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RHODE ISLAND  
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF  
**Middle School  
Handbook**  
For Students and Parents  
**2024-2025**

Parents: Please review this handbook with your child.



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One Corliss Park  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908-1795**

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**website: [rideaf.ri.gov](http://rideaf.ri.gov)**

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## OVERVIEW

Welcome to a new school year!

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf (referred to as RISDeaf for the remainder of this handbook) is a bilingual public school (grades preK-12) that uses American Sign Language and English as the languages of instruction. Approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and governed by an appointed Board of Trustees, it is funded by the RI Legislature. This school provides a unique opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing students to learn the skills necessary for them to confidently enter the world of postsecondary education and employment upon graduation. RISDeaf is a place where instruction is tailored to the dual language and learning needs inherent with hearing loss, where students who are deaf and hard of hearing have full access to the general curriculum, and where their unique learning and social needs are understood. Here is a place where they can more easily access full communication, as they establish friendships and build a community of peers.

In a brief fashion, this manual provides some information on programs/services, athletics and after-school opportunities, along with school regulations that pertain to our middle school students. We hope this information will help to create a positive understanding and a cooperative effort among parents, students, and the school staff and faculty.

RISDeaf is committed to parental engagement in each child's education. We believe that ongoing communication between school and home is essential to student success. Parents are always welcome to visit the school. As your child's strongest advocate, we encourage you to become involved at each level. Your input at your son/daughter's yearly Individual Educational Program (IEP) meeting is an excellent place to begin this dialogue.

Although this handbook has been designed to answer many of the questions asked by students and their parents, it is not intended to replace personal contact between students, parents, teachers, and administrators. RISDeaf reserves the right to change the policies contained herein, when changes benefit the school community.

The entire RISDeaf faculty and staff are also available throughout the school year for student guidance, parent conferences, and any questions that you might have regarding your child's program. If parents or students have questions regarding school policy, they should contact the Director for clarification.

You can find helpful information available on our school website, [www.rideaf.ri.gov](http://www.rideaf.ri.gov), including resources for learning American Sign Language.



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*To ensure that all children in Rhode Island who are deaf or hard of hearing become literate, independent, and productive citizens who set and achieve life goals.*

## **VISION**

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf will serve as a critical, strategic, and responsive educational center with a commitment to educational excellence for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, an important low incidence population.

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf will accomplish this through:

- forging partnerships with families, school districts, community groups, and agencies
- providing leadership, advocacy, and educational expertise that advances a continuum of educational options that honors the needs of each individual student and is based upon a comprehensive, whole-child assessment
- dedication to proven best educational practices in language and communication access and the utilization of both American Sign Language and English
- establishing and maintaining high expectations for all students through an accessible, engaging, standards-based curriculum that promotes social, vocational, and postsecondary success while utilizing state-of-the-art technology
- respect for the diverse cultures and perspectives of its families and students
- encouraging and supporting students' choices and self-determination to ensure their postsecondary success

# RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

## DIRECTORY

**Main Office:** (401) 222-3525 (voice)

**Videophone:** (401) 216-8425

**General email address:** info@rideaf.net

**Website:** rideaf.ri.gov

*\* Please note: Teachers and therapists cannot take calls during class time. Please leave a message with the main office and we will ask the teacher/therapist to call you back during a free period or after school.*

Director	Sarah McGaughey		smcgaughey@rideaf.net
School Secretary	Marie Silva-Golembiesky	401-243-1016	msilva-golembiesky@rideaf.net
Special Education	Mary Pendergast	401-243-1026	mpendergast@rideaf.net
Principal	Barbara Cesana	401-243-1035 (v) 401-450-2287 (Text/Facetime)	bcesana@rideaf.net

### *Departments:*

Athletics/After School Programs	Leo Gutierrez	401-602-0766	lgutierrez@rideaf.net
Audiology	Ryan McNamara	401-243-1000	rmcnamara@rideaf.net
Building/Facilities Rental	Ryan McNamara	401-243-1000	rmcnamara@rideaf.net
Counseling/Guidance	Joseph Batiano	401-626-4364 (vp)	jbatiano@rideaf.net
Free & Reduced Lunch	Ryan McNamara	401-243-1000	
Nurse/Health Services	Penny Bailey	401-243-1010	pbailey@rideaf.net
Outreach Services	Christen Kelly	401-243-1000	ckelly@rideaf.net
Social Services	Gerlany Mejia	401-243-1009 (Eng/ Sp)	gmejia@rideaf.net
Transition Services	Jeannie Desmarais-Valdez	401-227-0336 (vp)	jdvaldez@rideaf.net

## **THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

### **Overview**

RISDeaf offers a range of programs to deaf and hard of hearing students and their families.

Educational programs include:

- Early Childhood
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Independence Academy (18-21 special needs Transition Program)
- Transition Academy (post-grad program)

At each grade level there is a focus on literacy and academic skills, language and communication development, social-emotional growth, and citizenship. Development of strong literacy skills is woven throughout all academic areas. Teachers work to ensure that the curriculum is aligned to the state grade level or grade span expectations, Next Generation Science Standards, and to the Common Core State Standards. All students participate in English language arts, ASL language arts, math, science, and social studies courses. Supplemental academic offerings for all students include health education, physical education, comprehensive school counseling (CSC), technology and the Arts.

Within the classroom, instruction is differentiated to meet the academic needs of each student. Additional special education support is provided for students with more complex learning differences. All students have access to small group instruction and may receive one-on-one instruction based on individual need.

Community interaction is essential for students to understand better the world in which they live. RISDeaf often invites visitors to address its students, and students participate frequently in curriculum-related field trips. Students may be involved in local, state, or national events including, but not limited to, Middle School Math Competition and Battle of the Books. In addition, students may join intramural or interscholastic team sports such as volleyball, basketball, soccer, and track & field with local schools as well as schools for the Deaf in New England and as far down the East coast as West Virginia.

The combination of community interaction along with the offering of strong academic and vocational programming enables students to be successful and contributing members of their families in both the hearing and Deaf communities.

### **Common Core State Standards**

These standards guide our students' math and English language arts (ELA) education in Rhode Island. They clearly define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education, so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards are aligned with college and work expectations; include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills; build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards; and were developed and guided by top educators from across the country.

## Middle Schoolers At a Glance

*This article by Amanda Morin sums up this unique developmental stage of a child's life best*

- Middle-schoolers are often more physically mature than emotionally mature.
- During this time, kids usually begin to be more aware of what's happening in the world and how that affects them.
  - In middle school, many kids start communicating with more nonverbal language, like posture and tone of voice.
  - In middle school, kids meet developmental milestones at widely varied times. You just have to walk into a middle school to see the huge variation in physical maturity. But there are certain cognitive and social skills middle-schoolers are working on developing by the time high school rolls around.
  - If you're unsure what to look for, learn the typical developmental milestones you can expect at this age. It can help you identify possible trouble spots to discuss with your child's teacher or physician.

### Physical Milestones

As puberty begins, your child will likely go through some big physical changes. Periods of rapid growth are common, and girls tend to develop earlier than boys. There's a big difference in physical milestones among individual kids. Typically, though, middle-schoolers will:

- Become a little more clumsy as height and weight change quickly
- Start showing uneven development in skills like agility, balance, strength and flexibility; May be able to run fast, but not gracefully
- Need more rest since so much energy is being used for growing
- Have a difference between body and brain growth; may be more mature physically than cognitively or emotionally

### Cognitive Milestones

Problem-solving and thinking skills develop a lot at this age. Your child may also begin to pay more attention to decision making and to organizing ideas, time and things. In middle school, children often:

- Start to understand concepts like power and influence
- Question things; they no longer take everything at face value
- Think about how current actions affect the future; they may worry about things like climate change and war
- Memorize information more easily
- Use flexible thinking, such as checking work and changing approaches as needed
- Begin developing a larger worldview, including a basic set of values
- Want to contribute and make money if possible
- Academic demands are greater, and they seek more independence

## Language Milestones

As a fourth and fifth grader, your child's language skills probably didn't change very much. In middle school, though, language skills typically develop very quickly. You might notice that your child is better able to understand what people communicate—with or without words.

In middle school, children often:

- Use metaphors, slang and different ways of speaking
- Are interested in having discussions, debates and arguments (sometimes just for the sake of it.)
- Start to “get” and pay more attention to body language, tone of voice and other nonverbal language cues
- Various learning and attention issues can cause problems with communication,

## Social and Emotional Milestones

Middle school is a time of major social and emotional growth.

Your child may struggle to fit in and look for dramatic ways to be an individual. Don't be surprised if your opinions seem to matter less or your child doesn't ask your advice as often as before—that's pretty common.

It's not uncommon for middle-schoolers to do these things:

- Bow to peer pressure to be like others; have experiences with bullying
- Be sensitive to other people's opinions and reactions; think the whole world is watching them
- Develop a sense of pride in accomplishments and an awareness of challenges
- Keep secrets (often being able to have secrets is more important than the secret they're keeping)
- Have a better awareness of what's appropriate to say in different situations

Keep in mind that kids develop at different paces and this is particularly true of middle-schoolers. If your child isn't meeting a number of these milestones, consider talking to her teachers to get their perspective.

Here are the most important things to remember:

- At this age, it's not unusual for kids to begin to question everything, including their parents' and teachers' authority and opinions.
- Peer pressure can be an issue for middle-schoolers, especially those who struggle with social skills. They can misunderstand typical social situations.
- Kids develop at different rates. If you have concerns, speak with your child's doctor or Teacher.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Because these middle years are so developmentally challenging, RISDeaf has adopted an approach to teaching called *Responsive Classroom for Middle School*. This evidence-based practice uses strategies to support our children's progress in social-emotional development to ensure academic success.

In order to live in today's society, it is of utmost importance that each child be taught how to interact positively, respect self and others, be self-aware, demonstrate an aptitude for decision-making, develop a sense of responsibility, and practice persistence in pursuit of the academic level of which they are most capable. In middle school aged children, these qualities often need direct instruction and modeling.

***We recognize that a child's education rests not only in the academic knowledge they acquire, but also in the character they develop***

### **Responsive Classroom® Vision for Middle School Students**

1. Learning is a process and the best learning happens when academics are active and interactive and meet the developmental needs of young adolescents.
2. Learning is a social activity that is linked to our interactions with others.
3. When students are given multiple opportunities to reflect, ponder, engage, and take ownership of their decisions, they develop the knowledge and skills they need to take responsibility for their own learning.
4. Students' ability to see effort and stick-to-itiveness as vehicles for improving their skills keeps them focused and motivated to master challenges.
5. The middle school experience promotes students' sense of hopefulness so that they will achieve high-quality, specific and realistic goals. They crave independence.
6. Students learning is enhanced by positive teacher language and by learning core strategies for communication and thinking skills.

<b>2024-2025 Middle School Schedule</b>
<i>MS Period 1 8:05-8:37 Morning Meeting</i>
<i>MS Period 2 8:40-9:25</i>
<i>MS Period 3 9:27-10:12</i>
<i>Period 4 10:15-11:10</i>
<i>Lunch 11:13-11:43</i>
<i>Period 5 11:45-12:30</i>
<i>Period 6 12:32-1:17</i>
<i>Period 7 1:20-2:05</i>
<i>Period 8 2:07-2:55</i>

**Marking Periods 2024-2025**

*First quarter:* August 29-November 5 (midterm - Oct.1)

*Second quarter:* November 6-January 23 (midterm - Dec. 10)

*Third quarter:* January 24-April 3 (midterm - March 3)

*Fourth quarter:* April 4-June 16 (midterm - May 12)

**Academic Grades/Honors/Reports**

**Mid-Term Progress Reports**

Mid-Term Progress Reports, indicating general progress in core subjects are issued to secondary students mid-way through each quarter. (October 4, and December 13, 2024; March 6, and May 15, 2025)

**Report Cards**

Report cards, as well as progress toward each goal on the Individual Educational Plan (IEP), will be recorded and mailed home within two weeks after the end of the quarterly marking period.

**Progress Report/Conference**

Report Cards are sent home to families at the completion of each quarter. Parents who desire to have a parent-teacher conference should contact their child’s following teacher at any time to schedule a meeting.

## Honor Roll

The Honor Roll is computed four times each year based on quarterly grades. All students attaining an average of “B-” or higher are recognized as Honor Students and those having an average of “A-” or higher are recognized as High Honor Students. Names of these students will be placed on the Honor Roll and displayed in the building and a certificate will be sent home to parents with the student’s report card. Honors are based strictly on earned grades.

## Grading Scale

<i>Passing Grades</i>		<i>Warning and Failure Grades</i>	
<b>A</b>	<b>94-100</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>67-69</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-93</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>64-66</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87-89</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>60-63</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>84-86</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>under 60</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80-83</b>		
<b>C+</b>	<b>77-79</b>		
<b>C</b>	<b>74-76</b>		
<b>C-</b>	<b>70-73</b>		

## Incomplete Grades

Under extenuating circumstances, a teacher may request permission from the Principal to issue an incomplete grade for a student. Since an incomplete grade cannot be a final grade, the teacher will work with the student, and family if warranted, to create a plan to complete assignments within two weeks of the end of the quarter and finalize the grade.

