



# 2019 - 2020 Student and Parent Policy Handbook



# Welcome

Dear Giant Steps Families,

Welcome to the 2019 - 2020 school year at Giant Steps! This school year promises to be an exciting year for students and staff alike, and we are delighted that you are a part of our school community!

This document is a valuable resource for you. It contains important information about our school guidelines, policies, and procedures. Please take some time to read it and indicate your receipt of this handbook by signing the electronic "GS Supplementary Forms." If you have any questions regarding the information contained in the handbook, please call us for assistance.

We strongly encourage you to get involved in your child's education. The partnership between home and school must have a firm foundation to ensure the success of our students. Becoming a member of our Parents Club, volunteering at the school, and attending school events are a wonderful way to get to know your child's friends and their parents!

We are anticipating a school year full of excitement, adventure, relationship building, and a great deal of learning for students and staff members. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, please feel free to call, email, or stop by.

Best,



Dr. Sylvia Smith  
Executive Director



Angelina Strum  
Director of Special Education



Becky Kaufman  
Senior Program Supervisor  
Elementary/Voyagers



Sherry Bochenek  
Senior Instructional Supervisor



Jen Brown  
Senior Program Supervisor  
Secondary/Transition

# 2019-2020 Day School Calendar

AUGUST				
M	T	W	R	F
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

SEPTEMBER				
M	T	W	R	F
	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

OCTOBER				
M	T	W	R	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER				
M	T	W	R	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22

DECEMBER				
M	T	W	R	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20

JANUARY				
M	T	W	R	F
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY				
M	T	W	R	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	

MARCH				
M	T	W	R	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

APRIL				
M	T	W	R	F
6	7	8	9	
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

MAY				
M	T	W	R	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
	26	27		

JUNE				
M	T	W	R	F
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

JULY				
M	T	W	R	F
		1	2	
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

**KEY:**

-  Building Closed, NO SCHOOL (No camp offered)
-  Building Closed, NO SCHOOL (Possible camp day)
-  Early Release Day (1:40 pm)

-  Quarter End Date
-  Emergency Day (if needed for cancellations)

**AUGUST**

- 1-16 NO SCHOOL, Summer Break
- 15 Meet and Greet Night
- 19 CLASSES BEGIN
- 28 Early Release - Professional Development

**SEPTEMBER**

- 2 NO SCHOOL, Labor Day Holiday
- 4 Early Release - Professional Development

**OCTOBER**

- 2 Early Release - Professional Development
- 14 NO SCHOOL, Columbus Day Holiday
- 21 End of 1st Quarter

**NOVEMBER**

- 6 Early Release - Professional Development
- 7 Parent/Teacher Conferences 2:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
- 25-29 NO SCHOOL, Thanksgiving Break

**DECEMBER**

- 4 Early Release - Professional Development
- 23-31 NO SCHOOL, Winter Break

**JANUARY**

- 1-3 NO SCHOOL, Winter Break
- 8 Early Release - Professional Development
- 10 End of 2nd Quarter
- 20 NO SCHOOL, Martin Luther King Day

**FEBRUARY**

- 5 Early Release - Professional Development
- 17 NO SCHOOL, Presidents' Day
- 28 NO SCHOOL, Teacher Institute Day

**MARCH**

- 4 Early Release - Professional Development
- 17 End of 3rd Quarter
- 30-31 NO SCHOOL, Spring Break

**APRIL**

- 1-3 NO SCHOOL, Spring Break
- 8 Early Release - Professional Development
- 10 NO SCHOOL, Spring Holiday

**MAY**

- 6 Early Release - Professional Development
- 25 NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day
- 27 CLASSES END, Early Dismissal (Tentative)
- 28-29 Emergency Closing Make-Up Days
- 28-29 NO SCHOOL, Summer Break

**JUNE**

- 1-3 Emergency Closing Make-Up Days
- 1-19 NO SCHOOL, Summer Break
- 22 CLASSES BEGIN (Summer Session)

**JULY**

- 3 NO SCHOOL, Independence Day Weekend
- 31 CLASSES END (Summer Session)

Student Hours of Attendance:	
Regular School Day:	8:40 am - 2:45 pm
Early Dismissal Day:	8:40 am - 1:40 pm
Summer School Day:	8:40 am - 12:55 pm

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# Quick Reference Guide

Giant Steps Illinois, Inc.  
2500 Cabot Drive  
Lisle, IL 60532  
Phone Number: 630/864.3800  
Fax Number: 630/864.3820

## SCHOOL HOURS

Regular School Day 8:40 am – 2:45 pm  
Summer School Day 8:40 am – 12:55 pm

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Title	Name	Phone	Email Address
Executive Director	Dr. Sylvia Smith	630/864.3808	<a href="mailto:ssmith@mygiantsteps.org">ssmith@mygiantsteps.org</a>
Director of Special Education	Angelina Strum	630/864.3861	<a href="mailto:astrum@mygiantsteps.org">astrum@mygiantsteps.org</a>
Senior Program Supervisor Elementary/Voyagers	Becky Kaufman	630/864.3822	<a href="mailto:bkaufman@mygiantsteps.org">bkaufman@mygiantsteps.org</a>
Senior Instructional Supervisor	Sherry Bochenek	630/864.3897	<a href="mailto:sbochenek@mygiantsteps.org">sbochenek@mygiantsteps.org</a>
Senior Program Supervisor Secondary/Transition	Jen Brown	630/864.3737	<a href="mailto:jebrown@mygiantsteps.org">jebrown@mygiantsteps.org</a>

# Basic Procedures & Information

## **ADMISSION**

To be eligible for admission to Giant Steps, a child must be **5 years old and less than 22 years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year**. All students must have a primary eligibility for Special Education under the category of Autism. Giant Steps requires district supported placement, so a child must be identified by his or her home school district to need outplacement at Giant Steps. Giant Steps is not involved in the decision-making process regarding placement until a child has been enrolled in our program. Giant Steps admits students of any race, color, gender, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities.

Prior to admission, a complete student file must be submitted to Giant Steps, inclusive of a current Individualized Education Program (IEP), copies of the reports that address the domains covered in the student's most recent re-evaluation for special education services, a signed contract for placement in a nonpublic facility, and student registration which includes the online supplementary forms.

## **REGISTRATION**

Each child must be registered with both his/her home school district and Giant Steps. Parents are responsible for paying any and all fees required by the district, regardless of whether or not the child is attending his/her home school. Parents/guardians must meet all district requirements regarding residency and all state medical requirements. All documentation must be submitted by October 15 or your child may be excluded from attending Giant Steps until all documentation has been received.

Giant Steps registration is completed online through our student information system, Infinite Campus. Each family receives a user account that provides you access to the school calendar, your child's attendance, and important messages from the organization. Your account is secure and unique to only your family, so please do not share your login information with anyone else as this could compromise the security of your account.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

Every student must have at least one (1) emergency contact listed on his/her registration form who may be contacted in the event of an emergency, illness, or if your child needs to be picked up from school.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Illinois School Code requires compulsory school age attendance (105 ILCS 5/26-I-15). Valid cause for student absence shall be illness, observance of religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by administration. The Illinois School Code, Article 26-1 requires those who have custody or control of any child between the ages of 7 to 17 to cause such child to attend school the entire time it is in session during the regular school term.

Students are limited to nine (9) days of absence per year. Any absences beyond the allotted amount will be considered unexcused absences unless a medical statement from a physician is submitted to the school upon the student's return. Students who have missed their allotted nine absences per year will be considered unexcused and therefore truant per class period missed. Students who are chronically truant will not be subject to punitive action unless available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.

# Basic Procedures & Information

## ATTENDANCE (continued)

Any absence due to illness that lasts for more than three consecutive days must be verified by a medical note, which must be produced within two days of the student's return for the absence to be considered excused. The student should have a note with them explaining their absence or tardiness upon return to school, whether from a parent/guardian or from a physician if the absence resulted from a medical appointment.

## EXCUSED ABSENCES

An excused absence is defined as, but not limited to:

1. Medical appointment verified by a medical note,
2. Testing and assessment,
3. Illness confirmed by a medical note (after three consecutive days of being out of school before nine absences, one day after nine is considered unexcused),
4. Observance of a religious holiday,
5. Illness confirmed by a note from a parent/guardian (parent/guardian verified absences may not be excused if total absences are in excess of nine days per year),
6. Court appearance demanded by official summons or subpoena verified by court,
7. Funeral (confirmed by a note from parent/guardian),
8. School-sponsored activities (i.e. field trip, athletic event, etc.),
9. Extenuating circumstances that have been approved by the Director of Special Education and other relevant School Administrators.

## UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An unexcused absence is defined as, but not limited to:

1. Any absence that is not confirmed by a parent/guardian, medical staff, or within the two-day grace period,
2. Truancy (absence from school without verification from the parent/guardian),
3. An illness that lasts for more than three consecutive days that is not verified by a medical note,
4. Vacation days taken with family,
5. Personal reasons or business,
6. Failure to attend because of transportation problems, unless transported by a school bus/vehicle,
7. Non-school sponsored activities or events.

Parents/guardians will be notified by the school after the student's ninth absence of the year. Parents will be informed by letter and concerns will be shared regarding your student's attendance. Unless there are very unusual circumstances, missing more than nine days of school by the end of the second quarter is excessive. Students need to be in attendance in order to receive credit and access to needed educational supports. With the exception of excused absences due to medical reasons, bereavement, and religious holiday observance, both excused and unexcused absences count toward the student's annual attendance rate, which can result in loss of credit. Teachers may extend deadlines for missed work or work that was due for an excused absence only. Please remember that there is a positive relationship between attendance and success in school!

## ABSENCE PROCEDURES

**All absences from school must be authorized by the student's parent/guardian.** It is your responsibility to notify the school in advance or at the time of any absence. You must notify the school by calling **the absence line** at **630/864.3800, extension 3**, no later than 8:00 am on the day of the absence. The following information must be shared:

- Student's name
- Student's classroom
- Date(s) of absence(s)
- **Reason for absence(s)**

**REPORT ALL ABSENCES TO:  
630/864.3800, extension 3**

# Basic Procedures & Information

## **ABSENCE PROCEDURES (continued)**

If your child will be absent for more than one day, you are welcome to share all the dates of the extended absence in one voicemail.

If your child takes a bus or taxi to school, it is your responsibility to notify the Transportation Company of the absence(s).

