



Cardinal Cushing Centers

*All ages. All abilities. All together.*

**Handbook for  
Students, Families and  
Guardians  
2022-2023  
Hanover Programs**



## Index

Welcome Letters	Amy Purkis, Vice President, Student Programs and Services .....	4
Statement of Purpose	Program Philosophy .....	5
	Our Goal .....	5
	Our Students .....	5
	Our Services .....	5
	Equal Opportunity & Inclusion .....	6
Admissions .....		6-7
Programs and Services	Education .....	8-9
	Vocational and Inclusion Program (VIP) .....	10-12
	Residential .....	12
	Our Staff .....	13
	Transitional Visits .....	13
	Family Involvement .....	13
	Learning Life Skills .....	13-14
	Residential Moves .....	14
	Recreation .....	14-15
	Clinical Services .....	15-16
	Mental Health Services .....	15-16
	Social Skills .....	16
	Behavioral Support Services .....	17-18
	Safety-Care .....	17
	PBIS .....	17-18
	Medical Services .....	18
	Medication Orders .....	19-20
	Medication Administration .....	20
	Emergency First Aid & Medical Treatment .....	20-21
	Reporting Injuries/Illness to Parents/Guardians .....	21
	Communicable Disease Control .....	21
	Pandemics and Other Health Emergencies .....	21
	Students Returning to Program After Hospitalization .....	21-22
	Medical Appointments .....	22
	IEP Services .....	23
	Student Program Coordinators .....	23
	Related Services .....	23-24
	IEP Team Process .....	24-25
Professional Development .....		25-26
Family Involvement .....		25
	Family Code of Conduct: Statement of Purpose .....	26
	Family Code of Conduct: Prohibited Behaviors .....	26-27

	Limited English Modifications .....	27
	Family Visit Guidelines .....	27-28
	Students Returning from Home .....	28
	The PAG .....	29
	Events .....	29
	Guardianship .....	30
	Parent and Student Grievances .....	30-33
Student Rights, Responsibilities and Restrictions		
	Civil Rights .....	34
	IDEA .....	34
	Student Confidentiality .....	34-35
	Sexual Harassment .....	35
	Student Transportation .....	35
	Student Restrictions .....	36-37
	Student Search Policy .....	37-38
Emergency Policies		
	Suspension, Expulsion, & Termination .....	39-41
	Missing Students .....	41
	Fire and Lockdown Drills and Lessons .....	41
	Bullying Prevention & Intervention .....	41-43
Technology Policies		
	Student Cell Phones .....	44-45
	Computers (Personal & School) .....	45
	Game Systems .....	45
	Portable Listening Devices .....	45-46
	Television & DVD Players .....	46
	Content of Media Material .....	46
	Access to Internet and Cushing Wi-Fi Network .....	47
Additional Student Related Policies		
	Off-Campus Visits .....	47-48
	Mail .....	48
	Religious Services .....	48
	Swimming .....	48-49
	Telephone Use .....	49
Appendix		
	Important Links for Families .....	50

**PLEASE NOTE:** All policies referenced within the Student/Parent Handbook can be found in our Policies & Procedures Manual, including policies and procedures involving behavior management and restraint. Parents may request a copy of the Policies & Procedures Manual via their student Program Coordinator.

## Welcome from Amy Purkis Vice President, Student Programs and Services

Dear Students and Families,

As we continue to move forward from the pandemic, I'm excited at the prospect that the upcoming year will be full of opportunities for our students. None of this would be possible without our dedicated Cushing Community. I continue to be incredibly proud of the strength and resilience shown by our staff, our families and our students. Thank you all for your support.

Cardinal Cushing Centers is a place where people of diverse ages and abilities find possibility, opportunity, and growth, along with the possibility to achieve greater levels of success, the opportunity to be life-long learners, and the hope that each tomorrow will bring personal fulfillment, new experiences, and shared happiness.

Our organization aligns with the Franciscan Values that have been instilled with us since our founding in 1947 by the Sisters of Saint Francis of Assisi:

**Community:** We respect the strengths of each person, while fostering caring relationships, kindness and friendship.

**Creativity:** We encourage independent thinking, learning and initiatives where solutions and approaches can be different than the current ones.

**Stewardship:** We collectively are responsible to oversee and improve the performance of our organization to ensure longevity for future generations.

**Accountability:** We accept personal responsibility to efficiently use organizational resources, improve our services and systems and help others improve their effectiveness.

It is our foundation in these values that helped guide us through the last year. Success and challenges over the last year have allowed us many opportunities for reflection and growth. I am looking forward to working with all of you as we move forward, continuously improving Cardinal Cushing Centers while holding true to our mission and values.

With gratitude,

Amy Purkis, Vice President, Student Programs and Services  
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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### **Our Program Philosophy**

The driving philosophy of Cardinal Cushing School is to give all students opportunities that lead to self-determination and satisfying lives.

### **Our Goal**

Our primary goal is to maximize a student's independence in all areas of life. We work to make strides in academics, employability, daily living, leisure skills, emotional regulation, social skills and communication. We focus on preparing our students for life after 22 and providing them with the skills and tools to lead fulfilling lives full of fun, purpose and community involvement.

### **Our Students**

The Cardinal Cushing School is proud to provide day and residential programs to students with intellectual disabilities. We welcome students from all over Massachusetts, the United States and other countries. Our students include those with Autism, Down syndrome, seizure disorders and intellectual disabilities. Cushing also serves students with a wide range of psychological and behavioral characteristics that are secondary to their intellectual impairment. Our student diversity creates a unique environment for students to learn from each other, serve as role models and make friendships. One of the first things you will notice while on campus is the unique nature of our student body. Our students are cheerleaders, dancers, artists, athletes and musicians. They are found in classrooms, on the ball field, working in our café, delivering our office supplies and enjoying Zumba! Students participate in Special Olympics, attend the Senior Prom and enjoy field trips. Student needs vary from communication devices to psychopharmacology to transportation to work – and sometimes all of the above. Students are most often referred by school districts, advocates, and state agencies. For students not fully funded by the local school district, financial arrangements, made according with the Placement Agreement, are done with the coordination of the Finance Office.

### **Our Services**

Cardinal Cushing School provides academic and vocational learning environments in classrooms, at on-campus job sites and at job sites in the local community. Our residences provide a learning environment for daily living and social skills. Health services are provided on campus by the nursing staff who also arrange for off-campus medical and dental appointments as necessary. A full complement of support services is offered that includes case management, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, family work, behavior therapy, recreation, adapted physical education, art, music and recreational services. Psychiatric consultation is also available for our residential students on site by a psychiatric nurse practitioner who contracts with Cardinal Cushing School.

## **CARDINAL CUSHING CENTERS IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND FULLY INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION**

Cardinal Cushing Centers is an equal opportunity educational provider and employer. As such, Cardinal Cushing Centers does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or age in educational programs or activities or in employment decisions. Cardinal Cushing Centers is required by Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1976, as amended, as well as board policy not to discriminate in such a manner.

At Cardinal Cushing Centers we strive to create an inclusive environment that is safe, supportive and accepting. We believe in creating a respectful and nurturing environment that embraces diversity and the right of all students to experience an educational environment that is welcoming and respectful.

All students at Cardinal Cushing School have the opportunity to express themselves and live authentically with privacy and free from stigma and discrimination because of religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

### **ADMISSIONS**

Cardinal Cushing School has a rolling admissions policy so that referrals may be made at any time. Applicants considered range in age from 6 – 22 for our day programs and 10-22 for our residential program and present cognitive, behavioral and/or emotional deficits who will benefit from a safe, structured, therapeutic, educational & residential setting.

Though diverse, Cardinal Cushing School does not currently serve those with severe physical/medical conditions, blindness, profound deafness, severe behavioral disorders, acute psychiatric difficulties, active substance abuse, sexual offending behaviors, fire starting and delinquent behaviors.

The Cardinal Cushing School accepts both public and private referrals. A referral packet is required and should include:

- Educational and psychosocial assessments
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Current psychological testing
- Ancillary services reports (e.g., Speech, OT, Physical Therapy, etc.)
- Pertinent clinical/psychiatric reports
- Medical evaluation
- Dental exam

- State Identification for those over 18
- Copies of Guardianship and Rogers paperwork if applicable

Students deemed appropriate by the Board of Admissions participate in an interview which includes their parent/guardian. The public-school district may also participate in this interview. The Program Director, or designee, will also be available to the parent/guardian and the public-school member. During this interview process the student and parent/guardian are given the opportunity to take a tour of the campus to see the facilities and meet the staff members and other enrolled students. The interviewer will explain the school's purpose and services, policies regarding student and parent/guardian rights, including student records, the health program including the procedures for providing emergency health care and the procedure for termination of a student. This is also an opportunity to review current services provided to the student, including the IEP grid, and discuss available services and service models in our setting. Applicants may participate in an evaluative visit to determine appropriate classroom and residential placement. If still found to be appropriate by the Board of Admission, the student is accepted and an admission date is set.

As stated above, all students are required to have comprehensive medical and dental evaluations within one year of a planned admission. The program shall require a written report from the physician and dentist of the results of the examinations and any recommendation(s) and/or modification to the student's activity prior to admission. In the event of emergency placements, Cardinal Cushing School shall make provision for a complete examination of the student within 30 days of admission.

For residential students, the student's information is sent to the incoming student's Student Program Coordinator and House Manager to provide the Residential Department with information to prepare the staff and students in the residence for the arrival of a new student and so staff can assist the new student in adjusting to living in the new residence.

Cardinal Cushing School requires a written contract with the responsible school district consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 28.06(3)(f).

Upon admission and every year at the beginning of August, a general permissions form is mailed to parents/guardians. Initial permissions are followed until parents revoke them. The yearly mailing serves as a reminder of their signed consents and offers the chance to change any options.



## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The Cardinal Cushing School consists of three primary programs: Education, Vocational Inclusion, and Residential Life.

Services consist of Recreation, Case Management, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology, Adaptive Physical Education, Behavioral Support, Therapeutic Clinical Services and Medical Care. Services are provided across programs to assist students in a variety of settings and learning environments.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Our Education Program provides an environment that facilitates healthy emotional, personal and physical growth for all students. Students are encouraged to learn and work cooperatively and independently within their abilities. Maintaining positive attitudes, habits of mutual respect, self-esteem, self-expression/advocacy, decision-making, and tolerance are stressed. Learning activities are integrated into all areas of the program and are designed to build and enhance the productivity, knowledge and self-esteem of each student in our care.

