



# CREC

Excellence  
in Education

## STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

**Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center**



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## Message from the Executive Director

For over fifty years CREC has supported public education throughout the Capitol Region.

CREC is one of six Regional Education Service Centers in Connecticut. Service is part of that title, and service is at the heart of what we do as an organization. We provide an array of programs and services with a staff of passionate individuals who strive for excellence in everything we do, who understand that by working collaboratively, we are stronger and better able to meet the needs of those we serve, who are champions for equity and who act courageously in support of those in need.

As we move into a new decade, I am proud of CREC's position as a positive force in public education across the region. I look forward to continuing our equity work as courageous leaders and champions for all children and families. It is disheartening to know that the educational disparity that federal courts and laws attempted to address in the 1950s and 1960s persists today – and in many areas, is even more pervasive!

CREC will continue our social justice mission by providing:

- High-quality programs for students with disabilities,
- Magnet Schools that close the achievement and opportunity gap,
- Support services for school districts, communities, and educators across the state, and
- Leadership in educational innovation.

I acknowledge there will always be challenges, but I know the 2000+ employees of this organization are committed to CREC's continuous improvement and to our mission.

I am always pleased to share CREC's Mission, Vision, and Core Values with our stakeholders. These few words drive us and guide our very important work.

Thank you.

Dr. Greg Florio, Executive Director of CREC

### **CREC's Mission**

Equity, excellence, and success for all through high-quality educational services.

### **CREC's Vision**

To become our member districts' primary resource to facilitate collaborative efforts that create equitable and sustainable educational opportunities, assist in maximizing district and regional resources, and advance successful educational practices for all learners of all ages.

### **CREC's Core Values**

Expect Excellence, Act with Courage, Demand Equity, Embrace Collaboration

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

CREC is an intentionally diverse social justice organization whose members work to acknowledge, respect, and empathize with people of all different identifiers, such as race, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, education, age, ability, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, language, nationality, and religion. We commit to affirm and honor the lived experiences of others, willingly challenge inherited beliefs and ideologies, and consequently learn, grow, and serve.

## Message from the Director of Student Services

RESC's Student Services has a long standing history of supporting school districts in supporting students with special needs along a continuum of service delivery options. Our goal at the Division of Student Services is to provide leadership in special education and support services, research-based practice, student achievement, and value-added extensions to programs and services of local school districts. CREC works with local school districts to develop, adopt, and implement a collaborative approach to service delivery that involves effective use of student support services personnel, parental involvement, and community-based resources.

Currently the Division of Student Services has three models of service options:

Student Services Educational Sites:

- River Street Windsor
- River Street Birken
- River Street Community Based Group Homes
- John J. Allison Polaris

Regionalized Services:

- Southern Transition Real-World and Independent Vocational Education (STRIVE)
- Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center (FVDC)

Contracted Services:

- Birth to Three
- Neurobehavioral Consultation Services
- Homebound Instruction for Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities

CREC's Student Services is constantly evolving through its collaboration with local school districts and the Connecticut State Department of Education. Due to the mission of RESCs, Student Services is invested in supporting local school districts in developing their own innovations as well. We value building the local capacity of school districts in servicing their students efficiently and effectively.

Our most recent innovation is a collaboration with CREC's Resource Group (CRG) in supporting a shift of Soundbridge from a school to contracted service. Soundbridge has historically served students who are deaf/hard of hearing at an educational site. Over the years, school districts have been better positioned to support students with these needs in their local communities. As this shift has occurred over recent years, Soundbridge has closed its school and increased its contracted service delivery. This year, Soundbridge has made a final shift in this direction and has moved to CRG as a result. We have likewise made this shift with River Streets School System Therapies. This will provide a more effective response to the needs of school districts.

Sincerely,

Heather Tartaglia, Chief Program Officer

## Message from the Program Director of the Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center

Welcome to the Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center! We are thrilled to have you join our community where we work collaboratively to help students identify their strengths, establish goals and feel successful at school. I am coming to FVDC from Region 16, where I served as the Assistant Director of Special Education. Prior to Region 16, I worked as a clinician in the Therapeutic Day Program, which similarly represents an alternative educational setting for students struggling in their home schools. Over the entirety of my career, I have worn many hats – as a teacher, school psychologist, inclusion specialist, behavior analyst – but my most valued role has been as a collaborator and partner with families. I recognize that now, more than ever, we need to approach our work with **compassion, patience and positivity**.

In addition to myself, our Diagnostic Center team includes four veteran special educators, two seasoned school social workers, a doctoral level school psychologist, three general education teachers who are experts in their respective fields of Wellness, Technology and Visual Arts, and four therapeutically-minded support staff. Our team also includes Meagan Rodriguez, our program's valued Administrative Assistant, who is always prepared to graciously answer questions and take your calls. The make-up of our team accurately reflects our priorities as a Center - to address the complex social-behavioral and mental health needs of our students while reengaging them in school and long-term goals.

Our clinical team is made up of two seasoned clinicians who are both school social workers and Licensed Clinical Social Workers. Together, they bring specialties in adolescent mental health and adolescent substance use and are both trained in Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools, along with other evidence-based clinical interventions.

As you can hopefully tell, our team is prepared to support you and your student in gaining positive behavioral momentum, establishing positive and realistic long term goals and helping your student feel successful in school. At FVDC, we believe in second chances, celebrating even the smallest of successes and helping *all* students find their strengths.