Giant Steps requires at least one telephone number at which a parent/guardian may be reached by the school regarding absence notification. Student attendance is submitted to the district on a monthly basis. Giant Steps also notify districts immediately after a student has not attended for five consecutive school days.

## **EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PARTICIPATION**

Our program is designed for students with intensive special education needs and is designed to operate on a year-round basis including extended school year (“ESY”). Of course, Student participation in Extended School Year (“ESY”) is determined on an individual basis by the IEP team. The IEP team will review a variety of factors when considering if a student should receive ESY services. These factors include, but are not limited to: the degree of impairment, ability of child’s parents to maintain child’s level of skills, whether the service is extraordinary to the child’s condition, and the child’s rate of progress, retrospective data such as past regression and rates of recoupment of skills, as well as consideration of emerging skills. Reliable sources of information for determining the presence of these factors may include: (1) progress on goals in consecutive IEPs; (2) progress reports maintained by teachers and others having direct contact with the student before and after interruptions in the educational program; (3) observations and opinions from teachers, parents and others; and (4) results of criterion-referenced tests, assessments and other equivalent measures.

If the School members of the IEP team determine that ESY services are appropriate for the Student, the School expects to have that student attend. If the Parent or placing school district declines ESY services, the failure of the Student to attend ESY may result in the School not enrolling the Student for the following school year.

## **CHANGE IN PLACEMENT**

A student’s placement at Giant Steps may be changed or terminated by the parent, home school district, or Giant Steps at any time, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Giant Steps staff members will work with parents/guardians and/or the home school district to facilitate a transition to the student’s new placement. Parents/guardians must sign an Authorization for Release of Information form to allow Giant Steps staff members to share documentation and information about the student with the future provider.

In accordance with the Illinois State Board of Education requirements, should Giant Steps elect to terminate a student’s placement, Giant Steps shall give written notice to the contracting public school district and parents/guardians at least 30 calendar days prior to the date of actual termination, unless the health and safety of the student or others are endangered. The notice shall include the reasons for the termination. Giant Steps retains the right to terminate a student’s placement immediately if a student presents significant issues of safety or a threat to him/herself or others. In these situations, Giant Steps staff members will immediately inform the contracting public school district and parents/guardians of its recommendation to initiate an emergency change of placement until such time as a determination is made that the student no longer poses a threat to him/herself or others. The contracting public school district will be informed that an IEP meeting will be scheduled to discuss the change of placement. Upon termination of placement, all student records will be returned to the contracting public school district within 20 business days.

## **HOME/HOSPITAL SERVICES**

Home/hospital services are provided to a student when a licensed medical physician determines that the student will or is anticipated, due to a medical condition, to be out of school for a minimum of two consecutive weeks of school (10 days) or more or on an ongoing, intermittent basis totaling 10 or more school days throughout the course of one school year. The goal of home/hospital instruction is to afford the student experiences equivalent to those afforded to other students at the same grade level and are designed to enable the student to return to the classroom.

# Basic Procedures & Information

## **HOME/HOSPITAL SERVICES (continued)**

If your child is found eligible for home/hospital services, the IEP team may revise the IEP, as necessary. The amount of instructional or related service time provided in the home/hospital shall be determined in relation to your child's educational, physical, and mental health needs. The amount of instructional time shall not be less than five (5) hours per week unless the physician has certified in writing that the child should not receive as many as five hours in a school week. Services may be provided by telephone or other technological devices; however, your child must receive a minimum of two (2) hours per week of direct instructional services. The home school district is responsible for coordinating homebound services.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation between home and school is provided by the home school district or parent/guardian. It is your responsibility to notify the transportation company in the event that your child will be absent from school or if transportation arrangements need to be changed. If you drop your child off in the morning and would like the transportation company to bring him/her home, you must call the transportation company to confirm your needs. If a vehicle does not arrive to pick up your child, you will be called to come get him/her from Giant Steps. If you will be picking your child up from school, you must call the transportation company to let them know that your child will not be on his/her regularly scheduled route. If your child wears a safety harness, it must be brought with your child or the transportation company will not be able to transport your child back home.

If you transport your child to school, you can drop off and pick up in the front of the building. Giant Steps staff will come outside or to the front doors to meet your child unless alternate arrangements have been made with your child's teacher and Program Facilitator. You may wait outside or in the school lobby to pick up your child.

In the event that you need to pick up your child early, please let the receptionist know your child's name and classroom when you arrive. You can wait in the lobby for your child to be brought out of the classroom or therapy. Please allow adequate time for your child to gather their items, use the bathroom (if needed), and walk to the front of the building. We are unable to accommodate the request for your child to be waiting for you in the lobby in order to ensure that your child doesn't miss out on instructional time. Please inform your child's teacher of any early dismissals or late arrivals as soon as possible.

If your child has difficulty boarding the bus at the end of the day, the bus is able to remain on-site until 3:15 pm on regular school days, 2:15 pm on early dismissal days, and 1:25 pm on summer school days. At that time, the bus will be sent to drive other students home, and parent/guardian will be responsible for picking up or arranging for an emergency contact to pick up the student before 4:00 pm. If a parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached to arrange transportation by 3:45 pm, the Lisle Police Department will be contacted and custody will be transferred to them.

In the event that your child's home district school is closed due to their school calendar schedule or inclement weather and Giant Steps remains open you can drop your child off for the regularly scheduled school day.

## **TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENTS**

In the event of an accident while your child is being transported to or from school, the transportation company's emergency response policies and procedures will be followed. Parent/guardian will be notified by the transportation company or Giant Steps' staff regarding the accident. Should emergency medical services be required, the policies and procedures of the transportation company take precedence. Giant Steps is not responsible for any medical charges incurred as a result of the accident.

In the event of a transportation accident while your child is being transported using a Giant Steps vehicle, emergency services will be contacted, a Giant Steps Administrator will be dispatched to the scene, and students will not be removed from the scene for any reason until cleared by Police or EMS. Parent/guardian will be notified of the incident and any injuries as soon as is reasonable, but prior to the end of the school day on which the accident occurred. Per the *Consent for Emergency Medical Care*, Giant Steps' staff are authorized to consent for emergency medical services at the recommendation of the Emergency Responder(s). Giant Steps is not responsible for any medical charges incurred as a result of the accident.

# Basic Procedures & Information

## EMPLOYMENT

Parent/guardian/primary caregivers of students and participants in any Giant Steps program cannot be employed by Giant Steps.

## UNIFORM GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In the event that you are dissatisfied or believe you have been wronged by the faculty or staff at Giant Steps, it is your right to utilize the Uniform Grievance Procedure. The Board of Directors shall annually designate one of its members to be the Board Grievance Officer who shall direct grievances that are not resolved by the Executive Director.

Earnest efforts shall be made to resolve grievances by informal communication between parents (and students where appropriate), teachers, staff members, and/or the appropriate administrators/supervisors.

If such a resolution is not reached, the Complainant may utilize the Uniform Grievance Procedure outlined below:

1. The grievance must be presented in writing to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the subject of the complaint, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the Board Grievance Officer.
2. After the complaint is received, the Executive Director or Board Grievance Officer (as appropriate) shall schedule a conference with the Complainant and/or any necessary parties in order to investigate the grievance within ten (10) business days or as soon as possible thereafter.
3. The Executive Director or Board Grievance Officer (as appropriate) shall respond in writing within ten (10) business days after the conference or as possible thereafter.
4. If the grievance is not resolved by the Executive Director (or Board Grievance Officer in complaints involving the Executive Director), the Complainant shall submit the grievance in writing within ten (10) business days to the Board Grievance Officer.
5. After the grievance is received, the Board Grievance Officer will schedule a conference with the Complainant and/or any necessary parties in order to resolve the grievance within ten (10) business days or as soon as possible thereafter.
6. If the grievance is not resolved by the Board Grievance Officer, the Complainant shall submit the grievance in writing to the Board of Directors within ten (10) business days.
7. After the grievance is received, the Board of Directors will schedule a conference with the Complainant and/or any necessary parties in order to resolve the grievance within ten (10) business days or as soon as possible thereafter.
8. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final.

**Executive Director:**

Dr. Sylvia Smith ▪ 630/864.3808 ▪ [ssmith@mygiantsteps.org](mailto:ssmith@mygiantsteps.org)

**Board Grievance Officer:**

Judy Iantosca ▪ judypepper\_9@hotmail.com

**Board President:**

Lawrence LaVoie  
Giant Steps  
2500 Cabot Drive  
Lisle, Illinois 60532

# Educational Program & Services

## **ACADEMIC AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES**

Giant Steps provides highly individualized programming utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach inclusive of theoretical and instructional practices from Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Music Therapy, Speech Therapy, Social Work, and Behavior Analytic perspectives. Small classroom sizes, highly specialized staff, and small caseloads allow students to receive high quality, uniquely tailored programming guided by their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Programming is provided year-round – an August through June traditional school calendar, followed by a six-week Extended School Year (ESY) session that students participate in as deemed necessary by the IEP team. For students aged fourteen and a half years of age or older, transition planning is incorporated into the IEP.

Students are assigned to classrooms based on multiple factors, including but not limited to age and grade level, interests, strengths, and types of support needed throughout his/her day. See below for a list of classroom names by program:

### **Program: Classroom Names**

Elementary: A - H, Explorers, Voyagers (grades 9-12)

Secondary: Zion, Yosemite, Acadia, Olympic, Union, Noble, Oz, Palmer

Transition: Stevenson, Addams, Kennedy

## **CURRICULUM**

Giant Steps' curriculum is designed to provide students with a variety of learning opportunities, placing an emphasis on equipping students with the essential academic and functional skills necessary for future success. Our curriculum focuses on grade-level content in core areas including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education aligned to Illinois Learning Standards as adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education. Students are also afforded the opportunity to participate in a variety of elective courses to enhance programming and tailor instruction. Elective courses focus on students practicing and strengthening the development of skills based on students' needs, strengths, and interests. Programming is further individualized to target areas of needed skill development as specified in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Giant Steps' instruction allows students to access the curriculum in a more flexible way than may be seen in a traditional classroom setting. We utilize a multi-modal instructional approach where students are instructed in a manner that more closely matches their learning style. Additionally, we utilize a multi-disciplinary team approach to instruction which allows teachers to incorporate therapeutic strategies into academic lessons. This type of approach affords teachers the opportunity to collaborate with related services providers to match instruction to students' sensory, communication, and social-emotional learning needs. In order to provide instruction that meets the needs of a wide range of diverse learners' needs, teachers have access to a variety of curricula and instructional materials.