The keystone in our mission of challenging all students to achieve their greatest potential is embedded in positive behavioral supports, technology and transitional inclusive pathways. We offer high staff to student ratios (3:1) and the integration of the Common Core and Massachusetts Frameworks into a comprehensive school and community-based curriculum that includes academics, supportive employment, recreation, social skills and community living.

The Education Program is licensed to serve students from age six to twenty-two and class size ranges with a maximum of seven students per classroom. All classrooms have a licensed teacher and educational assistant/s. The school program runs 216 days from 8:15am until 2:45pm.

Classrooms offer academic and vocational opportunities in the classroom and beyond. Classrooms are language based and utilize formal programs to enhance language expression including sign and visual programs for students with verbal communication challenges.

The academic curriculum is aligned to all the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students are assessed according to the state guidelines of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). The student's TEAM determines whether a student participates in the MCAS tests or MCAS Alternate portfolio to document student progress. The classrooms use evidence-based reading programs, as well as, adapted and supportive materials which are used to relate learning to the student's daily life.

**Art**

The Art program teaches a variety of mediums to increase knowledge of art principles and to foster enjoyment and an appreciation for art. Projects completed by students adorn classrooms, offices, meeting rooms and the corridors of our school. Art is integrated into all aspects of the Cushing program.

**Performing Arts**

Performing Arts offers the students curriculum experiences in the areas such as: drama, music, rhythmic, and areas of the Technology & Engineering curriculum. During Performing Arts class, the students gain experience in more appropriate leisure-time activities and enhances the student's social and emotional expressions through the arts.

**A.P.E.**

The Adapted Physical Education program offers skill development in many sports, climbing activities, rhythmic movement (in conjunction with performing arts), an Outdoor Adventure curriculum that includes a low and high ropes course, problem solving and decision-making activities.

**Technology**

Technology is an essential part of the program for students at Cardinal Cushing. Students have access to computers, chrome books and iPads in their classroom. They also attend classes in the Computer Lab on a weekly basis.

In addition, we recognize the importance of helping our students self-determine how they want to live, work and form relationships in their community. We achieve this goal through self-advocacy development and empowerment in these essential components:

- Individualized academics
- All-inclusive community-based employment and transition services
- Communication and language development
- Community trips
- Integrated speech, counseling, occupational therapy and physical therapy
- School-wide positive behavioral interventions and support
- Nursing services

## VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL PROGRAM

At Cardinal Cushing School all student, regardless of complex disabilities, can achieve their transitional employment goals. To accomplish this, we provide a continuum of programs with our CORE and Vocational Technical Program. Both programs provide quality instructional program that incorporates the Vocational Technical Education Framework and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks that include competency-based applied learning that contributes to the student's skill development in the areas of employability, academic, and technical instruction using best practices in assessment and instruction. Our mission is to provide an effective, evidence-based transition process involving students, families, educators, community employers and adult service agencies.

The CORE (Community, Opportunity, Responsibility, and Education) Program aims to afford our 18 plus age students the opportunity to build on their skills which will enable them to access life-long inclusion as independently possible. This program is a bridge between the Education Program and the Vocational Technical Program. The areas of focus include employment skills, functional academics, life skills; as well as, social, safety, and leisure skills. The CORE program also focuses on students' learning work skills related to our CCC work sites, community-based settings, and suitable work habits and attitudes while completing vocational tasks.

The students work on general employability skills that include an understanding of the importance of following directions, working cooperatively with others, accepting supervision, good attendance, punctuality, and meeting the demands of quality work. They focus on increasing their work stamina, acquiring new skills, and learning the importance of being flexible. These skills are taught in a variety of settings on campus and in the community using hands-on work experiences. Students learn that they sometimes have to accept non-preferred tasks in the beginning in order to progress in their jobs as work is seldom done in isolation, focus is on the social and behavioral skills that are acceptable in the workplace.

The CORE Program offers students the opportunity to explore a broad selection of career cluster. By exploring several different career options, students are able to develop more realistic career goals based not only on specific job tasks but also on different work environments and employer expectations.

In the Vocational Technical Program, the students are prepared to live, work, and socialize in an integrated community setting. To reach this goal, students, their families, schools, and community agencies work cooperatively to identify instructional programs, areas of responsibility and the associations necessary to meet the transition needs of exiting students with disabilities.

**Goals:**

1. To assist all our students in developing vocational skills to prepare them to live and work in their communities as independently as possible.
2. To connect the bridge from life as a student to adult life by offering early, inclusive, and varied opportunities.
3. To help our students define and determine their own meaning of genuine success in the workplace by providing a range of options.

The Vocational Technical Program provides every student a continuum of career development opportunities that include but are not limited to:

- Self-determination and self-advocacy skills
- Job acquisition skills
- Comprehensive transition assessment and planning
- Work experience within the Cushing Community
- Cooperative Internships
- Group supported employment
- Individual job coach supported employment
- Inclusive Community employment
- Employer quality work-based learning experiences with natural supports
- Skill building in employability skills and technical skills specific to an occupation or industry sector.

**Community-based training programs**

The retail Marketplace center is comprised of career sites that are open to the public. The Marketplace includes the Cushing Café, Unique Boutique gift store, the Take Two thrift store with the Cushing Greenery Greenhouse and nearby Recycling and Reclamation Center. These sites operate as businesses and working classrooms to provide experiential learning opportunities for our students to develop core competencies associated with career readiness.

**The Culinary Arts** program assist the Food Services Department in preparing and serving meals to staff and students. Some of the jobs include cleaning and setting up dining rooms, food prep that entails salads, sandwiches, hot meals, and desserts. Students also learn how to portion and serve meals, bussing trays, and complete all dish room tasks according to OSHA health and safety regulations.

**The Industrial Arts** program provides real-life skills and supports the Unique Boutique gift shop with product and items made by the students. Students develop fine motor skills as they learn how to measure, sand, and use hand tools relevant to the project they are building. Students develop cognitive competencies to process and solve problems, make decisions, and create

new ideas as they work on projects. Students also learn, apply, and complete all safety standards according to OSHA health and safety regulations.

### **Community Employment**

Cardinal Cushing School employs several employment specialists responsible for the career planning, job development, and job coaching for the students they work with. The vocational staff works in partnership with local agencies and organizations. Together a variety of community-based job opportunities are created to match students' interests and skills. Opportunities include competitive paid employment, internships, and volunteer opportunities. Job development skills, job placement, and coaching services are provided to all students entering community placements.

Students may participate in "job shadowing" experiences, working with employees of a local business, providing realistic views of jobs, simultaneously providing Cardinal Cushing staff with opportunities to identify the students' preferred work environments, career interests, and abilities.

## **RESIDENTIAL LIFE PROGRAM**

Cardinal Cushing School Residential program provides opportunity for students to extend their learning beyond the education classroom and vocational environments. The focus of this co-educational program is on teaching the students important life skills needed to become fully integrated members of their communities and to lead fulfilling lives and the greatest level of independence. These areas of skill building include; socialization, household management, community engagement and leisure skills. The Residential Program strives to provide concrete, hands-on experiences that are meaningful to the students and increase independence in all the activities of daily living.

The Residential program operates 365 days per year 24 hours a day and is licensed to serve students from age 10 to 21 and 364 days. Due to the diversity of our students, staff-to-student ratios vary across settings. Appropriate staffing levels are determined by support and supervision needs of the individual student and the activity at hand. For example, some students with complex needs may require physical assistance to complete personal care or direct supervision to ensure safety, requiring a heightened staff to student ratio. The standard staffing ratio is 1:3, during awake hours. Others of our students need less direct supervision managing personal care, but they require coaching and role-modeling support for independent living skill acquisition; such as cooking and money management; in these cases, a student may successfully be supported in less intense ratio of staff to student of 1:4 or 1:5. In rare cases and only with authority of the referring school district or funding source, 1:1 staff to student ratio is in place.

### **OUR STAFF**

Residential staff members work to provide a nurturing, caring, and comfortable atmosphere for the students. The homes are overseen by dedicated Managers who ensure training and oversight of staff providing the direct care. Our staff members are our greatest resource. They encourage students to decorate their rooms with pictures and personal items that reflect their interests and preferences. Most students find great joy in doing this; particularly in decorating their residences for all of the holidays. While it is not possible to recreate their authentic family environments, it is hoped that students feel like they are at home while living at Cushing.

### **RESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONAL VISITS**

During the application process for a new student, we typically request a student spend a few days, for an evaluation visit, in one or more of our residential homes. Residential evaluation and transition visits are tailored to the unique needs of the individual student in consideration. They are important so that we can see where the student might fit best and plan for optimal success of the transition. We are sensitive to ensure transitional visits do not cause major disruption to meeting the needs of our current students. To that point, we often find that existing students are excited in welcoming these potential students to the Cardinal Cushing School.

### **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Inclusion in family life is important for all children who are able to maintain such involvement. Many families take their children home for weekend visits in addition to the regularly-scheduled holidays and vacations. Others stop by during the week to take their children out for dinner, a movie, or a shopping trip. Family involvement is a key part of a student's growth and encouraged. We strive to ensure a collaborative and respectful partnership with families.

### **LEARNING LIFE SKILLS**

One of the goals of Residential Life is providing a continued learning environment in the life space of home. Through dedicated residential goals in the IEP process, there is a system in which the skills students are gaining can be assessed, measured and documented. The Residential Skill Areas of focus include but are not limited to; Activities of Daily Living, Interpersonal, Transitional, Community and Self-Advocacy Skills.

The Residential IEP goals contain a variety of specific skills (objectives) needed to make progress in specific areas. Within the home environment there is tracking of progress. These have been created to serve several purposes:

- Breakdown the steps needed to teach a skill
- Clearly highlight the objectives that require more attention, or the areas in which the student is capable of making the greatest progress
- Allow for simple data collection that can be used to report progress in the IEP

Parents, School Systems and members of a student's Team can have access to assessments and progress updates at any time.

## **RESIDENTIAL MOVES**

Since we have a rolling admissions policy and students leave when they turn age 22, our community membership is dynamic. As a result, it is sometimes necessary for us to realign student housing assignments throughout the year to achieve best compatibility and meet the diverse needs of current and new students. While we attempt to minimize these kinds of changes, if a move is required a student will not be moved until family has been notified and the changes are discussed. If a family or individual desire a change in residential placement, they may do so by request of their team members or Director of Residential Programming.