## Homework

Students often receive homework assignments for several of their classes on the same night and may need guidance and support from home to complete and manage this work. Homework completion is part of each student’s classroom grade and should be taken seriously. It is helpful for parents to provide a distraction-free area at home where your child can complete homework. An agenda/planner will be provided to each student to assist in organizing assignments by class and due dates. In addition, Middle School teachers may require the use of Google Calendars to organize assignments.

The purpose of homework is to practice and demonstrate understanding of the classroom material that has already been taught. The teaching staff encourages parents to approach their child’s homework with an understanding that it is the student’s homework, and the child is responsible to do the work as independently as possible.

If the child experiences difficulty in completing the work, parents should encourage their child to do some of the work to show that an effort was made and enable the teacher to tailor instruction to address the misunderstanding of content. The following are guiding questions that you can use with your child to help with homework:

- Did you write down the assignment in your assignment book or in Google Calendar?
- What do you need to do to get started?
- What do you need to do next?
- What do you already know how to do?
- Which specific part is giving you trouble?
- Can you try it a different way?

- Where is this information in your notebook or textbook?
- Write your teacher a note explaining why you had difficulty with this assignment.

In the event of an excused absence, students will be responsible to check with their teachers for make-up homework assignments. Missed tests and exams are the responsibility of each student to complete and should be discussed immediately upon return with the teacher.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY (Plagiarism, Cheating)**

RISDeaf believes strongly in the value of truth, integrity, personal accountability and respect for the rights of others. As a result, the teachers and administrators of the school seek to promote an environment that fosters integrity and honorable conduct.

Plagiarism and cheating are strictly prohibited.

Any attempt to present someone else's work as one's own on quizzes, examinations, reports, or term papers, constitutes plagiarism. There are various forms of plagiarism. The following are the most common:

1. **Word-for-word plagiarism:** This includes: a) submission of another student's work as one's own; b) the submission of work from any source whatever (book, magazine, newspaper article, unpublished paper or thesis) without proper acknowledgement by footnote or reference within the text of the paper; and c) the submission of any part of another's work without proper use of quotation marks.
2. **Patchwork plagiarism:** This consists of piecing together of unacknowledged phrases and sentences quoted verbatim (or nearly verbatim) from a variety of sources. The mere reshuffling of other people's words does not constitute "original" work.
3. **Unacknowledged paraphrase:** It is perfectly legitimate to set forth another author's facts or ideas in one's own words, but if one is genuinely indebted to the other author for these facts or ideas, the debt must be acknowledged by footnote or reference within the text of the paper.
4. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI is not coming, it's here. Students will be taught how to use some digital tools appropriately and safely. The use of AI to complete school work is strictly prohibited. Students are expected to complete work without the use of artificial intelligence unless permission is granted by the teacher to use specific AI tools to support their work. Artificial Intelligence should never be used to replace the human who should be doing the work.

**Instances of suspected plagiarism or cheating will be referred to the Director for review.**

The student's parents will be contacted to discuss further action. Points will be deducted from a student's grade for this serious violation, and depending upon the degree of plagiarism, the assignment may earn no credit at all.

### **PROMOTION POLICY**

Students will be placed in the appropriate grade and promoted based upon completion of all required assignments and a grade of D or better has been earned. Students who miss 30 days of school or more and who have been unable to keep up with the academic content are at risk for not being promoted.

### **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

#### **Following Teachers**

Students are assigned a "following teacher" at the beginning of each academic year. Following teachers are responsible for maintaining contact with both the students and their

families/guardians. They also serve as the case manager for your child's IEP team. Home/school communication is an integral component of the middle school program. Direct any questions you may have to the following teacher assigned to your child. Please share your email address to help facilitate communication.

### **Comprehensive School Counseling**

The Counseling/Guidance Department is concerned with the academic, emotional, social, personal, and career development of all students. The department guides each student to explore and fulfill their potential for being a responsible and productive member of the school, community, and society.

This department comprises the school counselor, school psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker and the school's career coordinator.

Students may make an appointment with the school counselor when needed. A hall pass will be provided by the counselor. No student may leave class expecting to see a counselor without an appointment unless it is an emergency. Parents are encouraged to contact the school counselor or social worker for support with concerns affecting the social/emotional well-being of their child.

### **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**

The (ILP) has been a requirement for all Rhode Island students in grades 6-12 since 2005 when it was incorporated into the state's Secondary School and Graduation Requirement Regulations. ILPs are a student-directed planning and monitoring tool that customizes learning opportunities throughout students' secondary school experience, broadens their perspectives, and supports attainment of goals. The ILP documents students' interests, needs, supports, course selections (including access to college level programming), transition placements and other learning experiences both in and out of school. This information produces a thoughtful program of study leading to proficiency for graduation and postsecondary experiences. A meaningful ILP for all Rhode Island students:

- It begins no later than entry into sixth grade and is maintained through 12th grade.
- Is revisited at least twice each school year, and at key transition periods for students.
- Helps students identify and meet their goals in three domains: academic, career and personal/ social.
- Coordinates with other support plans as appropriate. For example, individualized education programs (IEPs), Section 504 plans, Personal Literacy Plans, etc.

### **Transition Program**

Beginning with the development of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) in grade 6, our Transition Program is a critical component of high school and, ultimately, post-high school preparation.

State regulations mandate that transition assessments will begin starting at age 14. This is an ongoing process throughout the middle school and high school years, not a single test or procedure. The results are shared at all IEP meetings and the information obtained is included in the development and planning of the student's educational services.

In Middle school, during the school year when your child turns 14 they will transition to the Secondary Transition IEP. This will begin more comprehensive discussion and planning of specific activities to support your child's growth and development in the areas of Education and Training, Employment and Independent Living. The primary focus of developmentally appropriate transition activities during middle school is becoming aware of post school options including post-secondary education and careers. Your child will participate in activities that will provide them with information about post school options so they can begin to explore their interests, basic knowledge and aptitudes in various areas. The goal is to assist them in making choices while in middle school to enhance their ability to make a smooth transition to future educational activities.

### **Learning and Achievement Team (LAT)**

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf has a Learning and Achievement Team (LAT) that meets regularly to identify strategies and develop academic interventions for students at risk for academic failure. The LAT works closely with the special education staff to design and provide evidence-based interventions to teachers that include a strong progress-monitoring component. Individual student data and documentation are used along with other evaluations and assessments to determine effective interventions.

### **Student Wellbeing Team (SWBT)**

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf has a targeted team to support students with their social and emotional growth and development when more traditional interventions do not successfully improve student achievement. This team meets weekly to plan proactive strategies for all students, monitor student data, make recommendations and model interventions for classroom teachers, and when necessary, develop individual behavior intervention plans.

### **Audiology Services**

RISDeaf has an up-to-date Audiology Center. This on-site facility employs two full-time licensed audiologists. These professionals are available to serve our students' needs throughout the school day. FM technology may be checked and hearing aid batteries are available. Students who use cochlear implants receive assistance with troubleshooting equipment and checking settings as needed.

Students from anywhere in Rhode Island may be screened at the Audiology Center at no cost. Our Audiology Test Technicians provide annual hearing screenings to all Rhode Island students in grades k-3 (approximately 55,000 children).

### **Communication: Speech & Language Services**

Members of our Communications Department include ASL Specialists and Speech & Language Pathologists. They work together to provide individual and group speech & language therapy, support classroom carryover, and program planning to ensure healthy ASL language development, spoken English development, and training in functional, communication, and pragmatic skills. These services are provided as detailed in individual student IEPs. Those students who utilize cochlear implant technology may also receive additional services focusing on auditory training (learning to listen) and auditory rehabilitation.

### **Occupational and Physical Therapy Services**

RI School for the Deaf employs licensed occupational and physical therapists to evaluate students and provide support with fine and gross motor coordination, sensory processing skills, strength, and balance, as needed for student success in school. Services may be provided either as a "pull-out" service in a therapy area or as a "push-in" model within the classroom.

### **Nursing**

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students often do not have easy access to medical and health information. Therefore school becomes one of the few places where this information is available in visual and accessible sign language. RISDeaf takes this responsibility seriously by employing a full-time and highly experienced Nurse/Educator who can sign. She can communicate bilingually with your child and is available to monitor and help maintain the health and safety of students and educate them on concerns related to overall health literacy.

**Please note: Students who spend more than one 45-minute period at the nurse's office during the school day are not allowed to participate in sports or after-school activities that day.**

## **STATE REQUIRED TESTING AND ASSESSMENTS**

The *Rhode Island Common Assessment System (RICAS)* will be administered to all grades 3-8 students.

Middle school students in grades 5 and 8 will also take the *Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (RINGSA)*

Students who qualify for the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment will take the *Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)*.

English Language Learners (those for whom English is not the language of the home) will take the ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

### **Below are the testing windows for the 2024-2025 state-required assessments:**

ACCESS for ELLs (and alternate ACCESS)	grades 5-8	January 6-Feb 14, 2025
DLM: ELA & Math	grades 5-8, 11	April 1- May 30, 2025
Science	grades 5, 8, 11	April 1- May 30, 2025
RICAS: English Language Arts	grades 5-8	March 24 - April 11, 2025
RICAS: Mathematics	grades 5-8	April 28 - May 9, 2025
Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment	grade 8	April 28- May 16, 2025

***Please note that there are strict guidelines regarding the time frame within which tests may be administered. Attendance is extremely important during formal testing windows. ASL interpretation of the assessments is provided if stipulated in your child's IEP. Please ensure that your child comes to school daily during testing windows.***

## **ATTENDANCE / ABSENCE / TARDINESS**

The law requires daily school attendance. Rhode Island law states that every child under 18 years of age shall regularly attend school all days and hours in which the public schools are in session. **It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure their child's attendance at school.** (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1 and § 16-19-6*).

Daily school attendance is a critical factor in achieving academic and social success. Students who attend school regularly are more academically, socially, and emotionally successful. They are less likely to drop out of school and more likely to continue their education beyond high school. Children who are not in school miss critical information and opportunities for skill development.

This is particularly true for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students, who often do not learn incidentally and require direct teaching of foundational concepts and multiple opportunities for guided practice.

**It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to call the school (401-222-3525) or email (absent@rideaf.net) when they know their child will be absent.**

Ensuring regular and timely attendance requires school and family collaboration. Therefore, communication with families regarding any unexcused absence is an important intervention by schools. If attendance and/or punctuality pose a problem, families are responsible for working with the school or asking for help from the school to develop a support plan.

***Attendance Matters!***

## Types of Absences

**Excused:** any absence verified by written note, phone call, or email from a parent or family member due to:

1. Student illness;
2. Medical, counseling, or court appointment;
3. Family emergency or death;
4. Religious holidays;
5. School-sponsored conferences and events, and
6. School-issued suspensions.

**Unexcused:** Unexcused absences are days out of school that do not qualify as excused absences, such as absences due to family vacation, missing the school bus, employment, poor planning, cutting class, etc. Three unexcused absences on three consecutive days will result in a call to discuss attendance.

When a student has missed ten percent (10%) or more of the school days in one quarter due to unexcused absences or absences of concern, the family will receive an absenteeism letter. If the student's attendance does not improve (drop below 10%) 4 weeks after receiving the absenteeism letter a meeting will be scheduled with the principal and/or special education director.

### Absence Protocol

Parents/guardians are responsible for contacting the school by 8:00 a.m. when they know their child will be absent and following up with a note in the case of an unexcused absence. **Email [absent@rideaf.net](mailto:absent@rideaf.net) or call 401-222-3525 or 401-216-8425 (VP).** A message will be sent by text, phone, and email to families who have not contacted the school to report their child's absence.

*Note: If a child is absent and the school does not receive communication from a parent/guardian, the staff will assume the absence is unexcused. The student will receive a zero for that day, and make-up work will be provided only at the discretion of the teachers.*

When a student has 3 unexcused absences on three (3) consecutive days, a call will be made to the student's parents to discuss attendance.

When a student has missed ten percent (10%) or more of the number of school days in one quarter due to unexcused absences or absences of concern, the family will receive an absenteeism letter. If the student's attendance does not improve (drops below 10%) 4 weeks after receiving the absenteeism letter a meeting will be scheduled with the principal and/or special education director.

The designated staff will attempt to determine with the parent the cause of the prolonged absences and help prevent more absences. Strategies may include home visits, daily calls, letters, or referral for support. The designated staff, with the parent/guardian, will view any information necessary to the determination of appropriate action.

### Unlawful Absence

An unlawful absence is any absence from school for one or more days with the knowledge and consent of the student's parent or guardian for reasons inconsistent with provisions of state law pertaining to compulsory attendance. (*R.I. Gen. Law § 16-19-1(a)*).