Quality instruction is based on careful data analysis; therefore, formal and informal assessment are conducted to evaluate student learning. Data is collected daily related to students' performance on specific skills and level of independence with which a student can complete tasks and activities. Informal assessment is used throughout instruction and presentation of lessons to gauge students' understanding of the content being presented. This allows teachers to modify instruction and make accommodations, so students are able to access the curriculum to gain knowledge and skills.

# Educational Program & Services

## **ERIN'S LAW**

Erin's Law is a state statute that requires public schools in Illinois to have a sexual abuse prevention curriculum presented to students annually. While this is not something that we are required to do as a non-public school, our School Leadership Team believes it is a priority to do everything we can to protect our students who we know are even more vulnerable as individuals with disabilities. Each year students in all grade levels (Kindergarten – Transition) will participate in the Erin's Law curriculum. These lessons will cover topics such as "safe and unsafe touch", "everyone has the right to say no", "appropriate hugging, kissing, touch" presented by your student's Social Worker.

Given that this is a state mandated requirement for public school students, we are not required to obtain parent consent to present these lessons to your child. That said, we certainly want to help you feel comfortable with the materials and appreciate your feedback and insight as to how this can be most effectively presented to your child. If your child has a sensitive history related to this topic, please feel free to reach out to your child's Social Worker to collaborate on how to best approach the topic with them. If you have specific concerns about your student participating in this curriculum, please contact your Program Services Supervisor.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Giant Steps utilizes a variety of instructional materials to present content to students. These materials have been selected to provide high quality instruction and learning experiences for students, to enrich and support the curriculum, and to provide background information that will expose students to a variety of subjects, topics, and skills. Instructional materials have been selected in a variety of media (i.e., textbooks, technology-based) to engage students and meet their wide range of needs.

The following list provides some of the instructional materials utilized at Giant Steps:

- Unique Learning System
- Early Literacy Skill Builders
- Early Literacy Skill Builder for Older Students
- Teaching to Standards: English Language Arts
- onRamp to Algebra
- Ready Math
- Early Numeracy
- Reading A-Z
- RAZ Kids
- Headsprout
- IXL ELA & Math

A parent/guardian may inspect, upon written request, any instructional materials used as part of your student's educational curriculum within a reasonable time period of the request. Requests to inspect instructional materials must be made to the Senior Instructional Supervisor.

## **COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION**

All students participate in Community Based Instruction (CBI) designed develop the skills necessary to participate in their communities. The duration of CBI varies by program and is based on students' needs, skills, readiness to learn in an alternate environment, and their IEPs. In general, students in participate in CBI for two (2) hours each week. Vocational opportunities are considered on an individual basis as determined by a student's IEP. Students are transported to and from the community location and Giant Steps via contracted buses or vehicles, Giant Steps' minivans, or walk to nearby locations. All CBI is supervised by Giant Steps staff members and health and safety precautions are taken as appropriate.

At times, it may be necessary for your child to remain at Giant Steps and not attend CBI due to behavioral or other factors impacting his/her success in the community. If this is the case, you will be notified of the alternate activities completed by your child during that time on his/her daily communication note.

If your child has difficulty transitioning back to the van or bus, a parent/guardian may be called to pick him/her up so as not to delay the return of the group back to Giant Steps.

# Educational Program & Services

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are offered to provide educational experiences and opportunities to enhance the curriculum and extend learning to the larger community. Parent/guardian permission is required for each trip and must be obtained in writing on designated Field Trip Permission Forms. Field Trip forms will be sent home in advance of the trip. The permission form must be signed by a parent/guardian and submitted before the student will be allowed to leave on the trip. **Verbal permission will not be accepted.** Students who arrive at school on the day of the Field Trip without a Field Trip Permission Form will remain at school and receive alternate programming for the day. A field trip may be cancelled without notice due to an unforeseen event or condition.

## **STAFFING**

Each classroom is run by a Special Education Teacher, who is supported by a Senior Program Assistant who holds an Illinois Substitute Teaching Certificate, multiple Program Assistants (PAs), and the therapeutic team. The number of PAs assigned to a classroom varies based on student need. Staff to student support levels vary between 1:1 and 1:4, depending upon the environment, task/expectations, and student needs.

## **INDIVIDUALIZED SCHEDULES**

Your child's schedule will be sent home at the beginning of the regular school year and Extended School Year sessions. Schedules may change throughout the year and you are welcome to request a copy of the current schedule to be sent home at any time. Specifics regarding what happens during the school day will be sent home on a daily basis through the Daily Communication Note.

## **LUNCH/SNACKS**

Your child will eat lunch with his/her peers in a designated location. Student lunches must be sent from home as Giant Steps does not offer a hot lunch program. You are welcome to send your child with a lunch and snack each day or send items in bulk on a weekly or monthly basis. Each kitchen is equipped with a refrigerator, freezer, cabinet for food storage, and a microwave. Students have access to parent provided snacks throughout the day. Please make sure that your child's lunch bag and all bulk foods are clearly labeled with their first and last name.

Giant Steps, in collaboration with student home districts, offers a free/reduced lunch program for those students who qualify. If you are interested or to determine if your child qualifies for free/reduced lunch please contact your students home districts.

If your child follows a restricted diet or has diagnosed food allergies, be sure to indicate so in their registration packet. This will allow Giant Steps to proactively accommodate your child's needs and ensure that precautionary measures are in place.

# Educational Program & Services

## **COMPUTER NETWORK ACCESS AND USE**

Giant Steps' computer network is considered part of the educational curriculum. Access to it facilitates resource sharing, innovation, communication, and extends the educational lessons learned within the classroom by:

- Providing access to educational resources and reference materials,
- Reinforcing the specific subject matter taught,
- Requiring the use of critical thinking skills,
- Promoting tolerance for diverse views, and
- Teaching socially appropriate forms of expression.

Technology is utilized for a variety of applications throughout the building. Students may use technology for:

- School-related assignments,
- Accessing school-approved software,
- Internet research under the supervision of a staff member,
- Independent Internet research with parent/guardian permission, and/or
- Leisure activities.

Giant Steps expects all students, parents/guardians, faculty, and staff to engage in safe and acceptable use of its computers, network, and the Internet. Giant Steps will not permit any use of the computer network which:

- Disrupts the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school,
- Threatens the integrity or efficient operation of the network,
- Violates the rights of others,
- Is socially inappropriate or inappropriate for a student's age or maturity level,
- Is primarily intended as an immediate solicitation of funds,
- Is illegal or for illegal purposes of any kind, or
- Constitutes gross disobedience or misconduct.

Giant Steps may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to a student's account or profile on a social networking website. Giant Steps may, however, investigate or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking website that violates a Giant Steps disciplinary rule or policy. During the course of the investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order to make a factual determination.

## **AUTHORIZATION FOR NETWORK ACCESS**

All students, parents/guardians, faculty, staff, and home school district representatives must submit properly signed copies of the Authorization for Electronic Network Access. This document describes appropriate uses, ethics, and procedures that must be followed. Failure of any user to follow the procedures will result in the loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

# Educational Program & Services

## **INTERNET SAFETY**

Giant Steps takes multiple precautions to restrict access to controversial and inappropriate materials on the Internet. Access is limited to students and staff who have submitted a signed *Authorization for Electronic Network Access* form. Staff members monitor students while on Giant Steps technology to ensure that they are abiding by the rules. Every computer with Internet access has a filtering device that blocks content that may be harmful or inappropriate for students as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the School Leadership Team, Director of Special Education, and/or the Executive Director.

Giant Steps is not responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or become unavailable when using the Giant Steps computer network, or for any information that is retrieved or transmitted via the Internet. In addition, Giant Steps will not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the Internet. Students and staff members have no expectation of privacy in any material that is stored, transmitted, or received via Giant Steps' computer networks or technology. General rules for behavior and communications apply when using computer networks. Electronic communications and downloaded materials, including files deleted from a user's account, may be monitored or read by school officials.

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

Assessment of student learning is an integral part of each student's educational program. Giant Steps uses a variety of formal and informal assessments to determine individual student progress and achievement, evaluate curriculum and instruction effectiveness, and guide the development of each student's educational program.

## **STATE STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT**

Students are required to participate in standardized assessments to comply with local, state, and federal mandates. Standardized assessments are typically administered at Giant Steps by an ISBE licensed teacher. The following list outlines the standardized assessments that are administered:

- IAR– Illinois Assessment for Readiness – administered to students in grades 3-8 (according to actual grade level) to measure achievement in English Language Arts and Math
- ISA – Illinois Science Assessment – administered to students in grades 5, 8, and students enrolled in Biology to measure achievement in Science
- DLM-AA – Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternate Assessment – administered to students in grades 3 - 11 to measure achievement in English Language Arts, Math, and Science (grades 5 & 8); this assessment is an alternate assessment to IAR
- ACCESS - administered to students identified as English Language Learners to measure social and academic proficiency in English
- IL Fitness Assessment/Brockport – administered to students in grades 3-12 to measure physical fitness in 4 areas; endurance, muscular flexibility, muscular strength, and aerobic capacity (grades 4-12 only)
- PSAT - Taken in grades 9 & 10 this assessment sets a readiness baseline in English Language Arts & Math, allowing teachers to pinpoint areas for focused practice as students progress through high school
- SAT - Taken in grade 11 this assessment focuses on the skills and knowledge in English Language Arts and Math that current research indicates are essential for career and college success

# Educational Program & Services

## ANIMALS

Pets are not allowed in school. Animals may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes only and with the permission of the Senior Instructional Supervisor. Such animals are to be kept in the classroom for the time necessary for their study only. Animals brought into the classroom must be adequately housed and cared for while on Giant Steps' property. Only the teachers or student(s) designated by the teacher shall be permitted to handle such animals. Animals in the classroom shall be treated in a humane manner at all times. If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, arrangements shall be made for their care.

## SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals will be permitted in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. A parent/guardian who is interested in having a service animal attend school or school sponsored events with their child should contact the Director of Special Education and/or Senior Program Supervisor

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conferences are offered for all students in the fall of each school year. Conferences are held with the student's Special Education Teacher and focus on academic performance, highlighting progress and areas of needed improvement. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact teachers and therapists with any questions or concerns throughout the school year.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Giant Steps issues quarterly progress reports to inform the parent/guardian and home school districts of progress toward IEP goals. Student performance throughout the quarter is analyzed and summarized at the end of each quarter. The parent/guardian will receive a hard copy sent home in your child's backpack or via U.S. mail. Home school districts will receive a hard copy sent via U.S. Mail. Quarter End Dates for the 2019 – 2020 school year are:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter - October 22, 2018
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter - January 11, 2019
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter - March 19, 2019
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter – May 29, 2019
- 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter - July 31, 2019

## STUDENT RECORDS

Giant Steps maintains student records in accordance with the *Illinois School Student Records Act* and the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*. The records contain information that is deemed necessary to the education of the student and are of two types:

- The **Permanent Record** consists of basic identifying information concerning the student, his or her parents'/guardians' names and addresses, the student's academic transcript, unique identifier, attendance record, accident reports, health record, record of honors and awards received, information concerning participation in school sponsored activities, scores received on State assessments administered in grades 9-12, and a record of release of this information. ***The Permanent Record is maintained by the home school district.***
- The **Temporary Record** consists of all information not required to be kept in the student's permanent record. This includes a record of release of student temporary information, scores received on State assessments administered in grades K-8, a completed home language survey form, information regarding serious disciplinary infractions that resulted in expulsion, suspension, or the imposition of punishment or sanction, and information regarding any report related to the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, biometric information, health-related information, accident reports, and may also consist of family background information, intelligence test scores, aptitude test scores, reports of psychological evaluations, elementary and secondary achievement test results, participation in extracurricular activities, including any offices held in school-sponsored clubs or organizations, honors and awards received, teacher anecdotal records, other disciplinary information, special needs records, records associated with plans developed under section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and any verified reports or information from non-educational persons, agencies, or organizations of clear relevance to the education of the

# Educational Program & Services

## **STUDENT RECORDS (continued)**

student. *The Temporary Record is maintained by Giant Steps for the period of time during which the child is enrolled at Giant Steps.*

Parents, guardians, or designated parent representatives of a child under 18 years of age have the right to inspect and copy information in your child's school records. A student older than 18 years of age may inspect or copy information in his or her permanent school record. Such requests must be made according to the policies and procedures of your home school district.

Giant Steps prohibits the disclosure by any school employee of any student records except in accordance with the *Illinois School Student Records Act* and its implementing regulations.

A parent/guardian may challenge the accuracy, relevancy, or propriety of your child's school records. Individuals wishing to do so for the Temporary Record must submit written notice of the challenge to the Director of Services at Giant Steps. Individuals wishing to challenge the Permanent Record must do so according to the policies and procedures of the home school district.

The Director of Special Education is responsible for the maintenance, care, and security of a student's temporary records. All questions should be directed to the appropriate administrator.

Upon disenrollment from Giant Steps, a student's Temporary Record is returned to the home school district within 20 business days. Any request for copies or dissemination of records is not the responsibility of Giant Steps and must be made to the home school district in accordance with their policies and procedures.

## **OBSERVERS/INTERNS/STUDENT TEACHERS**

Giant Steps prides itself on providing exemplary services to individuals and families impacted by autism. As an organization, we are committed to providing opportunities for educators and practitioners to observe, participate with, and lead sessions under the close supervision and guidance of Giant Steps staff members. Throughout the year, students may have opportunities to interact with observers, interns, and student teachers as Giant Steps upholds our commitment to educating others within our community.

All outside observers, interns, and student teachers must submit required documentation and may be subject to a background check prior to their participation in our setting. If you have any questions or concerns about observers, interns, and/or student teachers, please contact the Senior Instructional Supervisor.

# Communication and Participation

## **ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Parents/guardians are a child's first and most important teachers. Giant Steps firmly believes that a collaborative partnership between home and school is critical to student success. We welcome your involvement in your child's education and view you as active partners in the educational process. We encourage you to:

1. Ask questions and remain informed about your child's progress and the happenings throughout the school.
2. Maintain ongoing communication with your child's teacher and other staff members.
3. Provide input on school-related issues.
4. Join the Giant Steps Parents Club.
5. Volunteer your time, talents, or treasures to support Giant Steps' activities.

## **METHODS OF COMMUNICATION**

Keeping parents/guardians informed is a priority for our school. Giant Steps utilizes multiple methods of communication to keep families informed:

### *Primary Contact for Day-to-Day Happenings*

Communication between home and school takes place primarily with your child's Special Education Teacher. The Teacher will be the staff member with whom you most frequently collaborate, provide information to, and share your successes and challenges. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's Teacher. You are also welcome to contact any member of the School Leadership Team with any questions or concerns.

### *School Email Lists*

Parents/guardians who provide an email address are automatically subscribed to the Day School email list. The School Leadership Team uses these email lists to send parents school news and reminders of upcoming important dates.

### *Facebook*

Check out our Facebook page to stay informed about school events, helpful resources, and important information.

### *Giant Steps Website*

Our website, [www.mygiantsteps.org](http://www.mygiantsteps.org), provides information on news and events. The site also has information about our various programs, exciting family-friendly events, fundraisers, and pertinent information such as school closings.

### *Infinite Campus*

Giant Steps uses Infinite Campus as a student information system and means of communicating with families. Infinite Campus's Parent Portal allows you to access information such as the school calendar, your child's attendance, and important messages from our staff. Infinite Campus also allows us to send phone, email, and text messages should an emergency situation arise at school or to keep you informed about school events, programs, and celebrations.

## **DAILY COMMUNICATION**

Parents/guardians will receive a daily communication note summarizing their child's activities throughout the day. Parents/guardians are encouraged to share information about their child's activities at home - before and after his/her school day. It is particularly helpful for staff members to know about changes in a student's condition related to temperament, sleep, diet, family events, new interests or dislikes, and/or physical concerns that may impact his/her school day or overall educational experience.

# Communication and Participation

## **PHONE CALLS/EMAIL**

Giant Steps staff members are not available by phone or email during hours of student attendance (8:40 am - 2:45 pm). During the school day, parents/guardians are welcome to contact the Receptionist or call the Teacher/Therapist's direct line to leave a voicemail. You can expect a response within twenty-four (24) hours to answer questions or address concerns.

## **VISITORS**

Parents/guardians are welcome to observe and participate in academic and therapeutic activities at school, provided their presence does not disrupt the educational program. To allow students and staff members to get to know each other and adjust to their daily routine, parents/guardians are not permitted to observe during the first four weeks after a student begins attending Giant Steps.

If you are interested in observing your child's class or therapy sessions, please contact your child's Facilitator to schedule a mutually agreeable time. All visitors, including parents/guardians, are required to show a state-issued identification card or driver's license in order to gain access to the building. That identification is run through the Raptor system to ensure safety and security throughout the building. Each visitor will receive a badge that must be worn for the duration of the visit.

Giant Steps will allow for visitation at any time, with or without prior notice, by personnel from the State Board of Education or the school district of residence of any enrolled student, as required by 23 Illinois Administrative Code 401.220(f).

# Communication and Participation

## **ALERT MESSAGES**

Giant Steps utilizes Infinite Campus to instantly distribute valuable information to parents/guardians and staff members within a very short period of time. The system allows Giant Steps to quickly inform parents/guardians by phone and email about any critical or emergency situations. To be sure all messages are received, please submit current contact information during the registration process and update your Infinite Campus Parent Portal as changes occur throughout the year.

## **CLOSINGS AND CANCELLATIONS**

The Executive Director and Director of Special Education make the decision to close school in the event of severe weather or other emergencies. School closure decisions will normally be made before 6:00 A.M. the day of closure. This allows weather conditions to be monitored overnight to avoid unnecessary closures. Closure decisions will only be made the night before if conditions are known with a high degree of certainty and warrant closure.

The determination is made based on a number of factors including:

- The safety and well-being of students, participants, and staff
- Severity of the weather (extreme cold, flooding, etc.)
- Timing of weather events
- The availability of buses and cars to travel safely
- The operable conditions of our buildings
- Local area school closures

Information about school closings will be announced immediately after a decision is made. The ways to learn about school closure are:

- A phone call/email will be sent from the Giant Steps automated emergency alert system
- Visit the school website at [www.mygiantsteps.org](http://www.mygiantsteps.org)
- Check the Emergency Closing Center at [www.emergencyclosings.com](http://www.emergencyclosings.com)
- Watch/listen to Chicagoland News media
- Visit Giant Steps' Facebook page

## **SEVERE TEMPERATURES**

In the event that there is a severe weather condition impacting transportation and/or safety in the community, Community Based Instruction may be cancelled at the discretion of the Executive Director and/or Director of Special Education. The determination to cancel CBI or any outdoor activities is based on a number of factors including:

- Temperature (actual, wind levels, chill factor/heat index)
- Precipitation (rain, snow, ice, etc.)
- Conditions (tornado watch, thunderstorm, etc.)

# Communication and Participation

## **GIANT STEPS PARENTS CLUB**

Giant Steps Parents Club seeks to provide a meaningful and reciprocal relationship between home and school in a way that meets parents', families', and staff members' needs. The vision of Parents Club is to *foster connections between families, staff, and students within the Giant Steps community by creating opportunities to promote school spirit, plan family-centered events, and enrich student programs.*

Parents Club Committees are an excellent way to get involved in your child's school! Any family member who is a high school graduate and is at least 18 years of age is encouraged to participate in Parents Club committees. For the upcoming school year, the following committees have already been formed:

- Welcoming
- Spirit Wear
- Staff Appreciation
- Trunk or Treat
- Fundraising

Additional committees will be formed throughout the school year to help support school efforts and events. Parents Club holds Parent Meet-up Coffees on a regular basis to provide an opportunity for parents to connect with one another, enjoy yummy treats, and share ideas, resources, and experiences. Parents Club also distributes a newsletter to help families stay connected and aware of happenings at Giant Steps. Parent volunteers are welcomed to help support the school on a regular or one-time basis.

While Parents Club does not have formal administrative authority, and cannot determine school policy, Giant Steps welcome their suggestions and assistance. A Staff Liaison serves as a collaborative resource who provides information about school programs, resources, policies, problems, concerns, and emerging issues. Interested in getting involved or have a question? Email [parentsclub@mygiantsteps.org](mailto:parentsclub@mygiantsteps.org).