## **RECREATION SERVICES**

The Recreation Department is designed to make sure all of our students have exciting, enriching and engaging opportunities for fun and socializing. Activities occur after school, on the weekends and over the vacation periods. The Recreation Program is overseen by the Director of Recreational and Community Services who supervises the Recreation Assistants and seasonal Lifeguards.

Recreation activities are chosen and approved by the Recreation Director with considerable input for other department members, direct-care staff, and students. Students in the Residential Program can participate in social and recreational activities with their peers, friends, and classmates. The Recreation Department has developed a wide array of activities in which students participate. The Recreation Department, housed in the Recreation Center, provides a variety of clubs and activities for students. A sample of these clubs and activities include, but are not limited to, Boy/Girl Scouts, Zumba, Yoga, bike club, walking club, dances, year book club, movie nights, and many more. Organized varsity and junior varsity sports teams are also a favorite including basketball, softball, flag football and volleyball. Our students also are very active in Special Olympics throughout the year. In the summer months students access our accessible outdoor pool for hours of enjoyment and exercise.

Staff-to-students' ratios, as established by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, must be maintained for all on- and off-campus activities. The Recreation Director in conjunction with other department leaders may decide that, due to the nature of the activity, staff members in excess of the required ratios are needed to maintain student safety.

Transportation for recreational activities is the responsibility of the Recreation Director. The type of transportation depends on the number of student and staff participating in the activity. School vehicles are used for most recreational activities. Occasionally, buses are hired for recreational activities that involve a large number of students and staff.

Students choose activities in which they would like to participate through a sign-up process organized by the Recreation Department. Students are strongly encouraged to be involved in a variety of different recreational activities; however, participation is always voluntary. Staff working with the students recognizes that choosing an activity of interest is a valuable learning

opportunity! Students are provided with a variety of options including sports, cooking groups, fashion, arts and crafts, and biking, jogging, trips off campus to enjoy the YMCA or go bowling. Field trips to museums, sporting events, historical locations, natural parks, theatre shows and holiday themed events occur all year to make sure students are active, learning and having fun.

Student safety is a primary concern, no activities will be approved that are, by nature, inherently dangerous. Cardinal Cushing School has limited a number of other recreational activities for participation only with staff supervision. These activities include rollerblading, skateboarding, riding scooters, down-hill skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding, sledding, and mountain biking.

## CLINICAL SERVICES

The clinical department provides comprehensive mental health services to students and their families. Licensed master's level clinicians (LICSW, LCSW, and LMHC); a consulting psychiatric nurse practitioner (PMHNP); specially trained support staff and clinical interns all work closely together to meet the needs of our students who are dually diagnosed with intellectual impairment and mental illness. Our interventions are trauma informed, individualized, and tailored to the complex profiles that Cardinal Cushing students present.

### **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Individual and Group Psychotherapy to address:

- Emotion identification and regulation skills
- Adaptive coping skills
- Stress management skills
- Social skills
- Relationship skills
- Psycho-education

Psycho-Social Assessment, Treatment and Discharge Planning:

- Clinical Summaries
- Treatment Goals
- Plans for discharge to Adult Services
- Clinical Team Reports for Guardianship



#### Psychopharmacology:

- Mental Status Assessment for Medication Clinic
- Psycho-Education related to medication
- Consultation across programs
- Rogers' Affidavits
- Family/Guardian Consultation

#### Crisis Intervention:

- Safety planning
- Collaboration with team during psychiatric/behavioral crisis
- Re-integration planning following hospitalization
- Communication with Family/Guardian

#### **Social Skills**

Mastering social skills is necessary for one to successfully function in society. At Cardinal Cushing School we create an environment where our students can actively build self-confidence and develop social skills through individual counseling and group activities. Various groups are conducted in educational classrooms, vocational sites and residential houses. The groups provide practice opportunities with positive reinforcement to encourage continued use of appropriate skills that occur in social environments. Examples of Group Activities/Focus are but are not limited to:

- Boundaries
- Stranger Danger
- Friendship
- Listening
- Problem Solving
- Dealing with Feelings
- Developing Coping Skills
- Bullying/Teasing
- Getting Along with Others
- Citizenship/Sportsmanship
- Human Development
- Team Building
- Consultation to Educational, Vocational, and Residential Programs:
  - Ensuring consistency in programming
  - Training designed to address dual diagnosis, trauma and crisis intervention
  - Support generalization of skills

## BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Behavioral Services operates using a consultative integrated collaborative model. Based on the principals of Applied Behavior Analysis, our team strives to support the students we serve in improving socially significant behaviors. Socially significant behaviors include communication, social skills, academics, adaptive living skills such as, toileting, dressing, eating, personal self-care, domestic skills, and work skills. This can also include decreasing behaviors of concern through a focus on functionally equivalent adaptive behaviors.

Consultations are available to the residential, vocational, and educational programs. Services include: staff training, modeling of interventions/teaching techniques, data analysis, site observation, consultation on general household/classroom management, school-wide incentive programs, crisis management, individualize behavior plans and functional behavior assessments. Ongoing consultation and oversight, including data analysis, is provided for students with individualized behavior management treatment plans. Members of the behavioral services team regularly attend staff meetings of the educational, vocational, and residential teams as well as TEAM meetings for individual students.

### **SAFETY-CARE**

Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training™, trained in thousands of provider settings, is the only crisis prevention course providing staff with a combination of behavioral competencies and crisis prevention and management skills. With applied behavior analytic content throughout, staff acquires the best of prevention skills. The program is used to support individuals with a wide variety of diagnoses and conditions, including those related to mental health, developmental disability and neurological conditions. The curriculum is designed to provide a set of skills and strategies that allow staff in a variety of settings to safety and humanely provide support to individuals who may sometimes exhibit disruptive or dangerous behavior. The prevention and de-escalation interventions in Safety Care are drawn from extensive clinical research. This research has developed powerful, non-coercive ways to prevent crisis and teach positive alternatives to dangerous or disruptive behavior. It teaches concepts and skills related to the prevention and de-escalation of behavioral incidents and provide staff with physical techniques for responding safely to dangerous behavior.

The Support Team is a subset of behavioral services. This group has demonstrated exceptional skill in crisis mediation and response. In addition to providing additional support to during a crisis the team works with staff to develop antecedent management skills and de-escalation techniques. The team is available during peak hours 7:30 am-10:00 pm Monday to Friday and 8:30 am-8:30 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

### **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)**

At Cardinal Cushing Centers we utilize a Universal Framework across all learning environments which focus on teaching positive, independent behaviors to our students.

This universal framework, PBIS, is a team-based process for creating proactive, educative and functional support systems used in the development of effective interventions for problem behavior. This framework is not one specific intervention or a reward system. It is a combination of many evidence-based practices.

PBIS teaches our students how to meet their needs for freedom, fun, achievement and relationships using new, more effective behaviors.

Our ultimate goal is to build supportive environments in which positive behavior is more effective than problem behavior.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

The goal of the Health Center is to promote and maintain the good health of our students. We offer clinic hours during the day and evening to address students' medical concerns, in addition to providing regular medication administration. The Health Center also provides transportation for residential students off-campus for routine labs, medical and dental appointments. In order to meet the needs of the students on a continuing basis, the Health Center provides 24-hour, on-site nursing coverage.

The Health Center employs a variety of medical professionals, including a team of registered nurses, a part-time nurse practitioner who is available for consultations as needed, a registered dietitian, and a consulting psychiatric Nurse Practitioner. Additionally, the Center contracts with a medical doctor who serves as the school's medical director.

Cardinal Cushing prescribes to the healthy eating guidelines as put forth in the United States Department of Agriculture ChooseMyPlate.gov. In addition, for students who require specialized diets whether for weight loss, allergy or specific physician orders; special diets are reasonably accommodated with direction from the dietitian on staff. The Food Service Department will provide substitute foods as necessary and within reason. If there are preferences by families and/or students that dictate particular brands, particular stores or organic meats/produce items; families will be requested to provide these products for their child or charged a supplemental stipend to cover the additional cost.

When necessary, ill students are referred to the nurse practitioner or their primary care physician and may be observed overnight in the Health Center. When a student has been seen by the physician or is acutely ill, the parent/guardian will be notified by the nurse on duty. In some cases of serious illness, it may be necessary to send a student home, request that parents take the student to their primary care physician, or send the student to a hospital emergency room for medical evaluation.

The Health Center team works with each student's larger team to address all health-related questions that may impact the student's health and well-being. The Health Center also works

very closely with the Clinical and Student Services Department and the consulting psychiatric Nurse Practitioner to provide appropriate evaluation and services to those students requiring psychotropic medications.

### **Physical and Dental Exams**

A current physical and dental exam is required upon entry for all students and annually thereafter. A current annual physical is required for participation in all school sponsored athletic activities including Special Olympics. If an annual exam is not on file, students will not be able to participate in these activities.

### **Medical Policies and Procedures**

Cardinal Cushing School must be in compliance with all current regulations and requirements for students regarding medication orders, medication administration, and transportation of medication to and from Cardinal Cushing School. Also, practices must be maintained that ensure student safety and welfare and allow each student to realize his/her potential for responsible independence.

### **PROCEDURE REGARDING MEDICATION ORDERS**

- Medication is administered to a student only with written authorization from the parents/guardians. In order to maintain this authorization, a parent/guardian is required to sign a consent form annually.
- Complete and legible orders signed by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or certified physician assistant are required for any medication administration, therapeutic measure, or diagnostic procedure. A prescription is not acceptable as this is the order for the pharmacy to fill the medication. This includes over-the-counter medications (i.e., ibuprofen, tums, benzoyl peroxide face wash, etc.).
- All students on long-term medication schedules will have written orders renewed annually.
- The properly labeled medication container from a pharmacy may be accepted as an order for medications given for less than two weeks.
- Over-the-counter medications may be administered according to standing orders established in medical protocols.
- The Nurse Practitioner may write medication orders according to established protocols.
- Telephone orders from a licensed prescriber will be accepted by a Registered Nurse. Written confirmation of the order must be obtained within three days. The Nurse who accepts the order will initiate action to secure the written order.
- Medications must be delivered to the school in containers labeled by a physician or pharmacy. Doses may be prepackaged.
- All controlled substances (i.e., Concerta, Adderall, Ativan, Valium, etc.) are required to be blister packed.
- If a family member or caregiver reports a change in a medication schedule, a written order signed by the licensed prescriber is required.