This definition applies to vacations taken beyond the parameters of the adopted school calendar. It does not apply to health problems or unanticipated emergencies.



The parent must assume full legal responsibility under state law. No disciplinary action will be taken against the child, but it is expected that all work, which is missed during the absence, will be completed.

In serious cases of repeated unlawful absence, the school social worker and/or school counselor will become involved. If this intervention is unsuccessful the school will contact the sending school district (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1, § 16-19-4, § 16-19-6, and §16-29-10*).

## **Truancy**

Truancy is the willful, unexcused absence from school by a student for one or more days.

In all cases of truancy, the parent will be notified and a concerted effort will be made to locate the child. A follow-up conference will be held with the child and the parent/ guardian.

The outcome of the conference should be a plan of action, including appropriate counseling activities, which will determine the causes of truancy and provide suggestions for the prevention of future occurrences.

In serious cases of repeated unlawful absence, the school social worker will become involved. If this intervention is unsuccessful the school will contact the student's local educational authority (LEA) in the student's home school district and the LEA's truancy officer (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1, § 16-19-4, § 16-19-6, and §16-29-10*)

## **Tardiness to School**

Students must be on time for school. School starts at 8:05 am. Please send an email to [absent@rideaf.net](mailto:absent@rideaf.net) or call 401-222-3525 to let us know your child will be tardy. A student is marked as tardy for school if they are not in class by 8:15 am, unless they are tardy as a result of the late arrival time of their school bus or other excused absence listed above. When a student has four (4) unexcused tardies, a *Notice of Tardiness* letter will be sent to the parent.

**Note: When a student arrives to school after 10:00 am or dismissed early for unexcused reasons they may not participate in extracurricular or sports activities for that day.**

Students who arrive late must check in with the front office to receive a late pass. No student arriving late to school will be permitted into class without first signing in at the office and receiving a late pass.

In serious cases of repeated tardiness, more than four (4), a conference may be held with the parent or guardian and the child to develop a plan of action to remediate the problem. Additional instances of tardiness will result in referral to the school social worker, school counselor, and the principal or designee.

## **Tardiness from Class to Class**

Class periods are approximately 45 minutes long. For middle school students, changing classes occurs six or seven times per day. It is the responsibility of students to arrive at their next class on time. Passing time in the hallways does not allow for extended socializing. Chronic tardiness to class may result in lunch detention, required make up of missed work, and a meeting with the teacher.

## **Hall Passes**

Students leaving a classroom during instructional time must be signed out by the teacher using the hall pass in their student agenda book.

Repeated tardiness from class to class may warrant a conference with the school principal and/or designated staff.

### **Participation in Evening/Weekend Activities**

Students with an unexcused absence from school for more than half a day the day of the extracurricular/after school activity are not permitted to participate in the extracurricular/after school activities. The Principal and/or after-school coordinator may grant exceptions to this rule.

### **Requests for Early Dismissal**

RI School for the Deaf recognizes its responsibility for providing effective safeguards to ensure the safety and well-being of all its students. ***Unless the school is informed in writing (Note or email) by 12:00 PM, students will be transported home on the school buses provided by the student's home district.***

On occasion, the need arises to have a child dismissed from school per parental request, before the end of the school day for medical appointments, etc.

Students leaving school before the end of the school day, or students not traveling home on their regular school buses will be dismissed from school under the following guidelines:

- Parents wishing to have their child excused from school early or to have their child transported from school in a manner other than the school bus are required to submit a request in writing (note, email or text) specifying the date, time, reason for early dismissal, and the name of the adult who will be picking up the child.
- At the time of early dismissal, the parent or adult specified in the written request to pick up the child must report to the Information Office. This person will be required to show a picture form of identification. The student will be released only into the custody of the person designated in the note.
- In cases of divorce or separation, the school will only honor the request of the individual(s) legally entrusted with the care of the child. Appropriate legal paperwork must be on file with the school.

Faculty, staff, and administrators of RISDeaf shall not be involved in the transportation of students without special permission from the Director. RISDeaf staff does not transport students in their personal vehicles. For urgent circumstances and with written parental permission (note, email or text) RISDeaf staff could transport a student in a school owned vehicle.

### **Make-Up Work**

It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with their/his/her teachers to make up work and receive credit when they miss instruction. Students will be allowed to make up work only if the absence, late arrival, or early dismissal is excused. Students who miss 30 or more days of school in one school year and who are unable to keep up with the academic content are at risk of not being promoted.

### **Leaving School without Authorization**

Students may not leave the classroom, school building, or school grounds without authorization. Students leaving campus without prior written permission during school hours will face disciplinary action.

In such cases of elopement (unexcused leaving of school grounds), a concerted effort will be made to locate the student, and if after a **20-minute search**, the child cannot be located, the parent, local police, and the student's local school district will be notified. At the initiative of the

Director, a follow-up conference may be held with the student, the parent, following teacher, school counselor and principal and any other designated staff, to determine the cause of the student's leaving, and to plan an appropriate course of action for the prevention of future occurrences. In serious cases of repeated occurrences, the local school district, parent, and a RI School for the Deaf administrator and/or other designated staff will convene to determine appropriate safeguards.

## **SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS**

For information regarding school cancellations or delays, please tune to radio and television stations. You can expect these types of announcements starting at approximately 6:00 a.m.

Bookmark this site for easy reference. **[www.turnto10.com](http://www.turnto10.com)**

Please note: Often, local school districts cancel or delay their own "out-of-district busing" in the case of inclement weather. This may happen even though RISDeaf has not canceled or delayed classes and is beyond our control.

In general, if Providence Public Schools are open, RISDeaf is open, and if Providence Public Schools are closed, RISDeaf is closed. Occasional exceptions to this rule may occur.

Every effort will be made to post school closing information on our website at [rideaf.ri.gov](http://rideaf.ri.gov) by 6 am.

We also utilize a "phone blackboard" system of announcements that directs users to the contact information they have provided, such as their cell phone or email account.

During the 2024-2025 school year, the first two days of cancellation due to inclement weather will be made-up in June. Any cancelled days after that will be distance learning days and will not be made-up at the end of the school year.

## **Visiting the School**

Parents and school-related visitors are always welcome at RISDeaf. We encourage parents and family members to participate in school life and share their talents with our students.

**RI regulations require that all visitors and interns have a current Rhode Island BCI, a background check. This includes parents.**

We apologize if this feels inconvenient, but we are first and foremost concerned about safety and must comply with the law. These background checks can be obtained at the Attorney General's office or the Pastore Center at 4 Howard Avenue in Cranston. Thank you for helping us to maintain school safety.

Anyone visiting RISDeaf is required to report in at the front desk to sign in. All visitors will be issued a visitor's pass while in the building. Parents and visitors will be asked to remain in the waiting area upon arrival. Arrangements will then be made for a staff member to escort parents or visitors to the classrooms. If you would like to observe a class for an extended period, we ask that you make the necessary arrangements with the classroom teacher so that ASL interpreters are on hand to facilitate the visit.

## **Other Visitors**

If a student would like to have a friend or relative visit classes, they must receive permission at least 48 hours before the visit. Friends may visit for a maximum of one day and must obtain a BCI if they are over 18. Past graduates wishing to visit a faculty member must also make prior arrangements with the school secretary to choose an agreeable time to visit school. All visitors

must report to the main office and sign in before entering the academic buildings. A visitor's badge must be worn at all times.

### **Visiting Other Students' Homes**

RISDeaf understands that our students often live far from each other and may enjoy time together after school visiting each other's homes. If a student under 18 years of age wishes to travel to a friend's home immediately after school hours by bus or in the friend's family's car, RISDeaf must have proper permission from both families involved, specifically a written invitation from the host's parents and written permission from the visitor's parents. These permission documents must be signed and dated by the parents and delivered to the Office. We regret that a telephone conversation is not sufficient.

Some transportation companies do not permit guest riders or may charge a fee for the privilege. Therefore, hosting parents should contact the transportation companies before each visitation.

Anyone other than a parent who plans to take students off-campus during school hours for anything other than official school business must have written permission from the parents and show appropriate identification. Additional forms may be obtained from the School Secretary.

## **SCHOOL HEALTH GUIDELINES**

### **★ RISDeaf is a peanut-free and latex-free school. ★**

The nurse's office is open daily from 8:05 am to 2:55 pm. Fortunately, we have it staffed by an experienced, full-time registered nurse certified as a School Nurse/Teacher. Students must obtain a pass from a teacher or an administrator to visit the nurse's office.

Our school nurse monitors and helps maintain students' health and safety and educates them on health issues. She is also available to parents. Her phone number is (401) 243-1010, and she can be reached by email at [pbailey@rideaf.net](mailto:pbailey@rideaf.net).

**Please note: Students who spend more than one 45-minute period at the nurse's office during the school day are not allowed to participate in sports or after-school activities that day.**

Please contact the school nurse any time you have student health-related concerns.-The nurse **must be** contacted in the event of any of the following situations:

- \* A new medical diagnosis or change in your child's health status
- \* A newly prescribed medication
- \* A change in current medication
- \* A serious illness, injury or hospitalization
- \* A contagious disease such as chicken pox, flu, strep throat, whooping cough, head lice, ringworm, scabies, impetigo, conjunctivitis or MRSA infection
- \* An absence for an extended period of time

To allow your child sufficient time to recover from an illness or injury and to minimize the spread of an infectious illness, your child should be kept home from school if they have:

- \* A contagious disease such as an upper respiratory illness with significant coughing and/or nasal discharge, a sore throat, cough, chest congestion with a fever, or conjunctivitis (pink-eye.)

- \* A fever greater than 100 degrees - your child should not return to school until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and until they are feeling well and able to participate in the classroom
- \* Vomiting and or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.

### **Annual Health Emergency Packet**

A Health Emergency packet is completed by parents yearly and returned by the date provided to ensure that your child's safety, health and well-being are met and that sufficient time is provided to properly review the forms and for administrative handling of the forms. Forms, consents and medical documents that arrive past the due date may prevent your child from attending activities such as field trips, until the late arriving forms have been reviewed and processed.

### **Physical Examination and Required Immunizations**

A physical exam with up-to-date immunizations is required upon admission to school. If a student is transferring from another state or country, the health exam may have been completed within the last twelve months before entering school and/or within six months of entering RI School for the Deaf. All Students are required to have a physical exam upon entrance into preschool, kindergarten, seventh grade, and twelfth grade and it is recommended to have an annual physical exam to promote health and well-being. Please submit all updated immunizations to the nurse's office. **A physical exam is required annually to participate in sports.**

## **MEDICATION POLICIES**

### **Prescription Drugs & Medications**

Unless otherwise determined by the school nurse, the student's physician, and the student's parent, only the school nurse may accept and administer medication of any kind to a student. Medication must be in the original container or prescription bottle with the appropriate label. The nurse will administer the medication in the Health Office.

Students may not carry or self-administer any medications other than inhalers and Epi-pens if they have been trained and determined to be capable of self-administration. A physician must provide permission and annual documentation for all self-administered medications.

- \* We encourage parents to administer medication before or after school hours, when possible.
- \* All prescription and over-the-counter medications require a written physician's order and a completed parental consent form. Medications will not be administered without this documentation. Physician's orders may be given to the nurse or faxed directly from the doctor's office. (Fax: 401-243-1024)
  - **Medications must be in a correctly labeled pharmacy container that is delivered to the nurse by a parent/ guardian or responsible adult.**
  - **Students are not permitted to carry medication to school or in school.**
- \* All medication orders expire at the end of the school year. New medication orders, parental consent forms, and correctly labeled pharmacy containers are required at the beginning of the school year and whenever a medication order changes.
- \* On a field trip, a trained teacher may administer prescribed medication, with the parent/ guardian's written permission. There may be times when medical care and/or monitoring require that it is necessary for a nurse or parent/guardian to accompany the field trip
- Middle School students are allowed to administer medication on field trips after the **Medication at Off-Site School- Sponsored Activities** form is filled out by the

provider, parent, school nurse, and student, and medication is brought to school in advance by the parent or a responsible adult.

### **Guidelines for Management of Life Threatening Allergies in School**

Parents should notify the Nurse's Office and the classroom teacher of any life-threatening allergy pertaining to your child. Please schedule a phone or on-site visit with the nurse to discuss the specifics of the allergy and to develop an allergy action plan with input from the child's physician.

An Epi-pen will be kept at school for each student for whom it is prescribed. Staff who work directly with the student are trained annually by the school nurse in how to correctly administer emergency medication through the Epi-Pen.

### **Emergency Procedures**

All accidents, injuries, or illnesses must be reported. The school nurse will provide immediate medical attention and will notify a parent or guardian if the health need is serious.

In an emergency, 9-1-1 and the nurse will be called and parents will be notified at the time of the emergency. Your child will be transported by ambulance to the emergency room at Hasbro Children's Hospital, Providence. During an off-site emergency, such as a field trip, 9-1-1 will be called, and your child will be transported to the nearest hospital.

