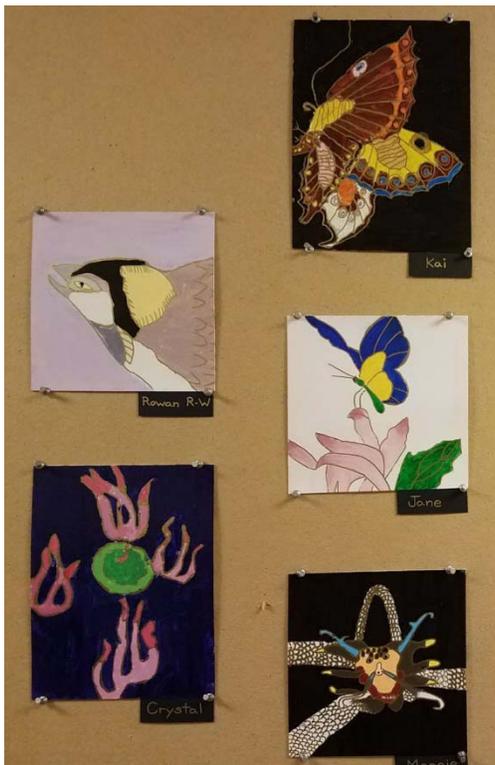
*Receiving Special Education Services*

*Computer Technology Acceptable Use Policy*

*Physical Restraint Policy*

*Grievance Procedure*

*Complaint Procedure*



### OTHER DOCUMENTS YOU MAY WANT TO READ

(Available on our website: [www.hilltowncharter.org](http://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*

*HCCPS Internet Acceptable Use Policy*

*HCCPS Consensus process description*

*HCCPS Consensus-process articles*

## ***Home Study Guidelines***

*Students in the younger grades are expected to read or be read to every night for at least twenty minutes. We see this as a way to develop good habits as readers, which is a major goal of the primary grades.*

*Beginning in fourth grade, students will continue with nightly reading, however specific books will be assigned as part of their literature study. In addition, students will have one or two math problems every night, Monday-Thursday.*

*6th-8th grade students will have more regular, systematic assignments. Sixth graders can expect up to one hour per night, and seventh and eighth graders can expect between sixty and eighty minutes per night.*

### ***Specific Home Study expectations by class***

*Blues, Indigos, Greens and Yellows:*

*At least 20 minutes of reading or being read to reach night.*

*Third grade math: five minutes of math fact practice during periods of the year*

*Oranges and Reds: Up to 30 minutes of reading nightly, plus one or two math problems*

*Purples: 60 minutes each night, M-Th plus occasional weekend assignments.*

*Prisms: 60-80 minutes each night plus some weekend work on major projects.*

# 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.

- \* **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, Dan Klatz)

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

## **GRADE PLACEMENT**

### 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**

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 Dan Klatz, Director of Administration

## **Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Revised 8/2019**

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): \_\_\_\_\_

7 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:

1. 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 and 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.

## **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. Some of the information available is controversial and may be offensive. The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School and the staff will make an effort to restrict access to sites it considers inappropriate for HCCPS students.

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School will provide instruction in appropriate use of computer technology. Students must agree to follow the rules of this Acceptable Use Policy. The nature of the computer technology provides many educational opportunities, but also necessitates personal responsibility for its use. Parents will be asked to help insure proper use of the Internet by reviewing this policy with their child(ren). Students will not be allowed access computer technology unless this Acceptable Use Policy has been signed by both parent(s) and the student. At HCCPS we value computers, technological tools, and access to online resources as a way to support and advance teaching and learning. We have made a considerable investment to ensure that members of our community have on demand access to these resources and in return we expect everyone to be responsible and respectful users. Students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

### **As a student at HCCPS, I will:**

1. Use the on-line resources provided by my school only for activities and projects known to be approved by my teacher(s).
2. Handle computer technology carefully and with respect – computers should only be used while sitting at a desk, not used while eating or drinking.
3. Not use computer technology for socializing, e.g., personal email, instant messaging, chatting, etc., or for downloading or streaming music, video, or other media unless I have explicit teacher permission.
4. Only use my HCCPS 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.
5. Not change or alter any computer, for example by installing software, removing hardware, adding extensions, or changing configurations, etc.
6. Only use printers with the approval of a teacher, and only print documents related to school work and activities.
7. Use language on-line which is consistent with school policy.
8. 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, and log on only under my own user name.
9. Not use school equipment to subscribe to outside e-mail services, newsgroups, bulletin board services or other commercial accounts unless with explicit permission by an HCCPS teacher.
10. Not reveal personal information such as home addresses or phone numbers of self or others.