## **DUAL MAILING**

Copies of reports and school correspondence will be distributed by USPS mail and/or email to the parent who does not have parenting time or has less parenting time, when requested in writing, unless a court order to the contrary is in effect. Parents with parenting time or those with more parenting time than the other parent will receive documentation via your child's backpack, email, and/or USPS.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCERNS**

Giant Steps values open and direct communication with parents/guardians. You are encouraged to address any questions or concerns to the person most directly involved in a given situation's resolution. When further conversation is deemed necessary, the customary "chain of command" should be followed. For example, if a specific concern arises within the classroom, it should first be discussed with the Special Education Teacher. If the outcome of that discussion is not satisfactory, it should be brought to the Program Facilitator. After speaking with the Teacher and Program Facilitator, if you believe that the problem has not been satisfactorily addressed, the program's administrator should be contacted. If, after speaking with all three program faculty, you believe that the problem continues to be unresolved, the Director of Special Education should be contacted. If after contacting the Director of Special Education and the problem has not been resolved, the Executive Director should be contacted.

## **INTERNET PUBLISHING GUIDELINES**

Giant Steps believes that the Internet is an important means of communicating with the public and has established the organization's website as a window into the school and ancillary programs for students, families, faculty, staff, community members, and professional colleagues. Information posted on these sites is intended to inform stakeholders about Giant Steps goals and activities, accomplishments, programs and services, as well as to serve as an educational and instructional resource.

# Communication and Participation

## **INTERNET PUBLISHING GUIDELINES (continued)**

All materials published on the Giant Steps website and social media outlets (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) must have educational value and comply with State and Federal law as well as Giant Steps policies, administrative procedures, and guidelines.

Before a student's name, photograph, grade level, or work can be published on any website or social media outlet, written authorization must be granted by the parent or guardian. These authorization forms are distributed at the time of registration each year and are kept in the student's temporary record. Parents/guardians may revoke their permission at any time by notifying the Director of Special Education in writing.

For the purposes of student safety and privacy, Giant Steps will only identify the first name of students, unless otherwise authorized.

## **PUBLICITY PERMISSION**

During the school year, students are occasionally photographed or videotaped for publicity. Photographs, videos, and other examples of a student's original work may be shared with local newspapers, used in various Giant Steps print publications, displayed in school or the community, or posted on the Giant Steps website. Videos and photographs may also be used in classrooms or at school-sponsored functions. Photographs and videos may also be used internally for programming needs (i.e., to label their items, in social stories, etc.).

At the time of registration, parents/guardians are given a *Consent for Photography/Videography/Original Work* form which gives Giant Steps permission to use your child's name, image, or original work onsite or offsite for professional development, educational programming, training purposes, and/or promotional purposes for Giant Steps, including electronic media.

If parents/guardians do not consent to the use of photography, videography, or original work to be used for publicity, personally identifiable information, photography, videography, or work will not be included in publicly available media.

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

Some personal information contained in a student's educational record is legally designated as public information and may be released at the discretion of the school unless a parent/guardian requests that information about his/her child not be released. This "Directory Information" includes:

- Student name, address, and grade level
- Student photographs
- Parent/guardian names, addresses, and contact information
- Academic awards and honors received
- Information relating to school -sponsored activities, organizations, and athletics
- Period of attendance in the school.

The above information may be released to the general public, unless a parent/guardian submits a request to the Director of Special Education that it not be released.

## **STUDENT AND FAMILY PRIVACY RIGHTS**

### *Surveys*

All surveys requesting personal information from students, as well as any other instrument used to collect personal information from students, must advance or relate to Giant Steps' educational objectives or assist students' career choices. This applies to all surveys, regardless of whether the student answering the questions can be identified and regardless of who created the survey.

# Communication and Participation

## **STUDENT AND FAMILY PRIVACY RIGHTS (continued)**

### *Surveys Created by a Third Party*

Before a school official or staff member administers or distributes a survey or evaluation created by a third party to a student, the student's parent/guardian may inspect the survey or evaluation, upon their request and within a reasonable time of their request.

This section applies to every survey: (1) that is created by a person or entity other than a Giant Steps Day School official, staff member, or student, (2) regardless of whether the student answering the questions can be identified, and (3) regardless of the subject matter of the questions.

### *Surveys Requesting Personal Information*

School officials and staff members shall not request, nor disclose, the identity of any student who completes any survey or evaluation (created by any person or entity, including Giant Steps) containing one or more of the following items:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian,
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family,
3. Behavior or attitudes about sex,
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior,
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom students have close family relationships,
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those with lawyers, physicians, and ministers,
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian,
8. Income other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

The student's parent/guardian may:

1. Inspect the survey or evaluation upon, and within a reasonable time, of their request, and/or
2. Refuse to allow their child or ward to participate in the activity described above. The school shall not penalize any student whose parent/guardian exercised this option.

### *Instructional Material*

A student's parent/guardian may inspect, upon their request, any instructional material used as part of their child's educational curriculum within a reasonable time of their request. "Instructional material" refers to instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of its format, printed or representational material, audio-visual material, and materials in electronic or digital formats (such as materials accessible through the Internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

### *Physical Exams or Screenings*

No school official or staff member shall subject a student to a non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as a condition of school attendance. The term "invasive physical examination" means any medical examination that involves the exposure of private body parts, or any act during such examination that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body, but does not include a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.

The above paragraph does not apply to any physical examination or screening that:

1. Is permitted or required by an applicable state law, including physical examinations or screenings that are permitted without parental notification,
2. Is administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC § 1400 et seq.),
3. Is otherwise authorized by school policy.

## **RESIDENCY**

In the event that a student's address or living arrangement changes while enrolled in the Day School, Giant Steps is required to notify the home school district of the change.

# Health Services

## STUDENT WELLNESS

Giant Steps is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle. Giant Steps recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn. Our school environment is aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence and promote health and wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff are encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

As part of our healthy school initiative, if you are so inclined to send something to celebrate a special occasion, we ask that you send healthy snacks or small trinkets rather than unhealthy treats. Treats sent to school for birthdays or other celebrations must be pre-packaged and will be sent home with the student at the end of the day.

## PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

As required by the Illinois Department of Public Health, **all children entering Kindergarten or First grade, Sixth grade, and Ninth grade and any student entering Giant Steps from outside of Illinois** must present proof of a current physical exam prior to admission. State law requires that these health examinations be performed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all of its branches, an advanced practice nurse who has a written collaborative agreement with a collaborating physician authorizing the advanced practice nurse to perform health examinations, or a physician assistant who has been delegated to perform health examinations by a supervising physician.

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

All students enrolled at Giant Steps must adhere to the ISBE immunization requirements in accordance with recommended schedules. Unless the student is homeless, **failure to comply with the ISBE immunization requirements by October 15 of the current school year may result in the student's exclusion from school until the required health forms are submitted to Giant Steps.** New students who are first-time registrants shall have 30 days following registration to comply with the health examination and immunization requirements. If a medical reason prevents a student from receiving a required immunization by October 15, the student must present - by October 15 - an immunization schedule and a statement of the medical reason(s) causing the delay. The schedule and statement of medical reason(s) must be signed by the licensed provider, advanced practice nurse, physician assistant, or local health department responsible for administering the immunizations.

Students eligible to remain in school beyond grade 12 must meet the immunization requirements of grade 12.

## DENTAL EXAMINATIONS

**Students entering Kindergarten, Second, and Sixth grades** are required to have a current State of Illinois Proof of School Dental Examination Form on file. Proof of such an examination must be submitted by **May 15** of each school year. A dental examination must have taken place within 18 months prior to May 15 of the school year. A waiver of this requirement is available for students who show undue burden or lack of access to a dentist. If requesting a waiver, the completed form must be submitted by May 15 of the school year.

## VISION EXAMINATIONS AND VISION SCREENINGS

An eye examination is required for **all students entering Kindergarten and for any student enrolling in school for the first time.** The examination must be completed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist and turned into Giant Steps no later than **October 15** of the current school year. The eye exam must be completed within one year prior to the first day of the school year the student enters Kindergarten or enters school for the first time in Illinois. Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision examination by an eye doctor. Students are not required to undergo a vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months. A waiver of this requirement is available for students who show undue burden or lack of access to an optometrist or physician who performs eye examinations. If requesting a

# Health Services

## VISION EXAMINATIONS AND VISION SCREENINGS (continued)

waiver, the completed form must be submitted by October 15 of the school year. Waiver forms are available by contacting the school nurse.

## EXAMINATION AND IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTION

A student may be exempted from the health, dental or eye examinations, immunizations, vision screening, and/or hearing screenings based on religious grounds. The *Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form* must be submitted by **October 15** of the current school year or the student may be excluded from school. The form must be completed by the student's parent/guardian and a licensed physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant. Parents/guardians may request a waiver of the eye exam and dental exam requirement for students who show an undue burden or lack of access to an optometrist or to a physician who performs eye examinations, or a dentist. The Illinois Department of Public Health waiver form is available at Giant Steps and must be submitted by May 15 of the current school year.

## DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

It is parents/guardians' responsibility to provide all necessary documentation regarding your child's health, immunization history, and dental records to both the home school district **and** to Giant Steps. Please note, students not fulfilling state-mandated physical examination and immunization requirements may be subject to exclusion from school starting **October 15**.

All health/medical forms can be found at [www.mygiantsteps.org/parents-corner](http://www.mygiantsteps.org/parents-corner). Please be sure to complete all documentation in its entirety.

## MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Medication during school hours should be limited to what is absolutely essential for a child to remain in school. A physician's order is required for **all** medications administered during the school day, **including** over-the-counter medications. A completed and signed *Medication Authorization Form* must be on file **for each medication** for the current school year. Any changes to a student's medication must be immediately reported to the school and the *Medication Authorization Form* must be updated and resubmitted **before** medication will be administered. All medication orders and Emergency Action Plans **must be renewed annually** at the start of the school year and **must be submitted 1 week prior to the first day of school**.

The *Medication Authorization Form* can be found on our website in the Parents' Corner: [www.mygiantsteps.org/parents-corner](http://www.mygiantsteps.org/parents-corner). A form is required **for each medication** prescribed for administration at school.

Medication will not be administered without a physician's order for the current school year and a signed *Medication Authorization Form* on file. Medication may be administered by an individual other than the nurse. Designated licensed staff members are trained by the Giant Steps Nurse on an annual basis regarding medication administration protocols, procedures, documentation, and safety. These designated, licensed staff members administer daily medication(s) to students. The Giant Steps Nurse is responsible for verifying prescriptions, counting medication(s), scheduling all medication(s) based on physician order, and providing additional education and training to employees on an individual and/or group basis.

All medication to be taken at school must be brought to the Nurse or Director of Special Education by a parent/guardian during the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:30 PM. During the week of staff orientation (one week prior to the school start date) the nurse will send out office hours for medication via email. The nurse will be available at Meet and Greet Night to drop off medications.