**Please note: Any student who spends more than one period at the nurse's office during the school day is not allowed to participate in sports or after school activities for that day.**

### **Required Screenings**

Hearing, vision, weight and height, and postural (scoliosis) screenings are provided annually to students.

### **Flu Shots**

When available through public health resources, annual flu shots are offered to students and families of RI School for the Deaf on-site. Students who are 18 years and older, do not need parental authorization to get a flu shot. All other students must have signed consent from a parent or guardian.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Athletics**

RISDeaf strives to provide a natural social environment for all of its students. There are numerous extracurricular athletic activities including: soccer, volleyball, basketball and track and field. Athletic programs are offered in middle school at the developmental league level, and continue in high school at a more competitive, varsity level.

Athletics are an integral part of the educational and social process at RISDeaf. Competitive sports offer a unique opportunity for our students to develop a positive self-image. The athletic program welcomes support from parents, staff, and the community. Annual physicals are required.

The aim of the program is to develop competitive athletes while emphasizing important values such as teamwork, sportsmanship, commitment, fitness and scholastic achievement. Our athletic teams compete against schools in the Coastal Prep League and the Eastern Schools for the Deaf Athletic Association, (ESDAA), Division II.

Teachers submit athletes' grades to the Athletic Director every two weeks during each sports season. To be eligible for continued participation on athletic teams, students must earn a grade of C- or better in all academic subjects. Study Table, a set-aside time for the athletes to do homework and get academic support, happens daily for the whole team in order to keep up with

school work. Additional and more direct tutoring is also available to those who are in danger of failing.

***If a student becomes ineligible as a result of grades, he or she will be placed on academic probation and prohibited from playing in athletic team sports until grades are brought back to passing levels. Students with a failing grade will attend mandatory after-school tutoring (provided by RISDeaf) and sit with the team during games but they may not play until the next two week grade check indicates that their grade has improved. If their grade has not improved, they may be ineligible to remain on the team.***

Please see the *Athletics and Afterschool Programs Handbook* for more specific information.

In addition to our competitive sports program, we offer a less competitive developmental league for younger students in middle school. The goal of this program is to offer students an opportunity to work together and build their self-esteem while learning the fundamentals of sports. All middle school students are eligible for the developmental league.

**Participation on the school's athletic teams is a privilege and not a right. Students are expected to follow team rules and demonstrate good sportsmanship during practice and games.**

Any student may be prohibited from participating on the school's athletic teams for failure to demonstrate good sportsmanship or for behavior that is considered by the Administration to be a poor model of RISDeaf's standards of conduct.

If a student's teachers and the school administrators conclude that a student's behavior justifies exclusion from athletics, then the student may be prohibited from participating. This prohibition may exclude the student from competing in tournaments and upcoming competitions. The decision by the Administration is considered final in these situations.

### **After School and Enrichment Opportunities**

Students also have the opportunity to participate in other activities that enrich learning and school life. This may include participation in the Rochester Institute of Technology Middle School Math Competition and after school clubs.

***The same attendance, grade point average, and behavioral requirements that apply to athletics will also apply to non-athletic extracurricular activities.***

### **Tutoring**

Specialized academic content tutoring is available after school at no charge for students who are in need of additional support and specialized attention to succeed. The Tutoring Program runs from 3:15-4:15 PM Monday through Thursday each week. Parents must submit a written request for tutoring to the principal for their child to receive tutoring services.

## **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

### **Library**

The library is open daily from 8:05 am to 2:55 pm. The library has computers for student use. It is a place for students to work in a tranquil setting, and is not a place for general socializing.

Students who are disruptive may lose library and/or library computer privileges.

### **Cafeteria**

The cafeteria is used daily for breakfast and lunch with appropriate supervision. A student whose bus arrives late may take breakfast to first period class. Middle School Lunch begins at 11:13 am and ends at 11:43 am.

### **RISDeaf is a peanut-free school.**

There is a designated nut table in the cafeteria, should a student inadvertently arrive with a lunch that contains a peanut product. Lunchroom staff are informed of all food-related allergies and trained in the use of Epi-Pens.

During designated lunch times, middle school students have the choice of using the outdoor eating area if the weather permits. No students are allowed in the kitchen area at any time without staff supervision.

Appropriate language and behavior are expected in the cafeteria at all times. If a student does not adhere to school-wide norms or is disruptive during lunchtime, the student may be required to eat lunch with a teacher or the Principal.

Lunch room staff should be informed when students are excused from lunch periods due to meetings with teachers, coaches, nurses, etc. Departures require a hall pass.

Students are responsible for cleaning their tables and returning all trays and utensils to designated areas. No food is to be taken from the cafeteria at any time without permission.

## **GENERAL POLICIES**

### **DRESS CODE**

Students are expected to observe basic standards of cleanliness, modesty and good grooming at school and school sponsored events. The administration and teaching staff reserve the right to remove a student from class if they are dressed in a provocative/ offensive manner. Students in violation of the dress code must change or cover up. Appropriate cover-up clothing may be borrowed when available from the school nurse.

The following articles of clothing shall not be worn in school:

1. Clothing in an overly revealing or distracting fashion is not acceptable.
  - Abbreviated tops: halter, tube, tank, those that expose the midriff and cannot be tucked in, and those that are overly revealing or distracting are not allowed.
  - No "B's" should be exposed. This includes backs, buttocks, bellies, breasts, boxers, briefs, bras, or bathing suits.
  - Low riding pants or jeans, which display underwear, and the wearing of excessively revealing shorts or skirts are not permitted.
  - Shorts and skirts must be below the fingertips when the arm is at rest at his/her side, and shorts may be worn during the first and fourth quarters of school only.
  - Exposed beach wear, cut off shirts, undershirts, undergarments, and muscle shirts are not permitted.
  - Pajamas and slippers are not allowed except during "Spirit Week" activities. Sunglasses cannot be worn while in the building.
2. Clothing or hairstyles that may be a health or safety hazard are not to be worn. This would include loose or highly flammable clothing or unrestrained hairstyles in laboratories, around machinery, or in areas where a fire/safety hazard may exist.



3. Clothing which causes excessive wear or damage to school or personal property will not be worn. Such clothing includes metal taps or cleats on shoes, or metal studs on clothing.
4. Outdoor clothing:
  - Including hats, caps, visors, bandanas, hoods and other forms of outdoor headgear may not be worn indoors.
  - Scarves and/or hats for religious or medical purposes are accepted and respected.
  - Caps and visors may only be worn on special occasions as designated by the building principal.
  - Coats and jackets will not be allowed in classrooms except for medical reasons. An administrator may waive this provision if classrooms are too cold for comfort.
  - Coats, jackets, and headwear are to remain in lockers during the school day.
5. Appropriate and safe footwear must be worn. No rubber flip flops are permitted in school. Wheeled shoes are not considered safe. Sunglasses will not be worn in school, unless required for certified medical reasons. The following may not be worn in school at any time:
  - Dog collars, chokers, chains around one's neck with links exceeding ¼";
  - Chains to secure wallets or other items to one's clothing or person or chains attached to one's clothing;
  - Wristbands, neck collars, or clothing with spikes of any type.
6. A student participating in physical education classes shall be allowed to wear any color of shorts or sweatpants and T-shirt without penalty so long as the clothing is modest, does not promote violence or unhealthy products. Sneakers must be worn.
7. Students shall refrain from wearing any other item of clothing or jewelry that is likely to be disruptive to a proper educational environment.
8. Dress Code Offenses:
  - A first dress code offense: students will be asked to change or cover up.
  - A second dress code offense: parents will be contacted, and students will be asked to change their clothes or cover up.
  - A third dress code offense: The student will be asked to change their clothes or cover up, parents will be contacted, the student may spend the day working on a writing assignment in the office or a private area of the school (in-school suspension)

## **PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

During the secondary years, many students become increasingly aware of their physical attractions. Overt displays of physical or sexual intimacy will not be accepted as appropriate school behavior. A reasonable greeting/parting kiss/hug and/or hand holding outside of the classroom will be acceptable in the high school only.

Beyond this acceptable gesture of affection, students will be admonished and/or restricted. For a first offense, the students will be asked to refrain from the behavior and return to class. For a second offense, a meeting will be held with the school administration, and parents will be notified. For third and subsequent offenses, an IEP team meeting may be called to discuss further action.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

Students are not allowed to have laser lights in school. Cell phones, headphones, earbuds, video games, PSP, iPods, iPhones, and cameras are not allowed to be used in school. These must be kept in lockers, backpacks, or in the main office.

Personal laptops and iPads are not permitted in school. Middle school students will each receive a school-assigned ChromeBook to be used for schoolwork.

Students should never bring large sums of money or valuables to school.

***RISDeaf is not responsible for valuables that are brought to school, and will not pursue a search for items that are not allowed in school.***

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Student belongings are often left behind at school events and in the cafeteria. RISDeaf has no responsibility for these items but will try to assist in recovery when possible. Please remember to write student's names on backpacks, notebooks and jackets. Valuables should be left at home. A *Lost and Found* box is located in the main office. If you are missing something, please inquire at the office, and we will try to help locate the missing item.

## **LOCKERS**

The use of lockers is a privilege offered to students. The lockers are the property of the school rather than any individual student, and as such, are subject to inspection at any time. The school is not responsible for theft. Students are responsible for keeping their lockers clean, locked, and damage-free.

Using a lock on student lockers is highly recommended. The school does not sell or otherwise provide locks, however the school will keep a file with the locker combinations as a support to students in case their combination is lost or forgotten.

Students should not leave money or valuables in their locker. If students choose to use a backpack, it needs to be stored properly in a locker or on a hook. Backpacks are not allowed in the classroom without teacher permission.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

***Students who bring electronic devices to school do so at their own risk. If an item is stolen, families may report the theft to the local Police Department for investigation. RISDeaf is not obligated to investigate the theft.***

RISDeaf recognizes the important role electronic devices serve as communication alternatives for its students. However, in order to respect the educational environment:

1. Cell phones, tablets, and music devices **must be turned off and put away** during the school day. Students may not use them during the school day.
2. The use of cell phones, tablets, and music devices is **never** allowed during class time, passing time, project-based learning or cooperative learning experiences.
3. All emergency calls must be directed to and from the school office (401-222-3525).
4. Cameras or videos of any kind, including those in cell phones, must not be used in classrooms, locker rooms, bathrooms or anywhere on school property unless they are required for a school assignment.
5. Students may lock them in the office of the Assistant Principal or in their lockers in the morning for safety if desired. Students will be permitted to use these devices after 3 pm. When students arrive at school each morning, all technology should be put away.

**● Please do not text students during the school day as this interrupts the learning process. ●**

Videophones (VP) are available throughout the school. RISDeaf students may use the VP/ Video Relay Service (VRS) with permission from the classroom teacher or other staff as appropriate. General student use of VRS will be supervised.

## **SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

### **Fire Drills**

[RI Gen. Laws § 16-21-4 \(Fire Drills Required – Failure to Comply\)](#) Fire drills are required. The Director or his/her designee will be responsible for training the students on drills, so that they may, in a sudden emergency, be able to leave the school building in the shortest possible time and without confusion or panic. There shall be fifteen (15) such drills or rapid dismissals during the school year. At least four (4) drills or rapid dismissals shall be obstructed by means of which at least one (1) or more exits and stairways in the school buildings are blocked off or not used and at least two (2) of such obstructed drills shall be held during the months of September and October. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will review the evacuation procedure with students. Students are to assume that all visual fire alarms indicate an actual fire unless told otherwise by the administration. Students are to file out of the building quickly and quietly, following all instructions which might be given. If it is necessary to evacuate, students must remain with their classroom teachers in the designated safe area until further instruction is provided.

RI School for the Deaf has an agreement with a neighboring school within walking distance to shelter our students until parents can be notified, should the need to evacuate for a prolonged period ever arise.

### **Lockdown Practice**

***RI School for the Deaf considers the safety of our community to be our highest priority.***

#### **Lockdown or Shelter in Place**

At certain times, staff may be asked to keep students safe and occupied for an extended period of time until students can be released to go home. An example might be if an unexpectedly severe snowstorm prevents cabs and buses from arriving on time to school at the end of the school day. Students would be cared for and kept in school for an extended period while emergency plans are implemented.

Short-term shelter in place or lockdown situations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A dangerous or frightened animal comes onto our campus,
- There is a toxic substance in the air outside due to an accident in the community,
- Police warn that there is a dangerous person in the neighborhood surrounding the school,
- A crime scene or medical emergency scene must be isolated so that EMTs or Police can address the problem (such as a heart attack victim or a bad car accident in the parking lot) and avoid frightening the students.

In addition to conventional lockdown, when necessary for safety, we have adopted the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) Protocol. This approach has been proven most successful in the event of an active shooter situation. In the event of an active shooter emergency, students are instructed what to do to stay safe. Instructing students and staff how to

be safe in the face of an emergency is an ongoing process and will be practiced several times throughout the school year.