- If a change in medication orders occurs while the student is at school, the parents/guardians will be notified.
- The medication order will include:
  - student's name
  - name of medication
  - dosage and route of medication
  - frequency of administration
  - date of medication order
  - specific directions for administration
  - signature of licensed prescriber
- Administration of selected anti-seizure drugs and psychoactive drugs requires that established protocols be followed to monitor efficacy and detect untoward effects. Protocols will be established and routinely reviewed by the Director of Health Services and the Nurse Practitioner.
- A review of medications administered to a student is incorporated into the student's IEP.
- A written record of the administration of a prescribed medication is maintained for each student receiving a medication, documenting its side effects, and notification to the doctor of any changes in the student's behavior or health which may have resulted from the medication.

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION**

Medication administration may be delegated to unlicensed personnel (Residential Life Skills Instructors, Teachers, Teacher Assistants, etc.) if those persons are willing to accept the responsibility. Only unlicensed personnel who have completed the Department of Public Health (DPH) medication delegation program and passed the competency test will be allowed to administer prescription medications. This instruction is given by a Registered Nurse who has completed the DPH Train the Trainer Course. An initial training program will be provided as well as annual reviews. The Health Center will maintain a list of medication-trained personnel. Medication delegation responsibilities may be revoked at any time at the discretion of the Director of Health Services.

### **ILLNESS AND FIRST AID**

On admission, all students are required to have a consent form signed by parent/guardian authorizing emergency first aid or medical treatment. No emergency first aid or medical treatment will be administered to a student without written authorization from a parent. These forms are renewed annually in September.

Please help the health center care for your child by:

- updating emergency phone numbers so the school can always reach you
- letting the health center know if your child has any chronic or acute illnesses
- communicating with the health center directly if medication, health needs change or if they have been exposed to a communicable disease
- keep your child home from school if he/she has: a temperature 100 or above; vomiting;

diarrhea; strep infections of any kind; ringworm; conjunctivitis; or impetigo-these need to be treated for 24 hours prior to returning to school; rash of unknown origin-students should be seen by their health care provider. Students should be 24 hours without fever, vomiting, diarrhea before returning to school.

### **REPORTING INJURIES/ILLNESS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

In the event a student is injured or ill while under the care of Cardinal Cushing School, parents/guardians will be notified by the nurse on duty.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL**

Cardinal Cushing Centers require immunizations to be up to date for entry into school and up to date as per Massachusetts Department of Public Health immunization standards. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping immunizations current and providing documentation to the school nurse when their child has received additional immunizations.

Upon recommendation of the health center, students may be excluded from school if immunizations are not up to date or if a student has a communicable disease to prevent transmission of the disease in school. For example, if there is a chickenpox outbreak at school and your child does not have documentation of having had either chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine, your child will not be allowed to go to school for a length of time specified by the MA Department of Public Health.

### **PANDEMICS AND OTHER HEALTH EMERGENCIES**

In the event of a pandemic or other health emergency Cardinal Cushing Centers will follow the direction provide by government officials and our licensing bodies. This includes the Center for Disease Control, Department of Public Health, Executive Office for Health and Human Services and our licensing agencies The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Early Education and Care. As responses to these situations are rapidly evolving, updates to families will be provided via email and written communications. Families with questions are encouraged to reach out to their students' program for clarifying information.

### **STUDENTS RETURNING TO PROGRAM AFTER HOSPITALIZATION/EXTENDED LEAVE**

Any Day or Residential student returning from a Hospitalization, Emergency Room visit or extended leave (14 consecutive days out of program) must be cleared through the Cardinal Cushing Health Center before returning to program. The Health Center must receive a Discharge Summary or a Medical Report from the hospital/emergency room/health care provider providing the following information:

- If the student is being cleared to participate in full programming (including physical, recreational and vocational tasks)
- Whether or not medications were administered to the student during his/her stay at the hospital/emergency room and the names/dosage of any medications if administered

- Whether or not any procedures were performed and a description of the procedures if performed
- A detailed description of any restrictions
- Follow up recommendations
- An end date if restrictions are indicated

Day or residential students returning to Program after suffering an injury at home or at school must return with medical clearance from a doctor providing the following information:

- If the student is being cleared to participate in full programming (including physical, recreational and vocational tasks)
- A detailed description of any restrictions
- Follow-up recommendations
- An end date if restrictions are indicated

A Guardian who chooses for their student to not seek medical attention after an injury must provide, in writing, permission for the student to participate in full programming.

Students who return to school without the above information will be brought immediately to the Health Center. The Health Center or Student Program Coordinator will contact the parent or Guardian. If the above information cannot be provided the Student will remain in the Health Center until the parent or guardian can pick the student up from school. Students will not be allowed to return to program until the above information is provided.

#### **ASSISTING RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS WITH OFF CAMPUS MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

If a residential student's parent or guardian requires assistance in taking a student to an off campus medical or dental appointment, the health center is happy to assist when possible. For these appointments to be successful we ask that they be scheduled in conjunction with the health center. We ask that these appointments be scheduled between the hours of 9 am and 4 pm, which allows us to plan for travel time. In order to assist as many students as possible we are not able to transport students to appointments located more than 30 miles from our Hanover campus. Please contact the health center with any questions or to schedule an appointment.

## IEP SERVICES

### **STUDENT PROGRAM COORDINATORS**

Each student at Cushing is assigned a Student Program Coordinator (SPC) to provide case management services and serve as the primary contact person for families, districts, and external agencies. The SPC hears parental concerns and works with the internal professionals to ensure they are being addressed. The SPC works with all members of the student's team (e.g., teacher, clinician, occupational therapist, etc.) in order to ensure up to date and thorough communication. In addition to facilitating internal communication and services, the SPC is the primary contact for the funding agencies, such as school districts and state agencies. The SPC is responsible for making sure parents and guardians are kept up to date with school, programming and student specific information. Students are encouraged to have positive and familiar relationships with their SPC and to see the SPC as their team leader at school. The SPC's are expected to know the specific needs of their students and have regular contact with families and guardians commensurate with student needs.

### **RELATED SERVICES: Speech-Language, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Assistive Technology**

In order to best meet each individual student's needs, we provide therapeutic intervention that is both functionally and evidence-based. Depending on the student's goals, this may include an individual and/or small group therapy, consultation to all areas of the student's program, Home Exercise Programs, mealtime monitoring, and Activities of Daily Living (meal preparation, cooking, hygiene, and/or community skills). Our speech therapists can assist in maintaining and updating individual communication devices. Our PT and OT department can help to identify adaptive equipment and materials to promote independence. PT also maintains a relationship with the Hanger Clinic to monitor the need for a variety of orthotics.

These services can take place in a variety of settings:

- Vocational sites
- Residential houses
- Community-based activities
- Classroom-based activities
- General therapeutic environment

Our services are coordinated with our educational and vocational programs on both the Braintree and Hanover campuses, and with the residential programs at Hanover. We offer evaluations, individual and group therapy, consultation with therapeutic staff, staff training, and home exercise programs. As part of an interdisciplinary team the therapy staff work closely with team members from the clinical, nursing, recreation, adaptive physical education, food services areas to name a few.

**Speech-Language:** The focus of this therapy area is to promote functional communication skills across all settings including on and off campus. Areas addressed may include building receptive



and expressive language, alternative/augmentative communication, audition, fluency and articulation, safe swallowing, and social skills.

**Occupational therapy:** The focus of this therapy area is to promote independence in functional skills such as self-care, fine motor, and visual/perceptual skills. Areas addressed may include sensory integration, visual tracking, safety, activities of daily living e.g., showering, cooking, dressing, eating, modifications of work environments, and/or use of adaptive equipment. Through the use of therapeutic techniques and equipment, strategies are incorporated into all areas of a student's program to promote increased independence, self-regulation, calmness and body organization.

**Physical Therapy:** The focus of this therapy area is to promote functional mobility and safety in order to safely access their school environment. Areas addressed may include activities to increase strength, function, balance, safety, seating and positioning, mobility, endurance, stamina, body mechanics, fitness and community access.

**Assistive Technology:** AT consultation is available to the team and student if necessary. AT includes devices, systems, and software that assist students to meet their goals. Areas addressed include computer access, educational opportunities, communication and social skills, vision, environmental control, and recreation and leisure. Services provided include: completing evaluations and consults, coordinating the acquisition of AT, providing training to students and their teams, and providing technical assistance.

### **IEP TEAM PROCESS**

Your student's Team consists of you, your School District (when applicable), any external agencies and the Cushing Team. The Cushing Team is led by the Student Program Coordinator and includes the teacher and residential staff (when applicable). In addition, any staff member that provides a service to your student is part of the Team. This can include a clinician, OT, SLP, PT or member of our Behavioral Support department. IEP meetings are chaired by the District or by the Director of IEP Services/IEP Coordinator here at Cushing. This position serves as the point person for compiling and coordinating an IEP that meets regulations, the needs of the students and Cushing's standards.

### **MEETINGS**

Various meetings take place within Cushing for each student. Several meetings require parent and school district attendance while others occur with the student's Cushing team. If any changes are recommended that will impact or substantially change the student's program, the SPC will inform the parent and/or district.

**Service Planning Meeting** - Within the first 2 weeks of admission a Service Planning meeting will take place. Our Admissions department or the assigned SPC will often schedule these meetings on the day of admission. This meeting serves to transfer the contact person from Admissions to IEP Services and to introduce all of the members of the students Cushing Team to the parents.

In order to teach students, the skills necessary to grow to their individual abilities Cardinal Cushing uses an independence system to promote personal responsibility and teach safety skills. All students, regardless of ability or staffing status, work on these skills.

Within 1 week of admission to Cardinal Cushing, a student's safety skills are assessed. This is led by the Student Program Coordinator (SPC) and will include members of the Cushing Team such as teachers, residential staff, occupational therapists, mental health clinicians, physical therapists, and BCBA's as appropriate.

Following the initial assessment, the internal team will review the students' progress monthly at the "Collaborative Team Meetings". This is also the time that staff discuss trialing new levels or means of independence.

**IEP** – All Team Meetings (i.e. Annual Review, Re-evaluation, Reconvenes, etc.) most often take place on the Cushing Campus. You will continue to receive a meeting invitation from your School District. Either your School District or Cushing's Director of IEP Services/IEP Coordinator will chair the meeting. All members of your student's team are invited and expected to be in attendance. After the age of 14 we make every effort to have the student attend and participate in as much of the meeting as they are able.