# Health Services

## **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION (continued)**

The initial dose of a new medication must be given at home. Medication must be sent to school in the original pharmacy bottle. The label must include the child's name, the name of the medication, dosage, administration instructions, and current date. If the dose for the medication is less than a whole pill, pills must be cut before bringing the medication to school. Over-the-counter medications must be sent in the original packaging. Expired medication will not be administered. All medications are stored in a secure, locked cabinet or refrigerator.

New orders are required immediately for any changes to dose/administration time. If your child takes more than one medication during the school day, you will need to submit a *Medication Authorization Form* **for each medication**. *Medication Authorization Forms* and *Emergency Action Plans* are available at [www.mygiantsteps.org/parents-corner](http://www.mygiantsteps.org/parents-corner) or in hard copy upon written request to the Nurse.

When a medication bottle/package is empty, the nurse will contact the parent/guardian to pick it up. All medication must be brought to and picked up from the school by a parent/guardian. Medication will remain at school for the duration of the school year, including breaks, unless the medication has been discontinued, and/or prior arrangements have been made by notifying the classroom teacher and Nurse **one week in advance**. All medication is to be picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of the Extended School Year session.

A student may self-carry and self-administer an inhaler or nebulizer prescribed for asthma. A student may also self-carry and self-administer an epinephrine auto-injector. A current *Medication Authorization Form* must be on file in order for the student to self-administer any medications.

Parents/guardians acknowledge that Giant Steps, along with its employees and agents, including the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse providing standing protocol or a prescription for school epinephrine auto-injectors incurs no liability, or professional discipline, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration or the student's self-administration of asthma medication or epinephrine auto-injector (whether or not undesignated) regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse. Parents/guardians must forever free indemnify, excuse, and hold harmless Giant Steps, along with its employees, agents, heirs, and assigns, against any claims (except a claim based upon willful and wanton conduct), including claims for professional discipline, as a result of any injury or other claim arising from the administration of asthma medication or an epinephrine auto-injector regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse. Giant Steps will provide notice to a parent/guardian (or emergency contact, if known) after the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector (whether or not undesignated). Giant Steps will provide notice to a parent/guardian (or emergency contact, if known) after the administration of undesignated albuterol inhaler.

## **SEIZURE DISORDERS**

All students diagnosed with a seizure disorder must have a current Seizure Action Plan on file. The Seizure Action Plan must be updated and submitted annually **at least one week prior to the first day of school and whenever changes are made**. If a current seizure action plan is not on file, 911 will be called at the onset of the seizure.

If student requires administration of Diastat, only the Nurse or another medical professional is qualified to administer the medication. If the Nurse is out of the building or unavailable, a 911 call will be placed in order to expedite the process of getting qualified medical professionals on site. This process will also be followed in the event that a student has a seizure while in the community. If diastat is administered the parent/guardian will be called and required to pick up their student for the remainder of the school day.

If a student has a seizure while in the water, 911 will be called. In the event that the student is not recommended to be transported to the hospital, the parent/guardian will be called and required to pick up their student for the remainder of the school day.

# Health Services

## **NON-FDA SANCTIONED MEDICATIONS**

Requests or orders for the use of non-FDA sanctioned medications, including but not limited to, herbal remedies, dietary supplements, naturopathic or holistic medicines, essential oils, and natural products are not honored at Giant Steps. The lack of safety information available for these medications limits their appropriate use at school. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) stresses that because herbal products and dietary supplements are not regulated, there are concerns about purity and potency of the products. Product quality is influenced by many factors, including which portion of the plant is used (e.g., root, stem, leaves, flowers), the time of harvest (i.e., young versus old plants), the handling of the product, and proper identification. Giant Steps does not honor requests or orders for the use of medical marijuana or CBD products. If your child has been prescribed medical marijuana please contact the nurse if you have any questions about administration during school hours.

Giant Steps does not permit the administration of non-FDA sanctioned medications or off-label products or uses, regardless of whether or not a prescription has been obtained by the parent/guardian. In the event that this situation arises, the Giant Steps Nurse will notify the parent/guardian and the health care provider that such medications/products must be administered at home. A notation will also be made in the student's health record documenting the communication.

## **HOSPITALIZATION/SIGNIFICANT INJURY**

In the event that a student is hospitalized or sustains an injury that requires medical attention, a doctor's note stating that they are cleared to return to school is required. If an injury occurs that restricts the student's mobility or requires the school to provide additional modifications and/or accommodations, the Giant Steps Nurse is to be contacted immediately along with the respective Administrator to determine if additional paperwork is needed. Once the paperwork is received, a conversation may be required to determine whether needed modifications can be accommodated at Giant Steps and/or if additional supports are required.

In the event that a student is hospitalized, please notify the Giant Steps Nurse as soon as possible. If the student receives treatment by a physician for anything other than a routine check-up (e.g., emergency room visit), please notify the student's Teacher and the Giant Steps Nurse. A physician's note may be required for prolonged absences or when a student's medical condition warrants further investigation.

## **ALLERGIES AND ANAPHYLAXIS**

Students diagnosed with a life-threatening allergy require a current *Allergy & Anaphylaxis Plan* to be on file. Allergy & Anaphylaxis plans are generated by the child's physician and are valid for the current school year, including the Extended School Year session. While it is not possible to completely eliminate risks of exposure to allergens when a student is at school, Giant Steps is an allergy aware school that educates staff members regarding best practices in order to reduce the likelihood of exposure.

For students with an Allergy & Anaphylaxis Plan, his/her classroom staff will receive training specific to his/her needs in order to ensure efficient implementation of the plan and administration of any emergency medications.

If a dose of epinephrine is administered at school, 911 will be contacted and the child must be transported to the hospital. Parents/guardians are responsible for replacing the medication and submitting any changes to the Allergy & Anaphylaxis Plan to the Giant Steps Nurse upon the student's return to school.

# Health Services

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

In the event of a medical emergency, Giant Steps will secure emergency medical services for your child. Parents/guardians are responsible for any and all charges incurred as a result of the medical emergency.

## **ILLNESSES**

Giant Steps' goal is to reduce the spread of germs and ensure the health of all staff and students. In order to promote a healthy learning environment, please consider keeping students home if they have an illness or symptoms that prevent them from participating comfortably in normal school activities (e.g., severe cough and cold symptoms). In accordance with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines, a child should be excluded from school if he/she has symptoms that:

- Prevent the child from participating comfortably in normal school activities,
- Result in a need for care that is greater than staff members can provide without compromising
- the health and safety of others, and/or
- Pose a risk of the spread of illness to others.

In the event that the nurse has been informed of a confirmed diagnosis by a physician of certain illness they will send a note home to parent/guardian(s) who's child is in the same classroom.

- Strep Throat
- Impetigo
- Confirmed influenza
- Pink Eye
- Confirmed viral gastroenteritis
- Lice
- Any other conditions identified as directed by DuPage County Department of Public Health

# Health Services

## ILLNESSES (continued)

Please use the following charts to determine if it is necessary to keep students home from school:

<b>Diarrhea</b>		
<b>Stay home if...</b>	<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
Watery stool with frequency of 2 or more above what is normal for that child, or  Chronic diarrhea is accompanied by other symptoms	Child has a documented history of chronic diarrhea  24 hours after last episode of diarrhea	24 hours after last episode

<b>Fever higher than 100</b>		
<b>Stay home if...</b>	<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
Accompanied by other signs or symptoms of an illness, such as irritability, persistent crying, excessive fatigue, lack of participation, atypical behavior(s), etc.	Not accompanied by other signs or symptoms of illness	When fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications

<b>Strep Throat</b>		
<b>Stay home if...</b>	<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
Any symptoms of strep throat are present	May not attend school until evaluated by Health Care Professional and on the appropriate medication for 24 hours	After completing 24 hours of antibiotic treatment, and  Fever has resolved

<b>Vomiting</b>		
<b>Stay home if...</b>	<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
2 or more episodes occur in 24 hours with no known cause, or  If accompanied by other symptoms (e.g., fever, sore throat, etc.)	Known cause of vomiting (e.g., ate too much, physical activity immediately prior, self-induced, response to stimuli, etc.)	Symptom free for 24 hours, and  Is eating and drinking normally

<b>Signs of Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)</b>		
<b>Stay home if...</b>	<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
Shows signs of pinkeye (e.g., red or irritated swollen eyelids, pink or red color, itchy, painful eyes, crusted shut in the morning, with green or yellow discharge, etc.)	May not attend school until evaluated by Health Care Professional and on the appropriate medication for 24 hours	When cleared by health care professional/physician

# Health Services

## ILLNESSES (continued)

Please use the following charts to determine if it is necessary to keep students home from school:

<b>Rash</b>		
<b>Stay home if...</b>	<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
An undiagnosed rash that meets any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is oozing or open</li> <li>▪ Has bruising not associated with injury</li> <li>▪ Rapidly spreading</li> <li>▪ Appears to cause discomfort, and/or</li> <li>▪ Is accompanied by fever</li> </ul>	Documented skin condition (e.g., eczema)	When cleared by health care professional/physician

<b>Impetigo</b>		
<b>Stay home if...</b>	<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
Any symptoms of impetigo are present	May not attend school until evaluated by Health Care Professional and on the appropriate medication for 24 hours	After starting appropriate treatment.  Draining lesions must be covered

<b>Lice</b>	
<b>Can go to school if...</b>	<b>May return...</b>
Children found to have evidence of lice during the school day will be notified by phone. The child must receive appropriate treatment before returning to school.	After appropriate treatment has begun.  Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice.

If a student presents other illness symptoms not mentioned above, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact a licensed Health Care Professional. Students reporting or demonstrating signs of severe or persistent pain should be evaluated by a licensed Health Care Professional.

It is important that parents/guardians adhere to these guidelines to help ensure a healthy learning environment for all of our students and staff. If you have a question about whether or not your student should attend school, please contact the administrator of your child's program.

If a student demonstrates any of the symptoms indicated for exclusion while at school, parents/guardians will be notified to pick up the student.

A student who was absent from school due to illness may not participate in any extracurricular activities, including dances and Rec Center, on that same day.

# Student Safety and Behavior

## SCHOOL SAFETY

Giant Steps believes that schools should be safe places for children whether they are learning in our classrooms, being transported, or participating in after school/extracurricular activities. Giant Steps has an Emergency Action Plan that contains specific responses to be followed in a wide variety of situations. This plan is reviewed annually with our administrative team and representatives from law enforcement, the fire department, and emergency management services. Giant Steps has a safety committee that is responsible for implementing the plan.