### **TOBACCO USE/ SMOKING**

***Due to the overwhelming medical evidence that smoking, whether use of tobacco or vape/e-cigarette, is unhealthy and life threatening, RI School for the Deaf does not allow its use anywhere on campus. This is also a Rhode Island Law.***

In accordance with *R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-20.9-1, et seq., The Smoking Restrictions in Schools Act*, the use of tobacco and all tobacco products is prohibited on school property. School property shall include, but not be limited to, all buildings, grounds and facilities, including school buses and field trip sites, which are under RISDeaf jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees. It shall be the purpose of this policy to ensure compliance with state law.

Because smoking is a health issue, parents will be notified if a student is caught using tobacco and/or vape/e-cigarettes. The Athletic Director and Coaches will be notified if the student is involved in sports. Students who are caught smoking will receive an in-house suspension during lunch for three days. Parents, staff and coaches will be notified. For a second infraction, the in-house lunch suspension will be increased to four days and the student's special education team will be notified. For a third infraction, the student will serve a full day of in-house suspension and will work on a project outlining the health hazards of smoking. This project will be presented to the Middle school. Violation of this policy shall include, but not be limited to, actual smoking, holding or displaying of cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, etc., whether lit or not.

### **DRUGS/ ALCOHOL**

The use of alcohol and drugs by minors on the school campus or RISDeaf sponsored events is a criminal offense. When a student is found with or using drugs or alcohol, parents and police will be notified immediately and the student will be suspended. There will be an IEP team meeting to determine the student's future educational programming. To minimize confusion, non-alcoholic beer and wine are not permitted in school at any time.

The following steps will be taken in response to student use of alcohol and illegal drugs.

1. If a student voluntarily confides a drug or alcohol problem to any staff member, the staff member will consult immediately with the educational administration team. In such instances, the school will work with the student and his/her family to identify resources for support and treatment.
2. If a school administrator has reasonable grounds to suspect, through direct observation, that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, but no contraband is found, an investigation will ensue. The student may be removed from class and parental contact will occur immediately. With the explicit approval of the parent, this investigation may involve a drug test. When a student is determined to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, but no contraband is found, the educational administration team or designee will immediately inform parents and a conference will be held with the student and parents before the student returns to school. The student may be required to attend an approved alcohol or drug recovery program
3. If a student is found to be in possession of drugs or alcohol, the educational administration team or designee will immediately inform parents and a conference will be held with the student and parent. There will be formal notification to the police by the school, and appropriate action will be taken. The student may be required to attend meetings at an approved alcohol or drug recovery program and will receive a maximum

of ten days suspension from school. In the case of a second offense, the educational administration team will consider suspension for more than ten days.

4. If a student is found to be selling, distributing, or in possession of a quantity of drugs or alcohol sufficient to be charged with the intent to distribute, the educational administration team or designee will immediately inform parents and the police for mandatory removal of the student(s). There will be an out-of-school suspension and discussion of a possible expulsion from RI School for the Deaf. The police will be notified and will take appropriate action under the law regarding the sale of drugs in proximity to school buildings.

### **WEAPONS**

The Law defines weapons as including knives of any kind, slingshots, clubs, guns, martial arts paraphernalia, straight edge razors, or anything that can harm another person. The decision as to whether or not an item is a weapon is decided by school staff. Weapons will be confiscated and will not be returned, regardless of value. If a student is found with a weapon, he/she will be suspended from school and will not be reinstated until a meeting is held with parents and the student's IEP team. When necessary, the police will be involved.

### **BULLYING / CYBER-BULLYING**

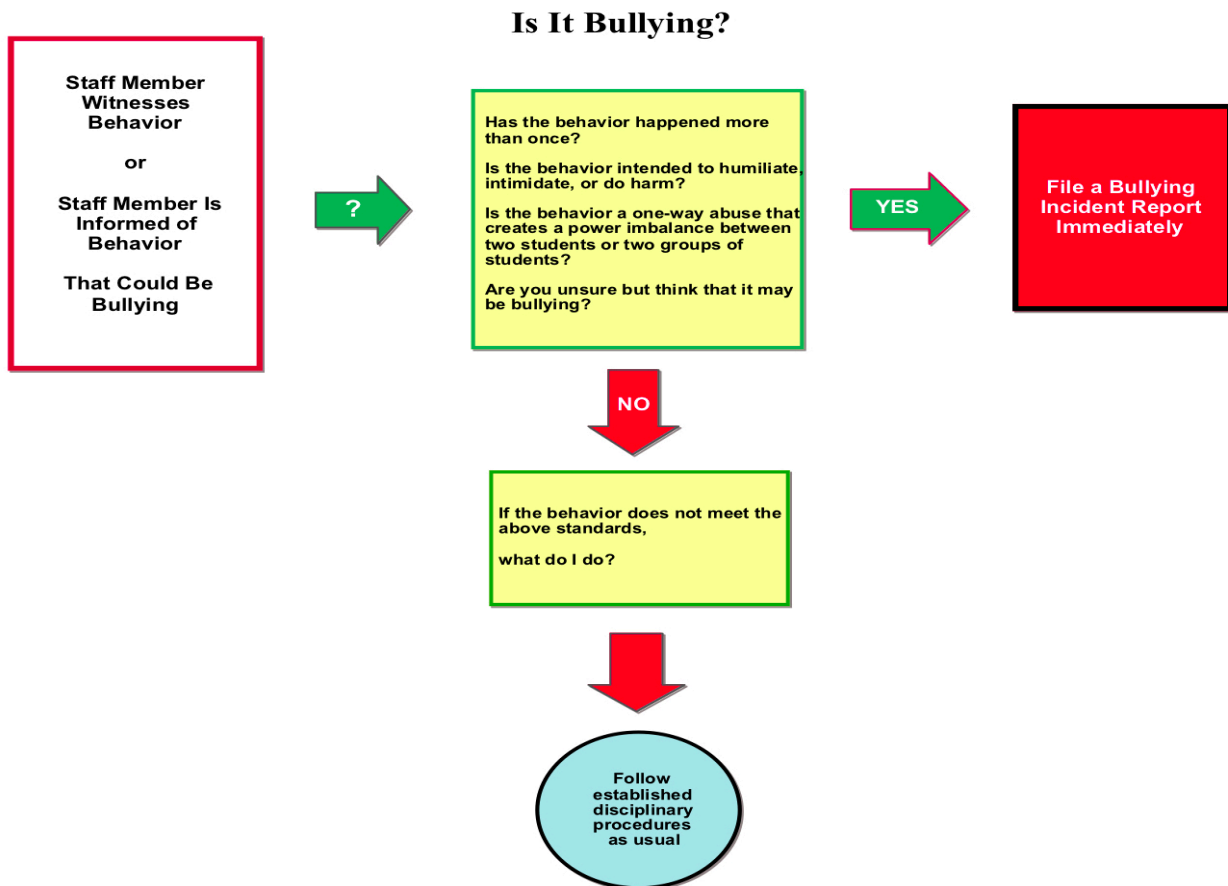
Bullying is an unprovoked, repeated, intentional act of hurting, frightening, threatening, or consistently and intentionally excluding another person. It is unwanted, intentional, unprovoked and repeated. It can be verbal, physical, direct (face-to-face), or indirect (through another person, in writing, on social media such as Facebook, etc.). It sets up a power imbalance between an aggressor and a target.

No matter how it happens, the bullying of students creates a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair student health and negatively affect their ability to learn. We believe that the prevention of bullying is critical to maintaining a safe, secure, and positive school culture that supports academic achievement and school engagement.

It is the policy of the RI School for the Deaf to promote and maintain an educational atmosphere for students, which is safe and free from harassment and bullying. Community members are expected to treat each other with respect and to report any bullying incidents immediately. **Every form of bullying, including cyber-bullying, is prohibited, whether in the classroom, on school premises, when a student is traveling to school, or at a school sponsored activity.**

RI School for the Deaf has established a formal anti-bullying plan. This plan is available to all community members in hard copy and can be found on the school web site [rideaf.ri.gov](http://rideaf.ri.gov) . It is discussed with staff and students annually. It is available in English, ASL, Spanish, and in Portuguese.

## Bullying Response Guide



### **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, TEEN DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, & HAZING**

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, teen dating violence, sexual violence, and hazing are prohibited under state law. (*R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 16-21-26; 16-21-30; 11-21-2*).

The prevention of harassment, intimidation, bullying, teen dating violence, sexual violence, and hazing is part of RISDeaf's strategic plan (*R.I. Gen. Laws §16-7.1-2(e)*) and school safety plan (*R.I. Gen. Laws §16-21-24*). Harassment, intimidation, bullying, teen dating violence, sexual violence, and hazing are prohibited at RI School for the Deaf.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination that violates federal and state law. (Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972, *20 U.S.C. §1681, et seq.*; *R.I. Gen. Laws §§16-21-26; 16-38-1.1; 16-85-2*). It is the policy of RISDeaf to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or employee of RISDeaf to harass

any student or employee through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. RISDeaf will act to investigate all complaints, whether formal or informal, verbal or written, of sexual harassment, and to discipline any student or employee who sexually harasses a student or employee of the School.

For the complete policy, please see Board of Trustees Policy: Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment.

## **COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY**

### **Computer Use is a Privilege, Not a Right**

Student use of the school's computers, networks and Internet services is a privilege, not a right. Unacceptable use/activity may result in suspension or cancellation of privileges as well as additional disciplinary and/or legal action. The Director shall have final authority to decide whether a student's privileges will be denied or revoked.

Parents will be required to sign a permission form to allow their students to access the Internet and acknowledge that they have read and understand the "Internet Acceptable Use Policy". Staff and students will sign a form acknowledging they have read and understand the "Internet Acceptable Use Policy" that they will comply with the policy, and understand the consequences of violating the policy.

### **Prohibited Use**

The user is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving RISDeaf computers, networks and Internet services and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. Examples of unacceptable uses that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

1. **Accessing/Transmitting Inappropriate Materials:** Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning, sending or displaying materials which are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal.
2. **Illegal Activities:** Using RISDeaf computers, networks and internet services for any illegal activity or activity that violates other school policies, procedures and/or rules, such as encouraging the use of tobacco, alcohol or controlled substances.
3. **Violating Copyrights:** Copying or downloading copyrighted materials without the owner's permission.
4. **Plagiarism:** Representing as one's own work any materials obtained on the internet (such as term papers, articles, etc.). When internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher, and web site must be identified.
5. **Copying Software:** Copying or downloading software without the express authorization of the system administrator.
6. **Non-School-Related-Uses:** Using RISDeaf computers, networks, and internet services for non-school-related purposes such as for private financial gain, commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes or any other personal use.
7. **Cyber-stalking and Cyber-harassment:** In accordance with Rhode Island law, whoever transmits any communication by computer or other electronic device to any person or causes any person to be contacted for the sole purpose of harassing that person or his or her family is guilty of a misdemeanor (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-52-4.2*).
8. **Violence and Discrimination:** Using the computer, networks and internet services to send or receive any data or information which advocates illegal acts, violence or discrimination toward people or organizations, or which is outside the scope of educational use.
9. **Misuse of Password/Unauthorized Access:** Sharing passwords, using other users' passwords without permission, and/or accessing other users' accounts; forging or attempting to forge electronic mail messages.

10. **Malicious Use/Vandalism:** Any malicious use, disruption or harm to RISDeaf computers, networks and Internet services, including hacking activities and creating/uploading of computer viruses (*R.I. Gen. Laws §§11-52-3; 11-52-4.1*).
11. **Unauthorized Access to Chat Rooms/NewsGroups:** Accessing chat rooms or newsgroups without specific authorization from the teacher, supervisor, or administrator.

### **No Expectation of Privacy**

RISDeaf retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks and internet services owned or leased by RISDeaf. The school reserves the right to monitor all computer and internet activity by students. Students should have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including electronic mail and stored files.

The RISDeaf computer network belongs solely to RISDeaf and any files, records, electronic mail or other communication may be examined, edited, or deleted by RISDeaf at any time, without warning or notice.

### **Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages**

The student and/or the student's parent/guardian shall be responsible for compensating RISDeaf for any losses, costs or damages incurred by RISDeaf and related to violations of these rules, including investigation of violations.

### **RISDeaf Assumes No Responsibility for Unauthorized Charges, Costs or Illegal Use**

RISDeaf assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by students including but not limited to credit card charges, long distance telephone charges, equipment and line costs, or for any illegal use of its computers, such as copyright violations.

### **Student Security**

A student shall not reveal his/her or any other student/classmate's full name, address or telephone number on the Internet. Students should never meet people whom they have contacted through the internet without parental permission. Students should inform their teachers and/or administrators if they access information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate or make them feel uncomfortable in any way.