11. Not transmit or download material in violation of state or federal regulations.
12. Not use language or retrieve information that is profane, obscene, abusive or threatening.
13. Report any problems or breaches of this agreement to a teacher or school administrator.

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

- Losing computer technology privileges within the school setting
- 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 s/he follows the rules of the contract. I understand that any conduct by my child that is in conflict with the contract will result 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** \_\_\_\_\_

# Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

## Physical Restraint Policy

### Introduction

It is the policy of HCCPS to promote a safe and productive workplace and educational environment for its employees and students and to ensure that every student in HCCPS is free from the use of physical restraint in compliance with the applicable Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations.

Accordingly, school personnel shall administer a physical restraint only as a last resort when it is needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm. When a physical restraint needs to be administered, school personnel shall seek to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of the physical restraint.

This policy shall not be construed to limit the protection afforded to students under other federal and state laws, including those laws that provide for the rights of students who have been found eligible to receive special education services. Additionally, this policy shall not be construed to preclude any teacher, employee or agent of HCCPS from using reasonable and necessary force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

The Director of Teaching and Learning will develop written procedures and guidelines related to this policy identifying: (1) appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention; and (2) alternative methods that should be used first when seeking to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student, including alternative methods in emergency situations that avoid resorting to physical restraint.

### 1. Physical Restraint Procedures

**Consent** shall mean agreement by a parent/guardian who has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which agreement is sought, in his or her native language or other mode of communication, that the parent/guardian understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity, and understands that the agreement is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.

**Mechanical restraint** shall mean the use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement or normal function of a portion of his or her body. A protective or stabilizing device ordered by a physician shall not be considered a mechanical restraint. The use of a mechanical restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and consented to in writing by the parent/guardian of the student.

**Medication restraint** shall mean the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. The use of medication restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and consented to by the parent/guardian of the student.

**Physical escort** shall mean a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

**Physical restraint** shall mean direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. The term physical restraint does not include prone restraint, mechanical restraint, or medication restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include: providing brief physical contact, without force, to promote student safety or limit self injurious behavior, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

**Prone restraint** shall mean a restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the prone position. The use of prone restraint is expressly prohibited.

**Restraint** shall mean limitation on a student's physical movement using force against the student's resistance.

**Seclusion** shall mean the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented, or reasonably believes he or she will be prevented, from leaving. Seclusion does not include a timeout. The use of seclusion is expressly prohibited.

**Timeout** shall mean a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During timeout, a student shall not be involuntarily confined and must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. Timeout shall cease as soon as the student has calmed or when thirty (30) minutes have passed, whichever event is earlier. The preference is for timeout to be implemented within a classroom. Any space utilized for timeout outside of a classroom must be approved by the Office of Student Services before it is utilized.

## **2. Use of Restraint**

If all other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student, a physical restraint may be used as a last resort.

In other words, a physical restraint can only be used as a last resort in an emergency when a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to himself or herself or others, and the student does not respond to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed inappropriate under the circumstances.

Any physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary, for the least time necessary, to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. A physical restraint may only be administered by school personnel who have been properly trained in the use of physical restraint.