**Transition Meetings** - Once a referral for Adult Service Eligibility (Chapter 688) is filed by the school district, various agencies and providers will contact the parent and Student Program Coordinator to start the process of getting to know your student and their needs. Meetings can include various members of the Team and Cushing will work with parents to assist in making the transition to adult life at 22 a smooth one.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF

Every employee of Cardinal Cushing Centers undergoes a thorough orientation upon hire. In addition, employees are required to complete mandated trainings on a yearly basis. These trainings include:

- Mandated Reporting of Neglect and Abuse
- Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Human Rights
- First Aid & CPR
- Safety-Care & Behavior Management Supports
- Evacuation and Emergency Procedures
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- Medical Information & Procedures
- Transportation Safety
- State and District-Wide Assessments
- Runaway Students
- Among other policies to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

Cardinal Cushing Centers, Inc. releases students at noon on several Wednesdays throughout the year to allow for professional development time. Please refer to the school calendars for specific early release dates. Professional Development topics reflect best practices in the field such as:

- Curriculum and Instructional Methodology
- Differentiated Instruction and Universal Design for Learning
- Positive Behavioral Supports and Classroom Management
- Transition Skills, Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy
- Progress Monitoring and Assessment
- Life Skills and Expanded CORE Curriculum
- The IEP Process, Civil Rights and Special Education Regulations
- Technology
- The Role of the Paraprofessional and Job Specialist
- Therapeutic Interventions with Specific Disabilities

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

### **Family Code of Conduct: Statement of Purpose**

Cardinal Cushing Centers recognizes the importance and value of a mutually supportive relationship between the school and families. The education of a child is best served when the school and parents/guardians share a commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and when roles, responsibilities, and expectations are clearly defined.

We expect parents/guardians to have a fundamental understanding and commitment to the following:

- Teachers, administrators and parents/guardians want all children to succeed.
- Teachers, administrators and parents/guardians must work together for the benefit of our students.
- All parents/guardians and visitors, as well as all members of the school community, deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

### **Family Code of Conduct: Prohibited Behaviors**

In order to provide a peaceful and safe school environment, Cardinal Cushing Centers prohibits the following behaviors by parents/guardians and visitors:

- Abusive, threatening, profane or harassing communication, either in person, by e-mail or text/voicemail/phone or other written or verbal communication
- Threatening to harm to an employee, visitor, fellow parent/guardian or student
- Damaging or destruction of school property

- Excessive unscheduled campus visits, e-mails, text/voicemail/phone messages or other written or oral
  - School staff and administration may not always be immediately available to speak with you. The only way to ensure that you are able to speak with a staff member or administrator is to schedule an appointment. Staff and administrators have a practice of attempting to return all phone calls/e-mails within 24 hours with great success. Your calls and visits will be responded to consistent with this practice if someone is not immediately available to speak with
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or school staff made publicly to others.
- Any concerns that you may have regarding these matters must be made through the appropriate channels so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all

Cardinal Cushing School clearly recognizes that families, guardians and other outside parties with dedication and investment in your student are crucial members of the student's team. We strive to create an open and welcoming campus and encourage visitation and collaboration. We commit to families a collaborative and respectful partnership and request the same of each family member involved.

### **Limited English Modifications**

All English Language Learners will be afforded full access to Cardinal Cushing Centers, Inc. services, activities, and benefits. Cushing Centers will work with the home district so that parents of ELL students who have limited English proficiency will be provided oral and written communication in the language that affords them the greatest comprehension and access.

### **Family Visit Guidelines**

In an effort to be consistent in our relationships with families and honor the privacy and needs of all students in our care, the following guidelines are in place.

1. Families are always welcome to visit their child at Cardinal Cushing Centers.
2. If the visit is planned between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. we ask that you let us know you will be visiting by calling or e-mailing your child's Student Program Coordinator and/or House Manager. This allows us to inform staff and ensures that your child remains on campus, so he/she will be here for the visit.
3. We do ask that visits longer than an hour take place off campus or in the Recreation Center to minimize the disruption to the programs of other students. If visits occur off campus please provide an estimated return time so that we may have staff ready to assist your child upon their return.

4. If the visit is outside of the 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. time frame, we ask that you make arrangements through the Student Program Coordinator or House Manager to avoid disrupting the programming of other students in the residence or school site.
5. Visits occurring after 6p.m. must take place in the common areas of the Residence. Many students begin bathing and nighttime routines that require various levels of assistance. If a parent would like to be with their child briefly in his/her bedroom or in the bathroom, staff will need to assess the area for privacy and can advise the parent accordingly. Staff will remain in the area with the parent. Staff reserves the right to request parents leave the bedroom and/or bathroom area at any time in order to provide the utmost privacy for all our students.
6. Parents are always welcomed to observe/visit their children in their classroom or vocational site; however, someone from Student Services or our Clinical Team must accompany the parent in these settings. Your Student Program Coordinator is happy to make these arrangements.
7. Families and visitors cannot be present in the houses without a staff member present. If staff and students are heading out for an activity family will need to also leave the residence and continue the visit elsewhere.
8. Cardinal Cushing reserves the right to ask a family member to leave at any time. Often staff may be aware of the confidential needs of another student and may make a determination that visitors need to leave for the benefit of the other student's needs.
9. Behavioral incidents may also warrant a family member being asked to leave. Parents are not permitted to engage in behavioral interventions or therapeutic strategies involving other students.

### **Students Returning from Home**

The IEPs for residential students allow them to be at Cardinal Cushing School for 315 or 365 days a year. Although Cushing is open 365 days, only those students who's IEPs identify additional days beyond the base of 315 days may be on campus during scheduled break periods. This has caused some confusion for parents, especially around vacations and holidays. The following protocol was developed to give parents clear directions as to when and how students should be returned to the school, including cases where behavioral difficulties cause early returns.

For security purposes, it is requested that, following a weekend and/or vacation period, parents check in with the Residential Supervisor in order to ascertain that staff members are present in the residential house to receive the students and their belongings. The policy prohibits non-Cushing personnel from being in students' residential houses when staff members are not present.

**365-Day Students** - If a student's IEP is approved for 365 days, funding is approved for each day of the year. A 365-day student may be returned to school on any day during a visit at home as long as the "Emergency Early Return Protocol for 315 and 365-day Students" is followed. It is requested that departures and returns for 365-day students be scheduled prior to 10:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. to enable off-campus activities to go on as planned.

**Emergency Return** - Parents/guardians are encouraged to make every effort to manage a student's behavior at home before using the early return option. In the event that early return becomes necessary, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. The student's parent/guardian must call the school to ensure that there is adequate staffing for his/her student's return. This call should be directed to the Supervisor on Duty. It is possible that, under unusual circumstances, the student's return may be delayed until adequate staffing can be arranged.
2. When arrangements have been made for a student to return, the first option should be for the parents to arrange for the student's transportation back to school. If the student's behavior is out of control, it is likely that transporting the student in a vehicle would not be safe.
3. If it is felt to be unsafe to transport a student whose behavior has become unmanageable at home, other options should be explored (e.g., engaging the area crisis team, transporting the student to the emergency room, calling the police). If one of these options is utilized, parents should communicate with the Supervisor on Duty as to the student's status in order to plan when the student might be able to safely return to school.

For students whose behavior may necessitate accessing the early return option, planning before home visits is encouraged to create incentives and strategies to improve the chances for a successful visit. The Student Program Coordinator, Clinician (if involved), and the Behavior Specialist should work with the parent(s)/guardian and student in this planning. Home Behavior Contracts, as well as emergency back-up plans, may be developed when appropriate. While students who are eligible for early return have been determined by their teams to need additional time at school, the hope is that they and their families are able to enjoy some visitation at home, including the celebration of holidays.

### **The PAG**

The Parent Advisory Group is comprised of any and all parents interested in attending meetings. All parents are welcome at any time. Meetings are held throughout the year and notifications are sent out through e-mail or a phone call from your Student Program Coordinator. Each meeting will provide a presentation or informational component for you to learn more about Cushing or other services related to having a child with special learning and emotional needs. If you would like more information about the PAG, have ideas or suggestions please contact the Director of Admissions.

### **Events**

Parents, guardians and extended families are welcome to attend many events on campus. From talent shows to basketball games, all are welcome. Some of our day students may require the support of a parent/guardian to participate. To ensure a safe and healthy environment for all of our students we require that any adult accompanying a student to these activities review and sign our participation guidelines.

These events are listed on our website and on our school and recreation calendars. In addition, families are invited to fundraising events and our Fall Festival. This annual autumn event helps kick off the school year with activities and information geared for new and returning families.

### **Guardianship**

The great majority of students at Cardinal Cushing School come here through the Chapter 766 process. That means they are here voluntarily or through the decision of their parents/guardians in coordination with their local school systems or other state agencies. For these students, their parents are most likely their guardians. As these students come close to their 18th birthdays, guardianship is an issue that must be discussed at their Team meetings. At the age of 18, these students become their own guardians unless someone, usually their parents, files for guardianship with the courts. The person filing for guardianship must show that the person/student is not capable of taking care of himself/herself or making responsible decisions. Some of our students over the age of 18 are their own guardians and must be treated as such. A student who is his/her own guardian must sign his/her own Individual Education Plan and any other documents that would require the signature of the student's guardian, including the acceptance of the Behavior Management Program.

Students with specific custody arrangements must have a legal copy of the arrangements on file at Cardinal Cushing. Cushing staff cannot uphold custody guidelines without legal notification.

### **Parent and Student Grievances**

We commit to families a collaborative and respectful partnership and request the same of each family member involved. Cardinal Cushing Center strives to resolve any conflicts that are identified by parents/guardians and/or students in an expeditious, fair and objective manner. Any parent/guardian and/or student, who believes that any policy, procedure, or federal or state standard has been violated, has the right to file a grievance according to the procedures outlined in this policy.

A parent/guardian and/or student will not be discriminated against, harassed, intimidated or suffer any reprisal as a result of filing a grievance or participating in the grievance process. If a parent/guardian and/or student feel that he/she is being subjected to any of the above, the parent/guardian and/or student may appeal directly to the Vice President, Student Services and Programs if there is a conflict of interest concerning the Program Director.

Any parent/guardian and/or student are encouraged to resolve issues informally and as soon as possible with their Student Program Coordinator. If a solution cannot be reached, a parent/guardian and/or student may present a formal complaint in the manner described below. All complaints will be facilitated in a timely manner with the goal of resolving the complaint within twenty (20) calendar days from the time of formal initiation through the completion of STEP 1. Should the grievant choose to continue the process, a goal of ten (10) calendar days will be established for each additional step throughout the process. All parties

will be notified if an extension is necessary. Meeting times will be mutually agreed upon depending on schedules with the goal of upholding the time frames outlined in this policy.