To protect the safety of students and staff, the following procedures are in effect at Giant Steps:

1. All exterior doors will be locked during the school day.
2. All parents/guardians, visitors, and volunteers must check in at the front desk prior to gaining access to other areas of the building.
3. All visitors are required to present a state-issued identification card or driver's license that will be scanned through our security software.
4. All visitors are required to wear identification badges while in the school. Badges will be provided by the receptionist.
5. Parents/guardians who are picking up students at times other than normal dismissal must sign the student out at the front desk before he/she will be released.
6. Any individual who is picking up a student may be requested to present a state-issued identification card or driver's license prior to a student being released.

To help implement the Emergency Action Plan successfully and to keep students as safe as possible, the cooperation of parents/guardians is of the utmost importance. In the event of a lockdown, evacuation, or other critical event, please **DO NOT COME TO THE SCHOOL**. Emergency responders and school staff are well trained to manage these situations and extra vehicular traffic and additional people can impede response time. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately about any emergency through email and/or voicemail messages sent via Giant Steps' automated messaging system. **Please make sure your contact information is current.** Updates to the status of the emergency and/or any reunification procedures will also be provided in this manner. Information will also be posted on Giant Steps' website and social media as soon as possible.

## SAFETY DRILLS

As mandated by the Illinois School Code, Giant Steps conducts a number of emergency drills to prepare for emergency situations. These include a minimum of three fire drills, one tornado or other severe weather drill, one bus evacuation drill, and one hard lockdown drill with the participation of a local law enforcement agency.

## SEVERE WEATHER AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Giant Steps will promptly implement the appropriate safety procedures for any emergency that occurs during the school day. In the event that a tornado warning occurs at dismissal time, students will be kept in the building until conditions improve or an all-clear signal is given. In the event of impending severe weather conditions, such as an approaching snowstorm, students will be dismissed at the regular time. Given the large geographic area served by Giant Steps, is unable to ensure that all transportation companies would be available to accommodate an early dismissal due to weather.

## EXPOSURE TO MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Given the nature of our student population at Giant Steps, a student may be exposed to peers who engage in maladaptive behaviors. Giant Steps staff members are trained to proactively and reactively respond to student behavior, but are not able to anticipate every situation and therefore there is a risk that a student may come into physical contact with another student during times of distress or dysregulation. Should that happen, parents/guardians will be notified and any injuries will be treated according to Giant Steps policies and procedures.

# Student Safety and Behavior

## **DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

Students are expected to dress in a manner that contributes to a positive learning environment. Articles of clothing that could be construed as promoting illegal, immoral, or obscene acts, including but not limited to, those depicting or referring to tobacco, alcohol, illegal substances, sexuality, vulgarity, indecency, gangs, or jewelry that could potentially be used as a weapon or used to inflict injury are strictly prohibited. Giant Steps reserves the right to require students to change their clothing as well as confiscate and retain these clothing items until a parent/guardian is able to pick up the items, if they are deemed offensive or could be used to endanger the student or others. The Executive Director is the final authority for judging the appropriateness of a student's dress and appearance.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

Giant Steps is not responsible for students' personal items of any kind that may become lost, missing, or broken. Please use discretion when sending items to school with your child.

## **EXTRA CLOTHING**

All students must have an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing that is clearly labeled with his/her name and seasonally appropriate. Please be sure to send socks, underwear, shirts, pants, and shoes. If your child wears pull-ups or diapers, please send an appropriate supply including wipes. The school does not supply personal hygiene products, including diapers, wipes, and/or feminine hygiene products.

## **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Giant Steps' staff are permitted to use video surveillance in the public areas of the building, grounds, and other property, including but not limited to hallways, classrooms, and other instructional areas to ensure the health and safety of all Giant Steps' students and staff. Video cameras will not be placed in restrooms, changing rooms, or any other location prohibited by law. Videos shall not include an audio component. Students may be disciplined based in whole or part on video evidence of misconduct.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

Giant Steps is committed to providing students with opportunities to learn critical problem-solving skills, especially during the most challenging moments. Behavioral interventions shall be used to promote and strengthen desirable behaviors and reduce inappropriate behaviors. The School Leadership Team in collaboration with Giant Steps' Crisis Management Board are responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring procedures on the use of behavioral interventions for students with disabilities.

Giant Steps complies with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 34 C.F.R. §§300.101, 300.530 - 300.536., Illinois State code 105 ILCS 5/10-22.6 and 5/14-8.05., and the Illinois State Board of Education's code 23 Ill.Admin.Code §226.400. when disciplining students. No student shall be expelled if his/her particular act of gross disobedience or misconduct is a manifestation of his or her disability.

## **BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS**

When behavioral interventions are used with students, they will be used in consideration of the students' physical freedom and social interaction, as well as in a manner that respects human dignity and personal privacy while ensuring the students' right to placement in the least restrictive educational environment. If Giant Steps reports to a law enforcement agency a crime committed by a student, Giant Steps will only release the student's records to law enforcement as permitted by state and federal law.

# Student Safety and Behavior

## **PHYSICAL MANAGEMENT AND ISOLATED TIME OUT**

Giant Steps bears the responsibility of protecting the safety, health, and welfare of the students, staff, and property of the organization as well as maintaining a safe learning environment. Therefore, it may be necessary at times to physically manage or remove a student into an isolated area when the student's conduct affects the well-being of the school. The criteria for use of isolated time out and/or physical management is a student/participant displaying continuous physical aggression, continuous self-injury and/or continuous high magnitude disruption. Such techniques are used to the extent that is necessary to preserve a safe learning environment and to preserve the safety of the students, staff, and/or others in the environment. Neither isolated time out nor physical management procedures shall be used as a form of punishment.

Giant Steps utilizes the Professional Crisis Management (PCM) system to proactively and reactively manage student behavior. PCM utilizes strategies based on scientifically verified principles, addresses a wide range of behaviors, and limits its application to individuals with special needs. PCM provides staff with a continuum of physical procedures and techniques that can be used to intervene in a crisis situation. All procedures have been designed to maintain human dignity and to avoid awkward positioning and physical pain. The crisis prevention component of PCM teaches a variety of nonphysical and verbal strategies for the prevention of crisis situations. Based on a teaching and learning model, it integrates smoothly and complements the intervention strategies currently utilized at Giant Steps.

If isolated time out and/or physical components of PCM are used to maintain safety, documentation is completed and the incident is kept on record. Parents/guardians are notified via email from the classroom teacher or therapist involved in the incident requiring isolated time out and/or PCM. Additional data pertaining to the incident may be kept in the classroom data binder. Patterns in behavior are examined and proactive behavior management strategies are consistently implemented throughout each classroom and therapy session. Some examples of proactive strategies commonly used at Giant Steps include programming and treatment modifications, reward systems, sensory diets, limit setting, environmental changes, etc.

Giant Steps staff are not permitted to lift students/participants from a lying or seated position on the ground into a standing position (with the only exception being in a situation of imminent danger) in order to maintain safety for staff and students, as well as to maintain the integrity of the use of physical management by using it during crisis situations only.

Parents/guardians interested in learning more about the specific PCM strategies used should contact Tara Oetting at [toetting@mygiantsteps.org](mailto:toetting@mygiantsteps.org) to attend an information session.

## **SEARCHES**

To maintain order and security in the school, Giant Steps officials have the right to conduct reasonable search of school property and equipment, as well as of students and their personal effects in accordance with school policy S.7.140. Searches can include lockers, desks, and parking lots, as well as personal effects left there by a student, without notice to or the consent of the student.

Where deemed necessary, the Director of Special Education may request the assistance of law enforcement officials to conduct inspections and searches of lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment for illegal drugs, weapons, or other illegal or dangerous substances or materials, including searches conducted through the use of specially trained dogs.

School authorities may search a student and/or the student's personal effects in the student's possession (such as purses, wallets, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc.) when there is a reasonable ground for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the school's student conduct rules. The search itself must be conducted in a manner that is reasonably related to its objectives and not excessively intrusive in light of the student's age, sex, and the nature of the incident.

# Student Safety and Behavior

## **SEARCHES (continued)**

If a search produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or Giant Steps' policies or rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities, and disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities.

School officials may not request or require a student or his or her parent/guardian to provide a password or other related account information to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. School officials may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking site that violates a school disciplinary rule or policy. In the course of an investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order to allow school officials to make a factual determination.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment of students is prohibited. Any person, a Giant Steps employee or agent, or student, engages in sexual harassment whenever he or she makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and/or engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

- Denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment, or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status, or
- Has the purpose or effect of:
  - Substantially interfering with a student's educational environment,
  - Creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment,
  - Depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment, or
  - Making submission to or rejection of such conduct the bases for academic decisions affecting a student.

The terms "intimidating," "hostile," and "offensive" include conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include crude jokes or pictures, touching, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, and spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and Giant Steps' policy. A student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate are diminished by bullying and other aggressive behaviors. Such conduct interferes with a student's educational environment, safety, and academic performance. Preventing students from engaging in these aggressive and disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are a priority at Giant Steps.

Students are expected to act respectfully toward their peers and to avoid bullying and aggressive behaviors in their interactions with other students. Giant Steps prohibits and will not tolerate aggressive student behavior, including bullying conduct of any type or on any basis, as defined below. Furthermore, Giant Steps will protect students against retaliation for reporting incidents of aggressive behavior and bullying. Disciplinary action will be taken against any student who participates in such conduct.

Bullying is prohibited on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic.

# Student Safety and Behavior

## **BULLYING (continued)**

Bullying is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity,
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, or school-sanctioned events or activities,
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment,
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of the School. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any non-school-related activity, function, or program.

For the purposes of this policy and as defined under the Illinois School Code, the terms used mean the following:

*Bullying* includes cyber-bullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Aggressive conduct toward other students that is not severe or pervasive shall not be deemed as bullying, but may constitute an offense leading to discipline under Giant Steps' Discipline Procedures of any student who engages in such behavior. Students who engage in bullying conduct also shall be disciplined under Giant Steps' Discipline Procedures.