## **3. Other Limitations on the Use of Restraint**

The following practices are expressly prohibited: (i) use of restraint inconsistent with the provisions set forth above; (ii) use of physical restraint as a means of discipline or punishment, as a response to the destruction of property or disruption of school order, as a response to a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or as a response to verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm; (iii) use of prone restraint;

(iv) use of mechanical restraint; (v) use of medication restraint that has not been approved by a physician or consented to by the student's parent/guardian; (vi) use of restraint when a student cannot be safely restrained; and (vii) continued use of restraint when a student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or appears to be in severe distress (including but not limited to: difficulty breathing, sustained or prolonged crying and coughing).

Restraint may not be included as a planned response in an IEP. However, for students who present with repetitive self-injurious behaviors, the Director of Teaching and Learning may propose to the parent/guardian a separate written agreement for the use of restraint on an emergency basis over a limited and specified period of time. In such cases the plan must include detailed reporting to the parent/guardian on the frequency of the use and duration of restraints, and the specific time period over which the use of physical restraint will be reduced and eliminated. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall obtain the parent/guardian's written consent to the plan prior to implementation.

#### **4. Proper Administration of a Physical Restraint**

Only trained school personnel shall administer physical restraints. Trained school personnel are those individuals who have received either the in-depth or basic training as detailed herein. Whenever possible, the administration of the physical restraint shall be witnessed by at least one adult who does not participate in the physical restraint. When administering a physical restraint, school personnel shall use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury. Additionally, school personnel administering a physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation in accordance with the safety requirements detailed herein, and shall discontinue the restraint as soon as possible.

All physical restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress, such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing.

It should be noted, however, that these training requirements shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable and necessary force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

#### **5. Safety Requirements**

No restraints shall be administered in such a way that a student is prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint, school personnel shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color, temperature and respiration. Any and all restraint shall be immediately released upon a determination by the school personnel administering the restraint that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to himself, herself or others.

Additionally, restraints shall be administered in such a way as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates difficulty breathing or significant physical distress, including but not limited to, trouble breathing or prolonged coughing or crying, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance. School personnel shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student, as well as known or suspected trauma history.

At any time during the administration of a physical restraint, school personnel may take steps to seek medical assistance if it appears that the student is demonstrating significant physical distress.

## **6. Follow-up Procedures**

At an appropriate time after a student has been released from a restraint, the Director of Teaching and Learning or his or her designee shall implement the follow-up procedures: (1) review the restraint with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint; (2) review the incident with school personnel who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; (3) follow-up should occur with students who witnessed the incident, including teacher debrief, counselor debrief or the use of restorative practices; and (4) written notification of the restraint should be sent to the Office of Student Services and the immediate supervisor of the Director of Teaching and Learning.

## **7. Reporting Requirements**

Every use of physical restraint shall be documented in writing and reported to Director of Teaching and Learning including the name of the student restrained. The Director of Teaching and Learning of the school shall maintain on-going records of all reported instances of physical restraint.

The school staff member who administers a physical restraint that results in an injury to a student shall verbally inform the Director of Teaching and Learning or his/her designee of the restraint as soon as possible and no later than the close of the school day in which the restraint was administered. A written report shall be completed and provided to the Director of Teaching and Learning for review of the use of restraint no later than the next working day after the restraint was administered. If the Director of Teaching and Learning has administered the restraint, he or she shall prepare the report and submit it to the Board of Trustees for a team designated to review it by the Board of Trustees.

The Director of Teaching and Learning or his/her designee shall verbally inform the student's parents/guardians of any physical restraint as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the use of restraint, and by a written report postmarked no later than three (3) school working days following the use of the physical restraint. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall provide the student and the parent/guardian an opportunity to comment in writing on the use of the restraint and on information in the written report.

The Director of Teaching and Learning shall convene a student support team to make an assessment of an individual student's needs if a student has been restrained on two (2) separate occasions within a seven (7) day period or three (3) times within a thirty (30) day period. Members of the student support team shall participate in the assessment. Each member of the student support team shall read written reports of restraint and any comments provided by the student and parent/guardian about such reports and the use of the restraints. In addition to review and discussion of such reports by the student support team, the assessment shall include an analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved. The assessment shall conclude with a plan for addressing any factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions, as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall ensure that a record of each

individual student reviewed by the student support team is maintained and made available for review by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, upon request.