If an issue cannot be resolved informally, a parent/guardian and/or student must request and complete a Parent/Guardians/Student Grievance Form (Grievance Form). This form should include the facts that form the basis of the grievance, the specific policy/procedure/regulation allegedly violated, and how the facts presented by the grievant support a violation of a policy/procedure/regulation. Any action taken to date and the specific action requested by the grievant should be indicated on this form.

The Grievance Form should be completed within twenty (20) calendar days of the alleged policy/procedure/regulation violation and should include the name of any individual(s) who can substantiate the grievance. The Student Program Coordinator will assist the parent/guardian/and/or student in completing the Grievance Form if required. In the event that the grievance involves the Student Program Coordinator, the appropriate Program Director will assist the parent/guardian and/or student in completing the form.

#### **PROCESS:**

**STEP 1:** The parent/guardian and/or student will present to the student's Student Program Coordinator a completed Grievance Form that includes the pertinent information and the action requested by the parent/guardian and/or student. If the parent/guardian and/or student feel that it would be inappropriate to forward the Grievance Form to the student's Student Program Coordinator, the form should be presented to the appropriate Program Director. This would occur in the event that the grievance is being filed against the Student Program Coordinator or if the Student Program Coordinator has a conflict of interest.

The Student Program Coordinator will notify the appropriate Program Director to assist in the facilitation and coordination of the process as required. If the Student Program Coordinator in consultation with the Director of IEP Services deems that a legitimate grievance exists, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian and/or student and the Student Program Coordinator at which time the matter will be thoroughly discussed and possible corrective actions developed. Following the meeting, the Student Program Coordinator will provide a written decision to the parent/guardian and/or student and send a copy to the appropriate Program Director. If the Student Program Coordinator deems that a legitimate grievance does not exist, he/she will provide the parent/guardian and/or student with a written explanation of the decision.

**STEP 2:** If the parent/guardian and/or student are not satisfied with the decision by the Student Program Coordinator, the parent/guardian and/or student can forward the Grievance Form to the appropriate Program Director. Specific issues and reasons for not being in agreement with the Student Program Coordinator should be outlined in the Grievance Form. A similar process to Step 1 will be followed.



STEP 3: If the parent/guardian and/or student are not satisfied with the decision by the Program Director, the parent/guardian and/or student can forward the Grievance Form to the Vice President, Student Services and Programs. Specific issues and reasons for not being in agreement with the Program Director should be outlined in the Grievance Form. The Vice President, Student Services and Programs will facilitate a meeting with the parent/guardian and/or student to thoroughly discuss the matter and attempt to resolve the issue. As an additional step the Vice President, Student Services and Programs may recommend a review and determination by an Ad-hoc Grievance Committee. If the Vice President, Student Services and Programs dismisses the grievance, that decision is final. If the Vice President, Student Services and Programs refers the grievance to an Ad-hoc Grievance Committee, the committee will review the grievance and provide a written decision. The decision of the committee is final.

Prior to commencing any legal action against the Organization, its Board of Directors, or any supervisor, a parent/guardian and/or student should exhaust his/her/their rights under this grievance procedure.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/STUDENT GRIEVANCE FORM

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
Step 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/guardians/Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Submitted to: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Witness and/or Individual(s) that can substantiate grievance: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please detail all the facts in the area provided below that form the basis of the grievance. Please include the specific policy/procedure allegedly violated, how the facts support a violation of each policy/procedure you have identified, any action taken to date, and the specific relief requested by you. If there is not enough room on this form, please attach as much information as necessary to this document. Please submit this form to your Student Program Coordinator or the appropriate member of Senior Management.

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Parents/guardians/Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDENT RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RESTRICTIONS

Our students are encouraged to participate in their programming decisions. Students have opportunities to attend Team meetings, and make appointments with various member of their Team. Students who require augmentative communication are given visuals and access to devices to provide input as well. Students have input in choosing their after-school activities, sports teams, and various leisure activities. Through systems such as PBIS and the Levels of Independence Students can earn opportunities by demonstration of continued growth and skill acquisition.

### **Civil Rights**

Cardinal Cushing Centers is committed to ensuring that all programs and facilities are accessible to all. We actively seek to prevent discrimination or harassment on the basis of age, gender, color, homelessness, disability, national origin, religion, race, or sexual orientation.

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

Students at Cardinal Cushing Centers are covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under this statute, our students are entitled to an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Appropriate Evaluation, Parent and Teacher Participation, and Procedural Safeguards. In addition, students have the right to confidentiality of information, transition services, and appropriate discipline.

### **Student Confidentiality**

Cardinal Cushing School maintains current and complete files for all students and shall manage such files consistent with the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Administrative Assistant in the IEP Services Department serves as the records clerk and is responsible for the oversight and maintenance of the student records.

All students at Cardinal Cushing Centers are instructed that they have the right to confidentiality in terms of all their school records being shared with any staff or outside agency not directly serving the student and that such written or oral communication is subject to student and/or guardian approval.

Additionally, students are instructed that any communication with IEP members at the student's or the IEP Team member's request is confidential. Such instruction occurs annually with each student and a record of these instructions is kept in the student file.

Students are further instructed that at their discretion, they have a right to private and confidential conversations with any member of their IEP Team.

1. Individual records of enrolled Massachusetts students are available to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request.

2. Staff notes or reports regarding a student are legibly dated and signed by persons making those entries.
3. An access log is maintained as part of each student's record. If parts of the student record are located apart from the main record, a separate access log is maintained for each part. The log indicates the names of all persons who have obtained access to the student record (See "NOTE" at the bottom of this page.) and provides the following information:

If information is going to be released to an individual outside the organization, the following should be included in the access log:

- The name, position and signature of the person releasing the information;
- The name, position, and, if a third party, the affiliation, if any, of the person who is to receive the information;
- The date of access;
- The parts of the record to which access was obtained; and,
- The purpose of such access.

**NOTE:** This log requirement shall apply to authorized personnel, e.g., state agency representatives who inspect the student records for licensing and monitoring purposes; Cardinal Cushing professional staff who work closely with the students; administrative office staff and clerical personnel who add information to the student records; and the school nurses who inspect the students' health records.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Cardinal Cushing Centers, Inc. prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender in educational programs and activities of the public schools. This policy applies to both educational and employment opportunities. Cardinal Cushing Centers is committed to maintaining an educational atmosphere in which each and every student can pursue scholastic achievement and personal fulfillment.

Sexual harassment is a destructive behavior that interferes with the educational process, and will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is a violation of an individual's right to privacy and personal dignity.

As part of our yearly "Positive Words" assembly, Students will be informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to our sexual harassment policy.

### **Student Transportation Safety**

While at Cardinal Cushing Centers, students will participate in off campus trips as part of the program. Many of these trips will be in small groups and in Cardinal Cushing vans. On occasion, larger group activities or whole school trips students will ride on school busses. Students are trained on a yearly basis on expectations in passenger safety.

## **Student Restrictions**

Although our students have many rights and opportunities there are certain activities and possessions that are not allowed on campus regardless of age, permission or skill level.

- Students at the Cardinal Cushing School are not allowed to buy or consume “Power Shots” or other high-caffeine, energy drinks; and staff members are not allowed to consume these drinks in the presence of students.
  - Students are not allowed to use tobacco products of any kind or drink/possess alcohol on campus, at any school related event, trip or function, or at any time under the care and supervision of Cushing staff.
  - Students cannot take any medications, prescribed or over the counter without a Doctor’s order on file at the Health Center.
  - No piercings or tattoos are allowed to be obtained while under Cushing’s care.
  - If a student has a guardian they must obtain that guardians permission for hair coloring or dying or severe haircut changes (e.g., shaving the head).
  - Students at Cardinal Cushing School are not permitted to wear the following:
    - Clothing, hats, pins or other materials that advertise or promote tobacco, violence, alcohol, drugs, or sex.
    - Clothing that is overly revealing, e.g. halters tops, short shorts, bare midriff, pants that expose under garments, etc.
    - Clothing or accessories that can be perceived as gang related.
    - Students are not permitted to wear (or possess), on the school campus or at any off-campus activity, any clothing with attachments that have the potential to be used as weapons (e.g., chains, etc.)
    - Additional restrictions may be implemented on a case by case basis following clinical recommendations and input from the student’s team.
    - The following items have been designated as contraband and are not allowed to be in the possession of students while under the care of Cardinal Cushing School:
      - Weapons of any kind
      - Drugs/alcohol
      - Fire-setting materials
      - Aerosol Cans
      - Motorized Vehicles
      - Cigarettes, E-Cigarettes, Vape, or other smoking/tobacco related products
      - Laser Pointers
      - Pornographic Materials (in school/work sites or in the possession of those under 18)
1. Students are not allowed to have contraband items in their possession while at Cardinal Cushing. In the event that that contraband is found:

- a. if an item that is legal, but inappropriate for CCS, it will be stored in a locked container in the Health Center. The item will be given to the student's parent/guardian with a request that the contraband not be returned to campus. Items that are not collected by the parent/guardian within 14 days will be disposed of.
- b. if an item that is illegal will be given to the appropriate law enforcement authorities

### **Search Policy**

Cardinal Cushing School (CCS) does not have a policy of searching students on a regular or random basis without reasonable cause for a search. In the event that the Team determines, in order to protect the safety of students and others, routine searches of a particular student's belongings are necessary, the student's Service Plan must be amended to include these searches.

In the event that the CCS staff has reasonable cause to suspect that a student has materials on his/her person, in his/her room, and/or in his/her luggage/backpack, that may be a danger to him/herself or others (e.g., weapons, drugs, alcohol, etc.), or that may be contraband, CCS staff will follow the procedure described below.