*Cyber-bullying* means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

*Restorative measures* means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (1) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (2) contribute to maintaining school safety, (3) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (4) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (5) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (6) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

# Student Safety and Behavior

## **BULLYING (continued)**

*School personnel* means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in the school, including without limitation school administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

### **Reporting**

Students, school staff, and parents/guardians who witness bullying or who have information about actual or threatened bullying shall immediately report it to the Director Special Education or any Giant Steps' employee. A report may be made orally or in writing. Anonymous reports also are accepted. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

You are encouraged to report any incident of bullying behavior to the School Leadership Team:

Angelina Strum	630.864.3861	<a href="mailto:astrum@mygiantsteps.org">astrum@mygiantsteps.org</a>
Becky Kaufman	630/864.3822	<a href="mailto:bkaufman@mygiantsteps.org">bkaufman@mygiantsteps.org</a>
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Sherry Bochenek	630/864.3897	<a href="mailto:sbochenek@mygiantsteps.org">sbochenek@mygiantsteps.org</a>
Dr. Sylvia Smith	630/864.3808	<a href="mailto:ssmith@mygiantsteps.org">ssmith@mygiantsteps.org</a>

### **Investigating**

The School Leadership Team and/or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying. All reasonable efforts will be made to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of bullying was received.

As part of the investigation, the School Leadership Team Member or designee shall:

1. Take into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
1. Involve appropriate school support personnel and other school staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
2. Notify the Director of Special Education and Executive Director or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
3. Investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction.

### **Notification**

Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the School Leadership Team Member or designee shall promptly inform parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, other interventions, and restorative measures.

In addition, the School Leadership Team Member or designee shall, consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, provide parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the School Leadership Team Member or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

### **Interventions and/or Consequences**

When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the School Leadership Team Member or designee immediately shall impose the appropriate consequence under this policy and Giant Steps' Discipline Procedures. The School Leadership Team Member or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to school

# Student Safety and Behavior

## **BULLYING (continued)**

### ***Interventions and/or Consequences (continued)***

social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, and community-based services. Additionally, the School Leadership Team Member or designee shall provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

Any form of reprisal or retaliation directed against any person who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation about actual or threatened bullying is prohibited. Any such act by a student will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this policy and the Giant Steps' Discipline Procedure.

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information about actual or threatened bullying, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing false information will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this policy and the Giant Steps' Discipline Procedure.

### **Distribution and Review**

This policy shall be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

The School shall review and re-evaluate this policy and make necessary and appropriate revisions every two (2) years.

The Director of Special Education or designee shall assist with the evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:

1. The frequency of victimization;
2. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
3. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
4. The types of bullying utilized; and
5. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may include the use of relevant data and information that the school already collects for other purposes.

## **RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN THE SCHOOL SETTING ACT**

Giant Steps is subject to the Right to Privacy in the School Setting Act as a nonpublic school recognized by ISBE. In accordance with 105 ILCS 75/15, Giant Steps hereby provides notice that a school official may request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website if the school has reasonable cause to believe that the student's account on a social networking website contains evidence that the student violated a school disciplinary rule or policy.

## **REPORTING OF FIREARM, DRUG, AND OTHER INCIDENTS**

School staff members must immediately notify the Director of Special Education and/or Executive Director if he/she (1) observes any person in possession of a firearm on or around school grounds, unless it would endanger the students under his/her supervision, (2) observes or has reason to suspect that any person on school grounds is or was involved in a drug-related incident, or (3) observes a battery committed against any staff member. The Director of Special Education, Executive Director, or designee will then immediately notify the local law enforcement agency, State Police, and any parent/guardian of student(s) involved in the incident. "School grounds" includes modes of transportation to school activities and any public way within 1000 feet of the school, as well as the property itself.

# Student Safety and Behavior

## **REPORTING OF FIREARM, DRUG, AND OTHER INCIDENTS (continued)**

Any incident of manufacture, delivery, or possession with the intent to deliver a controlled substance or look-alike substance occurring in the school, on school property, on a public way within 1000 feet of the school, or in a vehicle used to transport students must be reported to law enforcement by the Executive Director or designee within 48 hours of its occurrence.

In accordance with Illinois State law, when a student or other person 14 years of age or older is determined to pose a clear and present danger to themselves or to others, a report will be made to the Illinois State Police. Clear and present danger is defined as communicating a serious threat of or demonstrating threatening physical or verbal behavior, such as violent, suicidal, or assaultive threats, actions, or other behaviors as determined by a school administrator or law enforcement official (PA 98-0063, 430 ILCS 65/6-103.3).

# Notifications

## **ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILD REPORTING**

Any Giant Steps employee who suspects or receives knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child, or for a student aged 18 through 21, an abused or neglected individual with a disability must immediately report such a case to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) on its Child Abuse Hotline (800.25.ABUSE or 217/524.2606). The employee must also promptly notify his/her supervisor and the Director of Special Education who will notify the Executive Director. If the case involves an employee, the School Leadership Team will collaborate with the necessary authorities in order to investigate and address the report in a timely fashion. If a DCFS report is made by a Giant Steps employee or agent, Giant Steps is not obligated to inform the family that a report was made.

## **ADVERTISING AND DISTRIBUTING MATERIALS IN SCHOOLS**

No advertising material or literature may be posted or distributed at Giant Steps that would (1) disrupt the educational process, (2) violate the rights or invade the privacy of others, (3) infringe on a trademark or copyright, or (4) be defamatory, obscene, vulgar, or indecent. Community, educational, charitable, recreational or similar groups may advertise events pertinent to students' interests or involvement with approval from Director of Special Education who will notify the Executive Director. All material and literature must have the sponsoring organization's name prominently displayed. No one may advertise or promote its interests by using the names or pictures of the school, staff members, or students unless authorized to do so. Material from candidates and political parties will not be accepted for posting or distribution except when used as part of the curriculum.

## **COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Giant Steps supports the use of school facilities by staff, nonprofit, and for-profit groups for uses consistent with the public interest when such use does not interfere with (1) any school function, (2) the safety of students and staff, or (3) affect the property or liability of the organization. Giant Steps has established use guidelines and rental fees for use of the facilities. All requests must be completed on the appropriate form and submitted to the Financial Operations Manager who will notify the Executive Director for approval. Giant Steps sponsored activities and events take precedence over all other requests for use. Persons on school premises must abide by Giant Steps' conduct rules at all times.

## **DELEGATION OF RIGHTS**

Upon a student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, his/her educational rights transfer from the student's parents/guardians to the student. The written notice of transfer of rights must be provided to the special education student and the student's parents/guardians at an IEP meeting to review the student's IEP during the year in which the student turns 17. At the meeting, the home school district must provide the student with a copy of the Delegation of Rights form. If the student and the student's parents/guardians do not attend the IEP meeting, the home school district shall make all possible attempts to inform them of this process, including but not limited to mailing the notice and a copy of the Delegation of Rights form to the student and his/her parents/guardians at their last known address.

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES**

Giant Steps is committed to effective energy use, conservation, and efficiency. The Facilities Team consistently evaluates needs, resources, consumption, and associated costs in order to best meet the needs of our school in an environmentally conscious manner.

## **FIREARMS**

In accordance with the Firearms Concealed Carry Act [430 ILCS 66/65], a licensee may not knowingly carry a concealed firearm on or into any building, property, and/or parking area under the control of a public or private elementary or secondary school.

# Notifications

## **LEGAL PROTECTIONS WHEN A PUBLIC AGENCY SEEKS TO ACCESS PUBLIC BENEFITS OR INSURANCE**

In the event that a public agency seeks to access public benefits or insurance (e.g., Medicaid) to pay for services required under IDEA, the following conditions apply:

- Personally identifiable information may be disclosed,
- The purpose of the disclosure (e.g., billing for services),
- The agency to which disclosure will be made (e.g., Medicaid),
- Parents/guardians may not be required to enroll in public benefits in order for their child to receive FAPE,
- Parents may not be required to incur out-of-pocket expenses such as a deductible or co-pay,
- A district may not use a child's benefits if that use would decrease lifetime coverage, increase premiums, result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered, or risk loss of eligibility for certain waivers.

Parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their consent at any time and the withdrawal of consent or refusal to consent does no relieve the district of its obligation to provide all required services at no cost to the parents.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Giant Steps prohibits discrimination on the basis of color, race, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, physical or mental disability, immigration status, order of protection status, status of being homeless, military status, or unfavorable discharge from military service.

If you have a complaint regarding discrimination, please share it with the Executive Director, Dr. Sylvia Smith at 630/864.3808 or [ssmith@mygiantsteps.org](mailto:ssmith@mygiantsteps.org).

## **OFFENDER NOTIFICATION**

State law prohibits a child sex offender from being present on school property or loitering within 500 feet of school property when persons under the age of 18 are present, unless the offender is:

1. A parent/guardian of a student attending the school and the parent/guardian is
  - (a) attending a conference at the school with school personnel to discuss the progress of his/her child academically or socially,
  - (b) participating in child review conferences in which evaluation and placement decisions may be made with respect to his/her child's special education services, or
  - (c) attending conferences to discuss other student issues concerning his/her child such as retention and promotion and notifies the Executive Director of his/her presence at the school; or
2. Has permission to be present from the Executive Director or Executive Director's designee.
  - (a) If permission is granted, the Executive Director or designee shall provide the details of the offender's upcoming visit to the School Leadership Team.

In all cases, the Executive Director, Director of Special Education, or designee who is a certified employee, shall supervise a child sex offender whenever the offender is in a child's vicinity. If a child sex offender violates this policy, school officials shall immediately contact law enforcement. Any questions regarding youth offenders in the community should be directed to a local law enforcement agency. Further information regarding sex offenders is available pursuant to the Illinois Sex Offender Community Notification Law.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHT-TO-KNOW**

At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Parents/guardians may request their child's achievement level and academic growth of the student, if applicable and available, on each state academic assessment. Parents/guardians must also be notified when a student has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

# Notifications

## **SCHOOL VISITATION RIGHTS**

820 ILCS 147/1 *et seq.* requires an employer to grant an employee leave of up to 8 total hours during any school year (no more than 4 hours of which may be taken on any given day) to attend school conferences or activities related to the employee's child if they cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. An employee, however, must have exhausted all accrued vacation, personal, compensatory, and any other leave granted to the employee, except sick and disability leave, before the employee is allowed such leave. Employees must make prior arrangements with their employers. Giant Steps shall provide the employee (i.e., the parent/guardian) with documentation of the school visitation to submit to his/her employer. This documentation shall include, but not be limited to, the exact time and date the visitation began and ended.

This Handbook reflects policies as of the date of printing. Updated policies may modify some of the information and such changes will be effective on the date of adoption without providing notice.