The Director of Teaching and Learning shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management practices and procedures, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction/prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

## **8. Training Requirements**

### **a. All Program Staff**

Within the first month of each school year, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall provide all program staff with training on restraint prevention and behavior support, the requirements of when restraint is used and this policy.

Additionally, for all new school employees that are hired after the start of the school year, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall within the first month of their employment provide the new employees with training on this policy. The training shall consist of the following: (a) this policy and related procedures and guidelines developed by the Director of Teaching and Learning; (b) interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances, including use of time-out as a behavior support strategy distinct from seclusion; (c) when behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration; (d) administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student, including known or suspected trauma history; (e) the role of the student, staff and family in preventing use of restraint; and (f) identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.

### **b. Staff Authorized to Serve As a School-Wide Resource on the Proper Administration of Physical Restraints**

At the beginning of each school year, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall identify program staff that is authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

The content of the in-depth training shall be competency-based and at least sixteen (16) hours in length. Such individuals shall participate in at least one refresher course during subsequent school years of no less than eight (8) hours in length. Training shall include, but not be limited to: (a) appropriate procedures for preventing the use of physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint; (b) description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of students that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in

individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted; (c) the simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance; (d) instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints; (e) instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects; and (f) demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint.

## **9. Complaint Procedures**

### **a. Informal Resolution of Concerns About the Use of Physical Restraint**

Before initiating a formal complaint procedure, a student or his/her parent/guardian who has concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint, may seek to resolve his/her concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint by raising the issue with Director of Teaching and Learning. The student and/or his/her parent/guardian should direct their concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint to Director of Teaching and Learning within ten (10) days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the written report from the school as detailed herein. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall attempt, within his/her authority to work with the individual to resolve the complaint fairly and expeditiously. If the student and/or his/her parent/guardian are not satisfied with the resolution, or if the student and/or his/her parent/guardian does not choose informal resolution, then the student and/or his/her parent/guardian may proceed with the formal complaint process detailed herein.

### **b. Formal Resolution of Concern About the Use of Physical Restraint**

A student or his/her parent/guardian, who has concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint, may seek to resolve his/her concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint by submitting a written complaint to the Board of Trustees. The student and/or his/her parent/guardian should submit this letter to the Board of Trustees within twenty (20) days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the written report from the school as detailed herein. The written complaint shall include (a) the name of the student; (b) the name of the school where the physical restraint allegedly occurred; (c) the name of the individuals involved in the alleged physical restraint; (d) the basis of the complaint or concern; and (e) the corrective action being sought.

The Board of Trustees, through its designees, shall conduct an investigation into the complaint promptly after receiving the complaint. In the course of its investigation, the Board of Trustees and/or its designees shall contact those individuals that have been referred to as having pertinent information related to the complaint. Strict timelines cannot be set for conducting the investigation because each set of circumstances is different. The Board of Trustees and/or its designees will make sure that the complaint is handled as quickly as is feasible. After completing the formal investigation, the Board of Trustees shall contact the individual who filed the complaint regarding the outcome of its investigation and its determination as to whether any corrective action is warranted.

## 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 complaint 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 Director of Teaching and Learning or the 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  
the right of the aggrieved party to an impartial hearing officer
  - c. the right of the aggrieved party to be represented by counsel or an advocate at the aggrieved party’s expense;
  - d. 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 2019-2020