### **System Security**

The security of RISDeaf computers, networks and Internet services is a high priority. Any user who identifies a security problem must notify the teacher, administrator, or system administrator immediately. The user shall not demonstrate the problem to others. Any user who attempts or causes a breach of system security may have his/her privileges revoked and may be subject to additional disciplinary and/or legal action. It is unacceptable to connect any personal computing device to the school's network without written permission from the Office of Technology. It is unacceptable to engage in activity for private or financial gain.

### **Violation of Policy**

This policy applies to all school computer use, internet activity and communication. If a user is found to be in violation of the policy, his or her network and internet rights and privileges will be suspended until an investigation is conducted. Upon completion of the investigation, the Director will issue a decision to revoke or reinstate the computer user's privileges. Such violations may also result in further disciplinary measures or legal action.



## **Disclaimer**

All staff and students of RISDeaf take full responsibility for their actions in the use of computers, networks and Internet services. RISDeaf makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing RISDeaf will not be responsible for any damages the user suffers, including but not limited to the loss of data, delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions. Individual users are solely responsible for all charges and fees that they may incur in using the network, including outside telephone, printing, and merchandise purchases made through the network. RISDeaf is not a party to such transactions and shall not be liable for any costs or damages, whether direct or indirect, arising out of any network transactions by the user.

## **Chromebooks**

No personal computers or laptops are permitted in the classrooms. Middle school students are provided with a school-assigned Chromebook laptop for individual student use by RISDeaf. These Chromebooks are the property of the school and are provided to enable students to access technology at school and at home for school purposes (research, assignments, homework, etc.). Students are expected to use them for school purposes only.

There is a separate policy for Chromebook 1:1 device use. Middle school students and parents are responsible to read this policy, sign the agreement, and abide by the *Chromebooks Care and Use Policy Guide* before a Chromebook will be assigned to any student. Chromebooks are collected for maintenance and updating during school vacations.

## **Bring Your Own Device Policy (BYOD)**

The BYOD Acceptable Use Policy applies to all technology resources brought onto campus from outside. BYOD is an acronym for *Bring Your Own Device*. For BYOD, a "device" is a privately owned tablet computing device, iPod touch (or similar), or cell/smart phone. For the purposes of this program, the term "device" also includes any similar product owned by RISDeaf and provided for student use.

- a. Students are allowed to BYOD for personal purposes during free time. However, they will not be allowed to access the Wi-Fi network unless specified in their IEP. RISDeaf has a number of computers, iPads, and Macbooks that students can use for educational purposes that already have Wi-Fi access.
- b. In order to utilize RISDeaf services (specifically Internet access) and participate in the BYOD program, students/parents must review and sign the BYOD Acceptable Use Policy. This can be obtained from the IT Manager and will be considered a legally binding agreement.
- c. The IT/Data Manager will record the serial number and MAC address of the device. Wi-Fi access, if applicable, will also be assigned by the IT & Data manager. The Wi-Fi password will be known only to the IT and Data Manager.
- d. The owner of the device is fully responsible, at all times, for each device brought to school. RISDeaf is not liable for any loss/damage/theft of a personally owned device.
- e. The owner of the device is responsible for the condition of the device brought to school, including updates, antivirus software, and repair.
- f. Personal devices should be charged and recharged outside of school, unless specific permission is granted. Personal devices should be capable of lasting a full school day without recharging.
- g. No device, personal or otherwise, may be used to record, store, or transmit any type of image, sound, or video from RISDeaf, except for approved projects with the express permission of the school director.
- H. If the personal device is not used for appropriate academic purposes or distracts from learning, RISDeaf staff reserve the right to take the device and hold it until the end of the school day.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT and DISCIPLINE**

### **Guiding Principles**

It is the responsibility of RI School for the Deaf to make, maintain, and enforce a student discipline code the purpose of which is to foster a positive environment that promotes learning. Each student, staff member, teacher, and administrator has a right to attend and/or work at a school which is safe and secure, free from threat (actual or implied) of physical harm by a disruptive student or community member. The Board of Trustees or the Director may suspend all students found responsible for conduct which violates the Student Code of Conduct, or which threatens these basic rights.

### **Code of Conduct and Expectations of Respect**

All members of the RISDeaf community have the right to be treated respectfully by one another and entitled to a safe, orderly environment in which to learn, work, or entrust their children. Although the language of instruction may vary in individual classrooms, conversations conducted in all open areas must be accessible through sign language.

### **Expectations and Rights of Students**

#### ***Students have the responsibility to:***

- Come to school on time, prepared, and ready to learn each day;
- Respect self, others, and school property; Tell the truth;
- Do their work to the best of their ability;
- Plan for the future; and starting at age 14, become active members of the IEP Team that plans their educational and vocational programming;
- Participate in the development of their Individual Learning Plan;
- Ask for help when needed.

#### ***Students have the right to:***

- Fair and respectful treatment; A free and appropriate education with full access to the general curriculum and academic instruction in the language and communication modes that best meet their learning needs;
- Full communication access within the entire school environment and school community.
- Examine their school records and participate in developing their own academic program.
- Be free from danger, discrimination and harassment in school; and
- Be informed of, understand, respond to, and appeal any disciplinary action taken against them.

### **Expectations and Rights of Families**

#### ***Families have the responsibility to:***

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time each day, prepared to learn;
- Respect their child's education and school professionals;
- Help their child plan for each day, week and year in school;
- Provide a quiet place at home where homework may be completed;
- Ask for help when unable to meet the educational needs of their child; and
- Reinforce RISDeaf conduct expectations.

#### ***Families have the right to:***

- Be treated with respect by school staff;
- Participate in planning their child's academic program in partnership with the school and to examine school records as needed;
- Expect the confidential maintenance of their child's records;

- Be informed of their child's academic progress and related concerns;
- Visit their child's school according to school-based protocol; and
- Be informed of, respond to, and appeal any disciplinary action taken.

### **Time Off to Attend School Events**

Parents are entitled by regulation to time off from work to attend their child's school events:

- The Rhode Island Parental and Medical Leave Act makes it easier for parents to get time off from work to attend school functions. The law does not require that the leave be paid.
- The law states that a parent who has been employed by the same employer for 12 consecutive months is entitled to a total of 10 hours of leave during any 12-month period to attend parent-teacher conferences, an IEP meeting, or other school-related activities for a child of whom the employee is a parent, foster parent or guardian.
- The employee must provide 24-hour notice of the leave and make a reasonable effort not to unduly disrupt the operations of the employer.

### **The right of each student to learn must never be compromised**

RISDeaf is committed to ensuring the safety of all members of its community. Maintaining respect and school connectedness is the driving value for all disciplinary action.

Behavioral Philosophy- RISDeaf faculty and staff will:

- Maintain clear expectations
- Teach expectations & related skills
- Model expectations and provide opportunities for guided practice
- Provide positive recognition
- Consistently deliver fair consequences and Interventions

Effective discipline will be implemented through effective partnerships with students, families and the community. Expectations and consequences for student conduct will reflect a balance between the responsibilities and rights of the individual and the responsibilities and rights of the school community.

### **A Community of Learners**

The mission of RISDeaf is to provide every student with a safe, free and appropriate education. In order for RISDeaf to maximize the engagement of students in their education, it must foster the development of relationships among students, faculty, administration and support staff around the common mission of becoming a dynamic Community of Learners. This prevents disruptions to teaching and learning by creating a positive learning environment and by ensuring the safety of all members.

### **Respectful Interactions**

It is the expectation of RISDeaf that all members of the school community refrain from swearing, or using language which stereotypes, generalizes, harasses, puts down, or violates the confidentiality rights of others. Individual student needs should be discussed between school professionals only when discussion is intended to improve the educational outcomes of those students. It is expected that all members of the school community use language that promotes human dignity and respects individuality.

## **Student Discipline**

It is the responsibility of RISDeaf to make, maintain and enforce a student discipline code the purpose of which is to foster a positive environment that promotes learning (R.I. Gen. Laws §16-21-21). The Board of Trustees, or the Director, may suspend all students found in violation of school regulations which relate to the rights mentioned above, or when a student represents a threat to those rights of students, teachers, or administrators.

Students with disabilities are generally subject to the same rules governing student behavior and discipline as their non-disabled peers, although they are entitled to additional due process protections as outlined below.

No student with a disability shall be excluded, suspended, or withdrawn from any school-based education program for more than ten (10) cumulative days within one school year for behavior that is a manifestation of the student's disabling condition. Suspending a student for more than ten (10) cumulative school days for behavior that is a manifestation of the student's disability is a form of discrimination and violates federal and state regulations under IDEA. See section below titled Special Rules for Students with Disabilities

## **Scope of Discipline**

It is the responsibility of all RISDeaf personnel to maintain student discipline before, during, and after the school day in school buildings, on school premises, at other locations while attending school-sponsored activities, and while in transit to or from school. RISDeaf recognizes that while it is one entire school, it serves students of all abilities from grades preschool through 12. Therefore, every student shall be expected to follow the school wide Code of Conduct in a manner appropriate to their age and developmental level.

The goal is always to teach, model and support a student with the goal of guiding the child to learn to make better choices and to take responsibility for individual behavioral actions. Several tiers of support are in place to help students grow in this area.

## **Student Wellbeing Team, Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA), and Positive Behavior Support Plans**

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf has several teams that are formed to provide additional support to students and staff. The SWBT (Student Wellbeing Team) is one such team. Comprising clinical staff and faculty, the team meets regularly to review student data and school systems that support students who present with challenging behaviors. The team coordinates FBAs (Functional Behavior Assessments) and develops PBSPs (Positive Behavior Support Plans) as needed to provide additional support for student success.

An FBA is completed in order to clearly understand a student's patterns of behavior and to develop an individualized positive behavior support plan for students with high risk and high frequency behaviors that are resistant to the first two tiers of intervention.

Tier 1 consists of general classroom intervention.

Tier 2 is a targeted, small group response.

The SWBT meets weekly to identify and develop plans for these students. Plans are developed with input from parents, faculty, and the student when appropriate.

The Positive Behavior Support Plan and its corresponding monitoring are designed as an individual Tier 3 intervention. The determination of this need will be based on systematic data collection that can include attendance, office discipline referrals, surveys, self-assessments, rating scales, direct observations and discussion with the parent/guardian and teachers.

## Behaviors and Consequences

All members of the RISDeaf community need to teach, reinforce, and model these expectations. When it is clear that the student's behaviors are not related to the student's disability, staff must also respond swiftly and with authority while delivering consequences for unacceptable behaviors, in order to facilitate the development of self-discipline in students. Clear and concise expectations are essential for the understanding and support of an orderly school environment by students, families, school personnel and community partners. Consequences should match the severity of the behavior and the age of the student, as defined in the following Code of Conduct.

## Student Code of Conduct

Students have a right to a safe place to learn and grow. Every member of RISDeaf is responsible for addressing student behaviors observed in the Scope of Discipline that compromise any student's right to learn or threaten the safety of the school community. This means the full complement of adults in the building at any given time before, during or after normal school hours is responsible for addressing student behaviors as described.

## Definitions for Code of Conduct

- **Assault:** a physical act of a threatening nature, which puts another person in reasonable fear of immediate bodily harm.
- **Chronic:** three (3) or more instances of similar behavior defined in Levels 1, 2 and 3 for which interventions are not having observable impact.
- **Community Service:** organized and structured opportunities for students to contribute to the betterment of the school community.
- **Conference:** a non-public one-on-one conversation between a school professional and a student and/or family member regarding observed behavior that is disrupting the learning environment. A conference should include both members describing their concerns, with responsible adults specifically describing how the observed behavior is a barrier to learning or is disrupting the learning of others. Each conference should be resolved with an agreed upon plan for improvement. Conferences must never involve public humiliation of a student.
- **Fighting:** a mutually agreed to or mutually spontaneous eruption of physical aggression between two or more individuals.
- **Intervention:** an attempt to involve the student, family, teachers, school-based support staff, community providers and/or agencies to help support improvement in behavior, teach new behaviors, motivate and/or hold students accountable who are not upholding the expectations in the Code of Conduct.
- **Major Graffiti:** writing, painting or carving on property other than one's own which is permanent, or difficult to eradicate.
- **Minor Graffiti:** writing or painting on property other than one's own, which can be eradicated or cleaned up without substantial effort.
- **Major Theft:** any theft of valuable items or school equipment involving destruction of school property, physical harassment and/or malicious intent.
- **Minor Theft:** any theft of minor items, e.g., school supplies.
- **Non-Academic School Privileges:** any student privilege, which is not an element of the fundamental education program. This does not include food, physical education class, art class, music class, field trips, or any program set forth in the student's Individualized Education Program.
- **Weapon:** a loaded or unloaded firearm or look-alike firearm or pistol, knife, razor, martial arts device, gas repellent, mace, stun gun and/or any tool or instrument which school administrative staff reasonably could conclude is capable of inflicting bodily harm.