2. The student, the student's Student Program Coordinator, the Supervisor on Duty, and the student's parent/guardian will be notified that a search of the student's body, room, or luggage/backpack will be taking place.
3. In the event that a student's Student Program Coordinator cannot be notified prior to the search, the Administrator on Duty or the Administrator on Call will be notified.
4. In the event that a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, and it is deemed necessary that the search take place immediately due to concerns for the safety of the student or others, the search will be authorized by the Administrator on Call. The Student Program Coordinator will contact the parent/guardian at the earliest possible time. The parent/guardian will be informed of the reason for the search, the results of the search, and the reason that the search was conducted prior to notifying them.
5. A room search or luggage/backpack search will be conducted by the student's direct-care staff person and witnessed by a member of supervisory staff (Director of Education, Residential House Manager, Supervisor on Duty, etc.). The student may also be present for the room or luggage/backpack search. A room search will include a complete search of all areas of the room, including drawers, shelves, closets, and cabinets. A luggage/backpack search will consist of a hand search of all luggage/backpack that is being returned to the campus or that is about to be taken from the campus by the student.
6. Students are allowed to have locked cabinets or drawers in their rooms for protecting private or valuable items; however, when a search is necessary, the direct-care staff must

have access to these locked areas. Direct-care staff must have a key for keyed locks or the combination for combination locks.

7. If a student's body is to be searched, a gender-appropriate staff person (preferably a supervisor) with a gender-appropriate witness will conduct the search. A body search is defined as a pat-down search including having a student empty his/her pockets. **CCS does not search a student by having him/her remove clothing.** Body searches will be conducted in a private area away from other students.
8. If a staff person has reason to believe that a student has an item on his/her person that may be a serious threat to his/her or others' safety—and a pat down search has not discovered the item—the Administrator on Duty or the Administrator on Call may recommend contacting a local law enforcement agency so that a member of that agency may take whatever steps are necessary to retrieve the item.
9. If any contraband materials are found, the student, the student's parent/guardian, the student's Student Program Coordinator, and the Supervisor on Duty will be notified at the earliest possible moment.
10. In the event that that contraband found:
  - c. if an item that is legal, but inappropriate for CCS, it will be stored in a locked container in the Health Center. The item will be given to the student's parent/guardian with a request that the contraband not be returned to campus. Items that are not collected by the parent/guardian within 14 days will be disposed of.
  - d. if an item that is illegal will be given to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.
11. Searches of a student's body, room, and/or luggage/backpack must be documented on a Critical Incident Report and send to the critical incident distribution list.

The Administrative Team will review all incidents involving searches and contraband and will select a designee to report incidents to outside agencies as appropriate.

## EMERGENCY POLICIES

### **Suspension, Expulsion and Termination Policies**

#### **Suspension**

A student may be suspended from Cardinal Cushing School for a time span not to exceed three (3) calendar days with the approval of school administrator or designee.

A student may be suspended for any behavior that is deemed a serious threat to the safety of others or to himself/herself including, but not limited to; physical aggression that causes harm to another; bringing a weapon on campus; bringing drugs or alcohol on campus; returning to campus under the influence of drugs or alcohol; consuming drugs or alcohol while on campus; and selling or distributing drugs or alcohol while under the supervision of Cardinal Cushing School.

In the event that Cardinal Cushing School deems it necessary to suspend a student, the student's parent/guardian and the student's public-school system or agency will be immediately notified of the reason for the suspension and its duration. Within 24 hours, Cushing will send a written explanation for the suspension to the student's parent/guardian and the public-school system or agency.

If a student is to be suspended he/she will be entitled to all due process rights through implementation of the student grievance policy.

If a student is deemed an immediate threat to the safety of others, it may be necessary to immediately enforce a suspension; however, the student will be entitled to a due process hearing at the earliest possible date and time following implementation of the suspension.

Suspensions may be done in-house (student remains on campus) or at home. In the event that a suspension is to occur at home, Cardinal Cushing School will not send a student home until a responsible adult has been contacted and will be at home to supervise the student upon arrival.

#### **Suspensions Exceeding 3-Day**

If a student requires a suspension of three or more consecutive school days or five or more non-consecutive school days, the following procedures will be followed:

- Cushing, in collaboration with the parents/guardians and the public-school district or agency, will explore all possible program modifications within the school to attempt to prevent a more lengthy suspension of the student from the program.
- Cushing, through the collaboration of the Educational, Vocational, Residential, and Student Services Departments, will track the number and duration of suspensions, including suspensions from any part of the student's IEP program.



### **10+ Day Suspensions - Joint Responsibilities of Cardinal Cushing School and the Responsible School District**

Cardinal Cushing School adheres to the following procedures if suspensions for a child may exceed 10 consecutive school days or when a pattern of suspensions may exceed 10 cumulative days:

- Cushing staff will request that the responsible school district convene an IEP Team meeting. If a state agency is involved in the student's placement, that liaison will be informed of the 10-day suspension.
- Cushing staff will participate in the Team meeting in order to develop or review an assessment of the behavior or modify an existing behavior plan. During this meeting, Cushing will also participate in any discussion involving the identification of an appropriate alternative educational setting.
- Cushing staff will also participate in a manifestation determination to determine the relationship, if any, between the disability and the behavior. In addition, Cushing in coordination with the school district, and with the consent of the parents will modify the IEP, the behavior intervention plan and/or the placement if appropriate.

### **Expulsion Policy**

Cardinal Cushing School operates a special education school and residential treatment center to deal with the issues presented by students with cognitive/behavioral/emotional needs. Because students are referred to the Cardinal Cushing School with these issues, expulsion occurs only in those situations in which a student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of himself/herself or others, and the Cardinal Cushing School is unable to provide a safe environment for him/her. If it is determined that the student may be better served in another environment (e.g., other school or facility), the Cardinal Cushing School staff will work closely with those placing the student to ensure a smooth transition to a more appropriate setting.

### **Planned Terminations**

For planned terminations, Cardinal Cushing School will notify the public-school district (and/or agency) of the need for an IEP Team review meeting and provide notice of this meeting to all appropriate parties ten (10) days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to develop a clear and specific termination plan for the student that will be implemented in no less than thirty (30) days—unless all parties agree to an earlier termination date.

### **Emergency Terminations**

In the event that emergency termination is necessary, Cardinal Cushing School will immediately contact the student's public-school district (and/or agency) and will not terminate the student until the public-school district (or agency) assumes responsibility for the student.

- a. At the request of the public-school district, Cardinal Cushing School may delay termination of the student for up to two (2) calendar weeks to allow the public-school district the

opportunity to convene an emergency Team meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination from Cardinal Cushing School.

- b. The termination of enrollment may be delayed for longer than two (2) calendar weeks only if there is mutual agreement between Cardinal Cushing School and the placing public school district.
- c. For emergency terminations, which are circumstances where the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of himself/herself or others, Cardinal Cushing School will follow the procedures required under 603 CMR 28.09(12) (explained above) and immediately notify parents/guardians of the student, the sending school district and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### **Missing Students**

In the event a student is missing, parents/guardians are notified as follows:

- 1. If the student has not been located within 15 minutes, the student's parents/guardians are notified. The Administrator on Call or Supervisor on Duty will contact the student's parents/guardians. A report is sent to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education whenever a student has been missing for more than 30 minutes.
- 2. When the student has been located, the Administrator on Call or Supervisor on Duty will notify the student's parents/guardians.
- 3. When a student goes missing when not on Cardinal Cushing grounds, staff will immediately notify the local police department. Following that, they call and notify the administrator on duty who will then contact the student's parents/guardians.

### **Fire and Lockdown Drills and Lessons:**

Fire evacuation drills are held a minimum of twice per year, per shift, in each residence, and at least twice per year in the school building and vocational sites. Fire drills offer the students the opportunity to experience the fire alarm and to practice their evacuation routes and meeting places.

In addition to fire drills, each residence and classroom is required to complete fire safety lessons on a monthly basis. Lessons include crawling under smoke, touching the door for temperature, discussing alternate escape routes, etc.

Lockdown drills and lessons are completed per DESE regulations.

### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention:**

Cardinal Cushing Centers observes a zero-tolerance policy with regards to bullying. We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, in school-related activities or our residential units. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's

sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school and residential community including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, and extracurricular activities and parent or guardian involvement.

\*For more details, please refer to our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy. The policy can be found on our website or may be requested via your Student Program Coordinator.

The following page contains our Potential Bullying Incident Report form.



Please understand that you can contact the school administration directly by phone, email, or in-person. However, if you wish to remain anonymous, you can use this form to report an incident. Please send the form to your student program coordinator or the program director.

**Your name** (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Your email** (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Your phone number** (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you become aware of this incident?**

☐ I witnessed it in person ☐ I heard about it ☐ I saw it on the internet

**If you chose internet**

☐ Snapchat

☐ Instagram

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter

☐ Other Platform \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the incident in as much detail as possible. Please provide names, dates, locations, and any other details that you think will help.

**Incident details**

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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## PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

Students are permitted the privilege of having personal technology, equipment and entertainment devices. These include but are not limited to; cell phones, televisions, computers, tablets, gaming systems and other electronic equipment. Students are permitted to keep these items in their rooms provided they are students who remain in good standing and there is sufficient space and appropriate electrical outlets for the equipment. Cardinal Cushing School does not assume responsibility for the care of the technology/equipment or for any damage caused to the equipment by misuse, power fluctuations, lightning, or damage by another student. The Cardinal Cushing School does not assume financial responsibility for equipment that is lost, damaged or stolen.

The use of these devices is limited, and it cannot interfere with programmatic activities. This expectation has been developed to ensure that those students who use such devices do so in an appropriate, approved, and safe manner. Students must understand that using these devices is a privilege and not a “right.” Failure to comply with these guidelines set forth may result in the loss of this privilege. At any time if a student uses their personal device in an unsafe, threatening, irresponsible manner or if it is interfering with progress and program access the team may determine restriction on access for that student. If a repeated concern is presented and not successfully resolved, the property may be sent home not to return.

Below are additional guidelines around specific devices, this guidance is not exhaustive and not intended to address all scenarios. Each student’s plan will be reviewed on an individual basis influenced by the success and responsibility of the student.

### STUDENT CELL PHONES

1. A student enrolled at Cardinal Cushing School (CCS) may have and use a cell phone on campus with a parent or guardian’s permission and the full awareness of their Student Program Coordinator. A student who is their own guardian does not need outside approval for a cell phone. Any concerns regarding cell phone use must be brought to the SPC’s attention.
2. Students are expected to have their cell phones turned off during programmatic activities unless indicated in written guidelines provide by a member of the student’s team.
3. Residential Students are encouraged to follow expectations around phone access.
4. If a student has a cell phone allowing for texting, internet access, camera use and music CCS is not able to provide constant monitoring for content. Cushing staff can address issues that are brought to their attention and will contact the parent or guardian if restrictions to cell phone use need to be made. Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor usage at the level which they are comfortable.
5. Any student who is their own guardian, or for whom a state agency is the guardian, is required to have a “pay-as-you-go” phone to avoid excessive charges.
6. The parent or guardian is responsible for the care and cost of any cell phone provided.
7. Use of phones deemed to be unsafe, or otherwise interfere with progress may result in the student’s team providing student specific restrictions.