**CHECK ON-GOING GOOGLE CALENDAR REGULARLY FOR UPDATES**

updated 08/22/2019

	M	TU	W	TH	F		
AUG	19	20	21	22	23	Aug 22-30	Teacher Work Days
0	26	27	28	29	30		
SEPT	2	3	4	5	6	Sept 2	NO SCHOOL - Labor Day
20	9	10	11	12	13	Sept 3	First day for Grades 1-8; full day
days	16	17	18	19	20	Sept 4	First day for Grade K
	23	24	25	26	27	Sept 6	Welcome Ceremony 2:10pm; First Friday Family Fest 3:00-4:00pm
	30	1	2	3	4	Sept 12	Greens & Yellows Orientations 6:30-8:00pm
OCT	7	8	9	10	11	Sept 16	Indigos, Blues & Prisms Orientations 6:30-8:00pm
22	14	15	16	17	18	Sept 19	Oranges, Reds & Purples Orientations 6:30-8:00pm
days	21	22	23	24	25	Sept 27	Picture Day
	28	29	30	31	1	Oct 14	NO SCHOOL - Indigenous People's Day
NOV	4	5	6	7	8	Oct 16	Purples to Chimney Corners
17	11	12	13	14	15	Oct. 23,24,25	HALF DAYS, all students dismissed at 11:50am Parent-Teacher Conferences
days	18	19	20	21	22	Nov 4-8	Prisms trip to Washington DC
	25	26	27	28	29	Nov 5	HALF DAY, all students dismissed at 11:50am
DEC	2	3	4	5	6	Nov 11	NO SCHOOL - Veteran's Day
15	9	10	11	12	13	Nov 22	Fall Dance 7:00pm, Gr 6,7,8
days	16	17	18	19	20	Nov 27,28,29	NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break
	23	24	25	26	27	Dec 7	Winter Fair
	30	31	1	2	3	Dec 9,10	HALF DAYS, all students dismissed at 11:50am
JAN	6	7	8	9	10	Dec 9	IOWA tests, Gr 7-8
20	13	14	15	16	17	Dec 10	IOWA tests, Gr 4-5
days	20	21	22	23	24	Dec 11	IOWA tests, Gr 6
	27	28	29	30	31	Dec 12	IOWA tests, Gr 3
FEB	3	4	5	6	7	Dec. 20	HALF DAY - All students dismissed at 12:3 (no bus)
15	10	11	12	13	14	Dec. 23-Jan 1	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break 1; return to school January 2
days	17	18	19	20	21	Jan. 20	NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
	24	25	26	27	28	Jan 24	Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration 8:30-9:30am
MAR	2	3	4	5	6	Jan 25	Admissions Open House
21	9	10	11	12	13	Jan 27	NO SCHOOL for students - Staff Professional Day
days	16	17	18	19	20	Jan 31	Gr K-5 Sleepover
	23	24	25	26	27	Feb 10	HALF DAY, all students dismissed at 11:50am
	30	31	1	2	3	Feb. 17-21	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break 2
APR	6	7	8	9	10	Mar 3	NO SCHOOL for students - Staff Professional Development
17	13	14	15	16	17	Mar 19,20	HALF DAYS, all students dismissed at 11:50am - Staff Professional Development
days	20	21	22	23	24	Apr 3	Grandparents' Day 1:00pm; Music Festival 6:00pm
	27	28	29	30	1	Apr 6	HALF DAY, all students dismissed at 11:50am - Staff Professional Development
MAY	4	5	6	7	8	Apr 16	Science Fair
20	11	12	13	14	15	April 20-24	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
days	18	19	20	21	22	Apr 29	Annual Meeting and Concert 6:30pm
	25	26	27	28	29	May 4	HALF DAY, all students dismissed at 11:50 - Staff Professional Day
JUNE	1	2	3	4	5	May 25	NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day
13	8	9	10	11	12		
days	15	16	17	18	19	June 24	HALF DAY last day of school (if we have 5 snow days)
	22	23	24				



## **SNOW DAY ?**

*Check your email, Hilltown account, messaging, or voicemail.*

*Check the web: [www.hilltowncharter.org](http://www.hilltowncharter.org)*

*or look up Hilltown (not Easthampton) on local TV channel 40 or 22*

*The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School*

*1 Industrial Pkwy., Easthampton, MA 01027*

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

*[www.hilltowncharter.org](http://www.hilltowncharter.org) e-mail: [info@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:info@hilltowncharter.org)*

### **Absences and Late Arrivals:**

*If your child will be absent or needs to arrive late  
please email [attendance@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:attendance@hilltowncharter.org) by 9am  
after 9am, please call the main office 413-529-7178 option 0*