## **ZERO Tolerance for Weapons and Violence**

Any student found to be in possession of a weapon or involved in an aggravated assault will immediately be referred to the Director and may be excluded from school for the remainder of the school year or for a shorter period of time, in accordance with Rhode Island law. (*R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 16-21-18; 16-21-19; 16-21-21.1*).

In all cases involving weapons or aggravated assault in school or on school grounds, the Police and parents/guardians will be contacted. School grounds include, but are not limited to, actual property owned by the school, areas around the school, parking lots, school-sponsored events (whether on or off school grounds), school buses, and school bus stops.

## **Searches**

### Lockers

Lockers are school property and students should therefore hold no expectation of privacy in their lockers. RISDeaf officials may search student lockers when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the student has or is violating either school rules or the law. They also have the right to search lockers without notice, including through the use of animals and equipment to assist in the search.

### Personal Property

When RISDeaf officials have reasonable suspicion that a student has or is violating school rules or the law, they have reasonable grounds for conducting a search of personal property.

RISDeaf officials may inspect and search school property and equipment owned and controlled by the school (such as lockers, desks, and parking lots) as well as personal effects left unattended by a student without notice to, or consent of, the student. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in these areas or in their personal effects left unattended. School officials may search a student and/or the student's personal effects in the student's possession (such as purses, wallets, backpacks, book bags, lunch boxes, etc.) when there is a reasonable ground for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that the particular student has violated or is violating either the law or RISDeaf student conduct rules. This also applies to student vehicles parked on school property.

## **Code of Conduct Consequence Guidelines**

### **Level 1**

Level 1 conduct includes those behaviors, which are insubordinate or cause minor disruptions to the learning environment. These behaviors can often be redirected by the teacher and resolved through thoughtful planning and opportunity for discussion. Students may be referred to the Student Wellbeing Team, if the teacher or support staff cannot successfully abate the behaviors.

	<b>Level 1 Behavior</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>1.1</b>	Attending Class without required materials or assigned work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with Teacher</li><li>• Written or verbal apology</li><li>• Loss of privileges</li><li>• Restitution</li><li>• Detention (before, after school or during lunch with teacher)</li><li>• School-based community service</li><li>• Home contact</li></ul>
<b>1.2</b>	Off-task behaviors that demonstrate disengagement from the classroom (out of seat, etc.)	
<b>1.3</b>	Behavior that disrupts or interferes with classroom teaching and learning	
<b>1.4</b>	Inappropriate displays of affection	

1.5	Running in the classroom or hallways	• Parental visit to school if necessary
1.6	Communication that is not polite, courteous or respectful	
1.7	Refusal to comply with staff instructions or classroom, cafeteria, or school rules	
1.8	Using computer equipment without permission	
1.9	Unauthorized use of pagers, phones, electronic devices	
1.10	Dress code violation	
1.11	Leaving class without permission: 1 <sup>st</sup> offense	
1.12	Cutting a class	
1.13	Pushing, shoving	
1.14	Chronic late arrival to class	
1.15	Minor graffiti	
1.16	First violation: minor cheating, simple plagiarism, throwing objects in anger or frustration, minor property theft, etc.	
1.17	Teasing with intent to embarrass another	

## Code of Conduct Consequence Guidelines

### Level 2

Level 2 conduct includes those behaviors which are insubordinate or cause more significant disruptions to the learning environment. When these behaviors are more chronic, disruptive, disrespectful, requiring greater support to the classroom, and the teacher feels that regular interventions are not succeeding, students exhibiting these behaviors will be referred to the SWBT.

	Level 2 Behaviors	Response
2.1	Chronic Level 1 behavior that is escalating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with Teacher</li> <li>• Written or verbal apology</li> <li>• Loss of privileges</li> <li>• Restitution</li> <li>• Detention (before, after school or during lunch with teacher)</li> <li>• School-based community service</li> <li>• Home contact</li> <li>• Parental visit to school if necessary</li> <li>• Closer monitoring</li> <li>• Peer conflict resolution activities</li> <li>• Referral for additional learning supports</li> <li>• In school interventions (i.e., timeout, focus room following school protocols), behavior contracting/monitoring by teacher/teams/administrators</li> <li>• In-school suspension</li> <li>• Mandatory social skills training or counseling services (i.e., anger management, problem solving, aggression replacement therapy)</li> <li>• Detention with anger management workshops or other appropriate skills training program</li> <li>• Referral to Director for in-school suspension (any in-school suspension requires an Follow up plan for prevention /intervention to avert further problems)</li> </ul>
2.2	Off-task behaviors that result in injury to self or others	
2.3	Fighting: 1 <sup>st</sup> offense	
2.4	Throwing items with intent to harm others	
2.5	Leaving the classroom without permission a 2 <sup>nd</sup> time	
2.6	Communication that involves swearing at peers	
2.7	Swearing at staff members	
2.8	Harassment	
2.9	Verbal arguments that disrupt learning	
2.10	Chronic dress code violations	
2.11	Cheating on a test:	
2.12	Cutting class repeatedly	
2.13	Harm to self or others	
2.14	Chronic late arrival to class	
2.15	Major graffiti	
2.16	Plagiarism	
2.17	Bullying (repeated, intentional, and targeted power imbalance) *Reports must be filed for investigation.	



## Code of Conduct Consequence Guidelines

### Level 3

Level 3 conduct includes those behaviors, which are dangerous or disruptive to learning for the larger school community and do not meet the school's expectations of respect, directly compromising the community. These behaviors require immediate interaction with the Administration, resulting in a referral to the Director. Any alleged criminal behaviors will automatically result in a referral to the Police. For students under eighteen, parents will immediately be notified.

	Level 3 Behaviors	Response
3.1	Any of the previous behaviors that escalates to a dangerous or violent level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All those previously listed and also including:</li> <li>• Police involvement</li> <li>• Student and family advisement/ counseling</li> <li>• Legal response</li> <li>• Out-of-school suspension</li> <li>• Significant community service</li> <li>• Network of Support including community crisis resources</li> <li>• Immediate call for a Team meeting</li> </ul>
3.2	Possession of a weapon or a gun	
3.3	Intentional and chronic sexual harassment	
3.4	Physical intimidation	
3.5	Sexual assault	
3.6	Physical assault	
3.7	Investigated Bullying or Cyberbullying	
3.8	Using school computer network to bully	
3.9	Possession or sale of a controlled substance	
3.10	Retaliation	
3.11	Violence and serious threats to a RISDeaf community member	
3.12	Defiantly leaving school grounds without permission	
3.13	Major destruction of property	

## **Procedures Governing Suspension**

### Suspensions of Ten Days or Less

Unless an emergency situation exists requiring the student's immediate removal, no student shall be suspended prior to having an informal hearing before the Director or his/her designee. At said hearing, the student will be informed of the charges and be given an opportunity to respond. In the event of an emergency, the informal hearing shall be held as soon as practical following the removal of the student. In addition:

1. The administrator shall make all possible attempts to notify the parent/guardian of the student about the suspension and state the cause(s) leading to the suspension.
2. A letter will be sent to the parent/guardian stating the nature of the infraction and noting the consequences. This letter will be sent to the last reported address of the parent/guardian.
3. If a student is suspended, a parent re-entry conference must take place before reinstatement.
4. Textbooks and homework may be provided for each student for the duration of the suspension period. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to pick up this work from the school. The student shall be allowed to complete any class work, including examinations, without penalty, which he or she missed while under suspension. All make up work must be completed within the period of time equal to the number of days suspended (i.e. 5 days out-of-school suspension = 5 days to make up work). This period begins immediately upon returning from suspension.

### Suspensions for More Than Ten Days

A suspension of more than 10 days can only be imposed by the Board of Trustees. Prior to suspension or expulsion of this duration, the student and/or his or her parents/guardians, if the student is not 18 years of age, shall be afforded:

1. a clear, written statement of the reason for suspension or expulsion;
2. notice of the right to a prompt public or private hearing, at the student's choice, and the right to be represented by counsel at such hearing; and
3. If a hearing is requested, the student shall be given prompt notice of the time and place of such hearing, said time and place to be reasonably set so as to allow sufficient time for preparation, without undue delay.

If the student's presence endangers persons or property or threatens disruption of the academic process, however, the notice and hearing described above shall follow the suspension or expulsion as soon as practicable.

At the hearing, the student shall have the right to (a) representation and participation by counsel; and (b) cross-examine witnesses and to present witnesses on his/her behalf.

The hearing shall be recorded (through electronic or stenographic means) and preserved to send to the Commissioner of Education for the State of RI in the event of an appeal.

The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be furnished with a copy of the proceeding, without cost, along with a copy of the written decision. The student and his/her parents/guardians may appeal the matter to the Commissioner in accordance with Rhode Island law. (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-39-2*). In that event, the Board of Trustees shall send a copy of the written decision and the record of the proceeding (transcript and any exhibits introduced) to the Commissioner.

## **SPECIAL RULES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

As students with disabilities, RISDeaf students are entitled to particular procedural safeguards in certain disciplinary situations, in addition to those set forth above. The relevant procedural safeguards are provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1415, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C § 794.

For suspensions of fewer than ten (10) days cumulative for the entire school year, RISDeaf is not required to treat students with disabilities differently than it treats students without disabilities. (RIDE Regulations Governing the Education of Students with Disabilities) (§300.530(b)(1).

However, additional procedural safeguards must be provided when a student has been suspended for more than ten (10) days cumulative for the entire school year. (§300.530(b)(2)). A suspension for more than ten (10) days cumulative for the entire school year is considered a change of placement. (§§300.530(d)(4); 300.536). When a change of placement occurs, RISDeaf immediately must notify the student's parent/guardian of that decision and provide them with a copy of the procedural safeguards notice (§300.530(h)). In addition, RISDeaf must perform a manifestation determination.

### ***Manifestation Determination:***

1. Within 10 school days of the discussion to change placement, RISDeaf, the student's parent/guardian, and relevant members of the student's IEP Team must determine whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability; or if the conduct in question was a direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP. (§300.530(e).
2. If it is determined that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student's IEP Team must:
  - a. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment of the student and implement a behavioral intervention plan (unless an assessment has recently been conducted) (§300.530(f)(1)(i));
  - b. Modify the already existing behavioral intervention plan to address the student's recent behavior. (§300.530(f)(1)(ii)).
3. If it is determined that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, RISDeaf must return the student to the placement from which the student was suspended, unless the student's parent/guardian and RISDeaf agree to a change of placement as part of the behavioral intervention plan. (§300.530(f)(2)).

Regardless of whether the student's conduct is determined to be a manifestation of his/her disability, whenever a change of placement occurs, the student must continue to receive educational services so that the student can continue to progress toward the goals set out in his /her IEP. The student's IEP Team always includes the LEA from the student's district of residence and will determine what educational services are appropriate. (§300.530(d)(5)). However, it should be noted that these educational services might be provided to the student in an alternate setting.

If the student's parent/guardian disagrees with any decision regarding their child's placement or the manifestation determination, they may appeal the decision by filing a complaint pursuant to §§ 300.507 and 300.508 (a) and (b). The parent/guardian will be provided written instruction on how to file a complaint.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

RISDeaf does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin,

gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, or status as a veteran (*R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 16-38-1; 16-38-1.1; 42-87-1, et seq.*).

Inquiries concerning incidents of discrimination can be made with the RISDeaf compliance officer:

Personnel Specialist  
Amy Vincenzi  
401-243-1017

RISDeaf has designated this individual to coordinate its compliance activities with these regulations and investigate complaints filed through its internal grievance procedure.

Parents/guardians may ask may also contact:

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202  
[www.ed.gov/answers](http://www.ed.gov/answers)

Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights  
180 Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
(401-222-2661)

<http://www.richr.ri.gov/>

Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Equity and Access  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, R.I. 02903  
(401-222-8437)

<https://www.ride.ri.gov/>

Generally, within 180 calendar days of the alleged discrimination or harassment, or within 60 days of receiving notice of the RISDeaf's final disposition on a complaint filed through the school's internal grievance procedure, the grievant may also file a complaint with OCR.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

### **Notification of Parental and Family Rights**

RISDeaf makes school records available to parents/guardians and to students over 18 years of age (eligible students) according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. FERPA affords the following rights to parents and eligible students:

#### **1. Process for Reviewing Student Records**

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day upon which RISDeaf receives a request for access. Parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to the Director a written request, which identifies the record(s) that they wish to inspect. The Director will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

#### **2. Process for Amending Student Records**

The right to request the amendment of that portion of the student's education records that the

parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask RISDeaf to amend a record, which they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the Director, clearly identifying the part of the record that they want changed, and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading. If RISDeaf decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right of a hearing.

### **3. Release of Student Information**

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records is protected, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

- A school official is a person employed by RISDeaf as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; a person or company with whom/which RISDeaf has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
- A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, RISDeaf discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

### **4. Student Directory Information**

FERPA defines directory information as information contained in a student's education record that generally would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. As allowed by FERPA, RISDeaf has designated the following information as directory information:

- Name of student
- Address of student
- Telephone number of student
- Electronic mail address
- Photographs and video
- Date and place of birth
- Student grade and school of attendance
- Dates of attendance
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received

FERPA gives parents the right to have their child's directory information kept private and not released to anyone, which means that it will not provide any information to any person or entity requesting such information, including military recruiters.