## **COMPUTERS**

1. Any computer, peripheral, or electronic equipment brought by a student to Cushing for use at the school must be fully accessible to be viewed by the student's staff person.
2. Any CD-ROMs, DVDs, or other media to be used with the computer must be clearly marked as commercial products—or must be examined, approved and marked by the student's staff person.
3. The student must follow all time constraints that his/her staff may develop regarding the student's use of his/her computer or electronic equipment.
4. Any media found to contain inappropriate material (e.g., pornography, gambling, excessive violence, and/or racist material) will be confiscated and will be sent home. Any computer or electronic equipment used for these purposes may also be sent home at the discretion of the student's Cushing Team.

## **GAME SYSTEMS**

1. Game systems that place a student in a "first-person shooter" role are prohibited.
2. "M"-rated games are prohibited.
3. The use of game systems to access "on-line gaming" is prohibited.
4. Students are not permitted to use game systems to access online gambling, pornography or other sites with inappropriate content.
5. The care and security of a student's game systems are the responsibility of the student. Cardinal Cushing School will not assume financial responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

## **PORTABLE LISTENING DEVICES**

The primary concern for students when they use listening devices is safety. If the device is loud enough to be heard by others, the volume is loud enough to damage a student's hearing. Students will be asked to turn down the volume of the device.

1. Listening devices can be used at the following times:
  - a. During scheduled break times in the classroom or work sites;
  - b. In the vans while being transported off campus;
  - c. For behavioral and/or therapeutic reasons under specific circumstances. If used for therapeutic purposes, a student must have a written plan in his/her file specifying therapeutic use.
2. Listening devices cannot be used at the following times:
  - a. When crossing streets, the students must remove earphones from their ears;
  - b. During bicycle riding;

- c. During programmatic activities including classroom hours, vocational/work-site hours, structured residential activities, assemblies, and when at the Health Center;
  - d. During meals;
  - e. Bedtime (pursuant to the bedtime policy in the student's house unit).
- 3. Students must adhere to rating systems for (age appropriate) content. Any content that students have on their listening device that is overly violent or sexually explicit is prohibited. However, Cardinal Cushing School does not have a reasonable way to enforce this and will not be responsible for reviewing the content of each student's listening device.

## **TELEVISION & DVD PLAYERS**

Cardinal Cushing School does not allow students to have cable or satellite access in their rooms due to the cost and the inability to monitor content.

Students are not permitted to watch television programs, DVDs, CDs, or videotapes that display pornography, promote drug use, or have other inappropriate content, e.g., excessive violence/racist material, etc.

## **CONTENT OF MEDIA MATERIAL**

The objectionable content of various R-rated forms of entertainment makes it unsuitable viewing/listening material for the vast majority of our students. R-rated materials do not present or convey messages about language and behavior that are appropriate for the needs of our students, nor do they express values that are consistent with the philosophy and mission of Cardinal Cushing School.

Therefore, please be aware that Cushing students over the age of 17, while under the supervision of direct-care staff, are not permitted to rent, attend, or view R-rated movies or videotapes, unless, under exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted by a student's Team.

Students under the age of 17 may not view R-rated materials under any circumstances. Regardless of age, students are not permitted to view movies rated "NC-17" or "X."

It is expected that all direct-care staff will exercise extremely good judgment in the selection of other viewing or listening materials for students in their care (e.g., television shows, magazines, music, etc.).

## **ACCESS TO INTERNET AND CUSHING WI-FI NETWORKS**

During school instruction hours students are not permitted access to internet on personal devices.

Students of the Residential School may use the Cardinal Cushing Centers wireless network with endorsement from the student's team. Each student using the wireless network is expected to commit to the internet safety pledge and adhere to policies. Cardinal Cushing Centers will filter Internet content to prevent access to pornography and other material that is deemed otherwise inappropriate for minors. There is no guarantee that users will be not be able to access internet resources that are inappropriate. Students should report accidental or intentional exposure to inappropriate content to staff immediately. Access to internet may be restricted as warranted if there is perceived violations of safety standards and policies.

## **ADDITIONAL KEY POLICIES**

### **OFF-CAMPUS VISITS**

Students are encouraged to visit off campus with their immediate families/guardians and approved visiting resources. Arrangements for visits outside the regular schedule of vacations/weekends are usually made through the student's Student Program Coordinator.

If a student who is taking medications is to go on an overnight visit, the parents/guardian are asked to give 48 hours' notice, whenever possible, to allow time for the Health Center to package and, if necessary, order medications. This will ensure that the student has an adequate supply of medications for his/her off-campus visit.

If a non-immediate family member is taking a student off campus, they must be listed in the student's file as an approved visitor for off-campus visits or the Student Program Coordinator must have written approval for the visit from the student's parents/guardians.

It may be necessary to obtain a Release of Information from the parent/guardian to allow disclosure of information about the student's behavior to the person taking responsibility for that student.

A staff person must release the student to the parent/guardian or other authorized person. A student should never be picked up at the campus by anyone who hasn't had contact with a staff person.

To ensure the student's safety and security, when he/she is returned from an off-campus visit, it is imperative that the student's parent/guardian or other authorized person release the student to a Cushing staff member.



### **Visits at Staff Homes**

Staff members are not permitted (under any circumstance while on duty) to take students to the staff members' own homes or the homes of other staff members. Exceptions may only be granted with the approval of Program Administrator and the permission of the parents/guardians.

### **MAIL POLICY**

Cardinal Cushing School encourages and supports students and their families, friends or other persons to communicate by mail. Except in accordance with the following circumstances, all students at Cardinal Cushing School have the right to open and send mail unread by staff.

- Any restrictions or censorship must be no greater than necessary to achieve the therapeutic purpose documented in the student's Service Plan and Individual Education Program.
- Mail that is restricted or censored must be returned to the sender with an explanation or discarded at the discretion of the parent/guardian.
- Staffs members may open and inspect a student's mail for contraband only in his/her presence.

### **RELIGIOUS SERVICES**

Cushing enrolls students of all faiths. Participation in any religious service is not required except at the direction of the students' personal interests and the parents/guardians. Individual arrangements are made for those students who wish to attend a religious service at an off-campus location.

### **SWIMMING POLICY (On-campus Pool and Off-campus Sites)**

1. If a student who is admitted or on at Cushing for a transitional visit wishes to participate in swimming, a completed/signed permission form is required from the parents/guardian of the student. A student who is 18 years old, and is his/her own guardian (even though legally able to sign his/her own permission slips, IEPs, etc.) must have a completed/signed permission form from the parent/guardian. There are no exceptions to this rule.
2. The parents/guardian of a student with a seizure condition must have the student's physician submit a signed permission form. This may be part of the annual physical examination.
3. The Health Center nurses will regularly inform the Recreation Director, in writing, of any student who may not participate in swimming due to current health concerns. The nurses will also inform staff of any medical issues of concern regarding any student participating in the swimming program.
4. A file containing emergency contact numbers and emergency medical information for all students participating in swimming will be available at the Recreation Center.
5. The Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) has mandated staff-to-student ratios that must be maintained while students participate in any swimming program.
6. Prior to swimming, staff must be aware of the individual needs of their students (e.g., current seizure disorders, need for earplugs, etc.). A list of the students and their needs will be available at the Health Center and at the Recreation Office.

7. A student with a history of seizures, but without documentation of seizures within six months, must wear a T-shirt.
8. A student with an active seizure disorder will wear a T-shirt or Class I, Coast Guard-approved life jacket or have no less than a 1:1 staff-to-student ratio. The staff member must be in the water and in close proximity with the student at all times.
9. All staff members involved in the Swimming Program will receive training with regard to policies and emergency procedures as required by DEEC and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).
10. In case of an emergency or crisis situation, all students are to be immediately taken out of the pool/water and directed to a location outside the pool area or a location at the off-campus site.
11. Staff members must be aware that their students are going into the water/pool—prior to the students going into the water/pool.
12. In addition to the Lifeguard, there must always be at least one designated staff member who is out of the pool/near the water for purposes of observing the students from pool side or at the water's edge at an off-campus site.
13. Whenever the pool is used, a certified American Red Cross Lifeguard must be present at the pool.
14. No one is to use the pool facilities alone.
15. No guests are to be allowed in the pool without prior permission of the Recreation Director.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

Telephone communications between a student and another individual are not to be monitored or unreasonably restricted at Cardinal Cushing School unless there are specific legal or therapeutic reasons justifying such limitations:

1. Such legal/therapeutic reasons must be documented in the student's Service Plan and must be no greater than necessary to achieve the therapeutic purposes.
2. If telephone conversations are to be monitored, the parties to the conversations must be informed.
3. Communication with a student's social worker, attorney, or clergy may not be prohibited, restricted, monitored, or otherwise censored.
4. Incoming calls from parents/guardians to a student are not to be restricted unless the parents/guardians request or agree to restrict the phone calls.
5. Incoming calls from others (excluding social workers, attorneys, or clergy) may be restricted at the time of the call due to a student's behavioral lack of control.

## IMPORTANT RESOURCE LINKS FOR FAMILIES

### Cardinal Cushing Centers, Inc.

[www.CushingCenters.org](http://www.CushingCenters.org)

*All subjects' areas below are accessible from:*

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links.html>

- Disability Related Links
- Autism Blind and Visually Impaired
- Communication Impairment
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Impairment
- Health Impairment
- Intellectual Impairment
- Neurological Impairment (including Traumatic Brain Injury)
- Physical Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Assistive Technology
- Board of Education Advisory Councils
- Global Special Education and Disabilities Sites
- Federal Sites
- Inclusive Education
- Massachusetts Approved Private Special Education Schools
- Massachusetts Educational Collaboratives
- Massachusetts State Agencies
- National Sites
- Occupational Therapy
- Section 504 and the American with Disabilities Act
- Transition

### **Other Helpful Links:**

Parent Notice of Procedural Safeguards

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb>

Massachusetts Student Record Regulations 603 CMR 23.00

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr23.html>.

Problem Resolution and Bureau of Special Education Appeals

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs/>

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/docs.html>.

Transitional Services

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition/default.html>

The IEP Process

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/proguide.pdf>