## **5. Complaint Process:**

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/index.html>

## **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents/guardians certain rights regarding the school's conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams (20 U.S.C. § 1232h; 34 C.F.R. Part 98). These rights are as follows:

Parental consent is required before students can be given a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents/guardians; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

The following is a list of specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the Department of Education.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents/guardians must receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any nonemergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Parents/guardians may inspect the following, upon request and before administration or use:

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights apply to a student who is 18 years old or older, or an emancipated minor under state law.

RISDeaf will directly notify parents/guardians of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys and provide them with the opportunity to decide not to have their children participate in such specific activity or survey.

RISDeaf will make this notification to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year if it has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, RISDeaf will provide parents or guardians with reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys, and the opportunity to decide not to have their children participate. Parents/guardians will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

**Complaint Process:**

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/index.html>

**Rhode Island School for the Deaf**  
One Corliss Park  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Highly Qualified Educators

At RI School for the Deaf, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal rules related to teacher qualifications as defined in Every Student Succeeds Act. These rules allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject they are teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask if your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking needed to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact me at 401-222-3525.

Sincerely,  
*Sarah McGaughey*  
Director  
RI School for the Deaf



## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION POLICY**

### **A. Purpose**

One of the guiding principles of the RI School for the Deaf is to involve families to the fullest extent possible in realizing the goals of the school and of the students. To achieve this, the School will offer a range of activities to:

- (a) welcome families to the school, as well as seek their support and assistance;
- (b) communicate effectively with families, ensuring that communication is two-way and meaningful;
- (c) Assist families in playing an integral role in student learning and ensure that families (and students whenever possible) have the information they need to participate in assessing, planning, and implementing their children's education program;
- (d) Involve families as partners in shared decision-making and advisory functions;
- (e) Utilize the school community to connect students and families with resources that provide educational enrichment, support, and promote connections between students, families, and the community-at-large;
- (f) Communicate in languages families understand;
- (g) receive education and support in areas that will facilitate achievement of students;
- (h) Empower families to lead and collaborate confidently on issues of deafness, ASL, spoken language development, and resources for social-emotional support to their children with unique needs resulting from hearing loss.

The School recognizes that the diversity of personal beliefs, political opinion, religious affiliation, and cultural identity is a community strength, and is mindful of how employee's personal attitudes and opinions influence decisions and conduct. Accordingly, the School respects that each family is unique in their educational, cultural, and religious backgrounds and expectations, and rightfully deserves to obtain individualized services and programs compatible with their abilities, goals and cultural framework. Every effort is made to provide information and materials in the families' native languages.

Although parents are diverse in culture, language, and needs, they share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children. Collaboration between school and parent is essential to support student learning. Programs reflect specific needs of the students and families in the communities we serve.

This Family Involvement Policy supports the development, implementation and regular review of a parent involvement program. It obligates the involvement of parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles. Parent involvement programs are comprehensive and consistent with the standards set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act.

Three decades of research provide convincing evidence that parents are an important influence in helping their children achieve high academic standards. When schools collaborate with parents to help their children learn and when parents participate in school activities and decision-making about their children's education, children do better in school and schools improve.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, Anne C.; Anne T., *Urgent Message: Families Crucial to School Reform, 1998*

## **B. Parent & Student Education**

Numerous studies have documented the importance of educating parents and caregivers of children in all aspects of their child's education. The progress of children and the quality of their families' lives are greatly enhanced when there is ongoing, open communication between the family and school program, and when methodologies are consistent across environments. During the screening and subsequent education planning processes, any barriers that may interfere with the student's access to education will be assessed. Strategies for minimizing these barriers will be identified and may result in parent and student education activities.

The School will provide education and information to families (and students when appropriate) through a variety of methods so that families can get access to it through the channel that best meets their needs.

- During the referral and screening process, families will receive written information about the school, its scope of services, philosophy, and expectations for participation.
- Upon a student's acceptance into the school, a parent orientation meeting will be held with the family. The family's rights will be reviewed, along with School procedures relevant to the education of their child. Parents will be encouraged to discuss their expectations, interests, and ability for involvement in their child's school, and any barriers that may restrict or prevent their full participation. Such a discussion will enable the school to meet the family's needs and collaborate with the family in planning for the child's future.
- Parents will be provided with a handbook/information packet to use as a reference for understanding their rights, participating in their child's education planning, managing their child's health and safety, school expectations, community resources, and helpful information to care for their child.

### **Family Involvement:**

RI School for the Deaf views family involvement as one of the foundational principles of the school and encourages families to partner with us in providing children with the highest quality opportunities for healthy development.

Research has concluded that "the evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing; families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more."<sup>2</sup>

Consistent with the standards set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act and the National PTA Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, a successful parent involvement program here at the RI School for the Deaf will include, but not be limited to, the following components:

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<sup>2</sup> Henderson, Anne. T. and Mapp, Karen L., A new Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement, 2002, p.7

### **ASL Classes for Parents/ Guardians**

We believe that parents are a child's primary teachers and thus, we encourage direct parent-to-child communication as much as possible. ASL classes are strongly encouraged for parents as well as for extended family members and other interested community members. Classes are offered at school in the evenings through a partnership with two community organizations. We provide access to ASL classes through *ASL Academy* and *Perspectives, Inc.*, local programs that meet several times/ week at our school. These classes are offered to our parents at no cost for the first six levels of instruction. Our community partners are: *ASL Academy* and *Perspectives, Inc.*, local programs that meet several times/week at our school. Parents are strongly encouraged to access registration for these classes through our school website under OUTREACH. Be sure to indicate that your child attends RISDeaf.

Special classes and workshops are also offered throughout the year, including occasional Family Sign Language Saturdays, classes for families that speak Spanish in the home, and Sibling Signs classes.

### **Parent Teacher Collaboration**

A collaboration of parents and/or guardians, teachers, and administrators of RI School for the Deaf whose desire is to promote a sense of community in the school often plan activities together. They play a role in helping to develop and support enrichment programs and community-building for our children and families.

### **Empowerment CAB or Strategic Planning Team**

RISDeaf is an Empowerment School, one of only three state-wide. This means that we are free to determine what is best for our students and work with RIDE to have regulations that do not apply to our unique learners waived by the State. Consisting of a group of people who represent the school community and who are interested in making the school a better place for learning and teaching, the CAB is a group that decides what the school should do to improve student performance by gathering and analyzing data that can be used to make decisions that drive changes in the school.

### **Special Ed Local Advisory Committee (LAC)**

The overall purpose of the Local Advisory Committee is to advise the school on issues regarding students with special needs. This committee seeks technical assistance on specific education issues, disseminates information to the school community about special education concerns and participates in school planning meetings as an advocate for students with special needs.

### **School Volunteer Program**

We benefit from having our families partner with us. Some of the volunteer opportunities include classroom parents, assisting team coaches, cataloging in the school library, and planning special enrichment events, etc. Do you have any fun or unique interests and/ or skills? We'd love you to share with our students!

### **Health & Wellness Committee**

(a) The school committee of each school district shall establish a district-wide coordinated school health and wellness subcommittee chaired by a member of the full school committee. The subcommittee will make recommendations regarding the district's health education curriculum and instruction, physical education curriculum and instruction, and nutrition and physical activity policies to decrease obesity and enhance the health and well being of students and employees.

(b) The school health and wellness subcommittee shall consist of members of the general public, a majority of whom are not employed by the school district, including at least one parent, and are encouraged to include teachers; administrator; students; community and school-based health

professionals; business community representatives; and representatives of local and statewide nonprofit health organizations. The subcommittee will be chaired by a member of the school committee.

### **C. Parent-School Communication**

Throughout the course of enrollment at the school, ongoing contact will be maintained with each family about their child's educational progress. Individual family communication needs will determine the frequency of contact. Several strategies may be implemented to provide a variety of opportunities for communication.

- Staff and parents may write to each other about activities, concerns, general information, and progress. Phone calls and email can be used as an alternative or a supplemental means of communication. We ask that you do not text teachers .
- Written progress reports will be sent home quarterly.
- Review and general planning meetings will be held whenever requested by parents and/or school staff.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled each November to bring families of children and RISDeaf staff together to communicate about the school. Other evening events are planned to encourage parent-school communication.
- A series of educational workshops in parenting, communication, basic rights in special education, curriculum, and advocacy will be offered several times per year. Meetings will be scheduled at convenient times so as to optimize attendance. Language translators in the parents' preferred language will be provided.
- The school will provide ASL classes to parents/guardians and family members on an ongoing basis. Please ask for details.
- Newsletters and other forms of informational materials may be distributed to parents. The newsletter provides information about school-wide activities, general news about the School, resources, and topics of interest.
- Families will be provided with information about parent support networks, educational advocacy, and legal assistance.
- Additional resources will be available through the RI School for the Deaf website at [www.rideaf.ri.gov](http://www.rideaf.ri.gov) and the RI Department of Education website found at [www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov).

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

These opportunities to conference about students and their progress is made available upon distribution of First Quarter Report Cards and as often as requested for any student. They represent an opportunity for families, teachers, and students to evaluate student progress towards meeting grade level expectations according to the Common Core State Standards and IEP goals.

### **Family Nights**

Several times each year, RI School for the Deaf hosts social and educational events for parents and families. Information about upcoming events will be distributed in advance. Every effort is

made to provide childcare and interpreting services.

**Additional Resources:**

- ❖ **RIDE.RI.gov** website. Rhode Island Department of Education’s comprehensive website about all matters educational in our state.
- ❖ The “**What Works Clearinghouse**” (WWC), a project to help education decision-makers answer such questions as how do we create better schools and how can we make sure that all children can read? A part of the Department’s Institute of Education Sciences, The WWC has been established to put solid evidence from high-quality scientific research into the hands of educators, policy-makers and the public so they may make better choices about programs and practices. To receive email updates, subscribe to WWC Update on the Web at [www.w-w-c.org](http://www.w-w-c.org). or call 1-866-WWC-9799.
- ❖ **American Society for Deaf Children.** A helpful website for families and professionals who care about making good decisions for deaf and hard of hearing children found at [www.deafchildren.org](http://www.deafchildren.org)
- ❖ <http://raisingandeducatingdeafchildren.org/deaf-children-are-not-hearing-children-who-cant-hear>
- ❖ **Clerc Center at Gallaudet University,** The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University provides information, training, and technical assistance for parents and professionals to meet the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Its mission is to improve the quality of education afforded to deaf and hard of hearing students from birth to age 21 throughout the United States.  
[http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc\\_center.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center.html)

**Appendix A**  
**Permission and Acknowledgment of Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

**Student:**

I have read the Rhode Island School for the Deaf "Internet Acceptable Use Policy" and I understand and agree to abide by the terms of this request for network access, and the Rhode Island School for the Deaf rules for acceptable use of network resources. I understand that I am solely responsible for all charges and fees, including outside telephone, printing, and merchandise purchases made through the network. The Rhode Island School for the Deaf is not a party to such transactions and shall not be liable for any costs or damages, whether direct or indirect, arising out of network transactions by the user.

In addition, I acknowledge that the Rhode Island School for the Deaf computer network belongs solely to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf and that any files, records, electronic mail or other communication may be examined, edited, or deleted by the Rhode Island School for the Deaf at any time, in accordance with the School's policy or regulations. In general, electronic mail in personal accounts will not be inspected without the consent of the sender or recipient, except as necessary to investigate a complaint.

I further understand that should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, and school disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. In consideration for using the Rhode Island School for the Deaf network connection and having access to public networks, I hereby release the Rhode Island School for the Deaf and its Board of Trustees, employees, and agents from any claims and damages arising from my use, or inability to use, the network. I understand that the use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. I further understand that any violation of the above guidelines will result in immediate suspension of my Internet privileges, and that as a result of such violations further disciplinary measures may be taken.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

**Parent:**

I am the parent/guardian of the above named student. I have read the Rhode Island School for the Deaf "Internet Acceptable Use Policy" and I understand and agree to all of the provisions, rules, and regulations delineated within. I hereby give permission for my child to use the Internet service provided by the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. I do understand that my child is required to follow this policy. I further understand that there is a potential for my son/daughter to access information on the Internet that is inappropriate for students and that every reasonable effort will be made on the part of the faculty and staff of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf to restrict access to such information, but that my son/daughter is ultimately responsible for restricting himself/herself from inappropriate information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Parent's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

## Appendix B

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

#### RI School for the Deaf 2024-2025

**Please return this page to school with your child after you have read and signed it.**

We have read this Handbook for Students and Parents/Guardians and understand its contents. We also have reviewed and discussed this Handbook, with our child, who understands and agrees to abide by the rules contained in it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date