This handbook has been created to provide you additional information about both CREC and FVDC - our mission, services and procedures.

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you and your students!

Sara Steinberg, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Program Director, Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center

## Table of Contents

Message from the Executive Director	1
Message from the Director of Student Services	2
Message from the Program Director of FVDC	3
Introduction to Student Handbook Policies	7
Access to CREC Policies	7
Disclaimer	7
Equal Opportunity Statement	7
Nondiscrimination in the Instructional Program – 6121P	7
General CREC Policies	8
Health and Safety	8
Health and Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Policy 3516.1	8
Student Health Services: Policy 5141	8
Health Assessments and Immunizations: Policy 5141.3	9
Administration of Medications: Policy 5141.21	9
Communicable/Infectious Diseases: Policy 5141.22	9
Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs): Policy 5141.7	10
Accommodating Students with Special Dietary Needs: Policy 5141.23	10
Psychotropic Drug Use: Policy 5141.231	10
Suicide Prevention and Intervention: Policy 5141.5	11
Alcohol, Drugs, and Mood Altering Substances: Policy 5131.6	11
Smoke-Free Environment: Policy 1331	11
Pesticide Application Policy: Policy 3524.1	11
Confidentiality and Protections of Student Data	12
Media Access to Students: Policy 1112.5	12
Surveys of Students: Policy 6162.51	13
Student Protections	14
Nondiscrimination: Policy 5162	14
Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect: Policy 5141.4	14
Student Dismissal Precautions: Policy 5142.2	15
Care and Security of School Environment	15
Dress and Grooming: Policy 5132	15
Care of Instructional Materials: Policy 6161.2	15
Video Surveillance; Policy 5131.111	15
Student Wellness	16
Student Nutrition and Physical Activity: Policy 6142.10	16
National Lunch Program	19
Food Service-Charging Meals: Policy 3542.43	19
Free and Reduced Price Meals and Afterschool Snacks: Policy 3541.31	19

Technology Use	19
Internet/Computer Networks Use: Policy 6141.321	19
Computers: Web Sites/Pages: Policy 6141.322	21
Policies and Practices Supported in Collaboration with Local School Districts	23
Student Services and Legal Protections	23
Special Education: Policy 6171	23
Physical Restraint and Seclusion: Policy 5144.11	23
Transportation	23
Confidentiality and Protections of Student Records	24
Student Records; Confidentiality: Policy 5125	24
Use and Disclosure of Medical Information (HIPAA) – 3512P	24
Assessment, Grading and Graduation Requirements	24
Grading/Assessment Systems: Policy 6146.1	24
Graduation Requirements	25
Statewide Assessments	25
Program Related Policies and Practices	26
Program Information and Admission	26
Program Information	26
Program Hours and Calendar	26
Intake Process	26
Program Contacts	26
Attendance	26
Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal: Policy 5113	26
Program’s Practices for Implementing the Attendance Policy	28
Truancy: Policy 5113.2	30
Program’s Practices for Implementing the Truancy Policy	30
Instruction and Student Activities	31
Program Curriculum and Instructional Practices	31
Homework and Home Programs: Policy 6154	31
School Sponsored Trips: Policy 6153	31
Student Expectations, Behavior Supports, and Discipline	32
Program Expectations and Behavioral Supports	32
Discipline: Policy 5144	32
Program’s Practices for Implementing the Discipline Policy	34
School Climate	34
Bullying –Safe School Climate Plan: Policy 5131.911	34
Hazing: Policy 5131.91	37
Sexual Harassment: Policy 5145.5	38

Program's Practices for Implementing the Bullying, Hazing and Harassment Policies	38
Program Security and Safety	39
Visits to the Schools: Policy 1250	39
Students Search and Seizure: Policy 5145.12	39
Program's Practices for Implementing the Search and Seizure Policy	40
Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness: Policy 6114	40
Program's Practices for School Closures and Other Emergencies Responses	40
Crisis Response: Policy 5141.6	41
Program's Practices for Implementing Crisis Response	41
Appendix	41
Health Assessment Record	41
Authorization for Medication at School	41
Program Calendar	41
Bullying, Hazing and Harassment	41

## Introduction to Student Handbook Policies

The policies in this handbook are applicable for the students who attend CREC Student Services Educational Sites. These policies and procedures guide our operations at CREC and within CREC Student Services. Employees must familiarize themselves with these guiding rules and regulations to ensure equitable treatment and practice throughout our division. Our member districts are welcome to review these policies as a reference. Families and students are asked to review these policies as means to support a successful experience within our schools and programs. CREC's policies were based on those drafted for school districts by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) and modified by the CREC Council.

The policies listed in this handbook provide the related policy number next to the title of the policy. If you have an electronic version of this handbook, hyperlinks to the full policies and their regulations are embedded within this document for your convenience. In addition, the actual text of the policy as it was written upon the time of publication of this handbook is included. All policies are subject to change. Any pertinent information needed for families and students relative to the implementation of these policies is also provided as appropriate, including critical forms.

### Access to CREC Policies

The most current and relevant CREC policies can be accessed at <https://www.crec.org/about/policies.php>. Any policies that have been updated since the publication of this handbook can be located at this website for your review.

### **Disclaimer**

In case of a conflict between a CREC policy and the provisions of this handbook, the CREC policy most recently adopted will prevail. If policy changes are enacted during the school year, the administration will communicate the changes immediately to students, staff, and parents/guardians.

### **Equal Opportunity Statement**

The Capitol Region Education Council's programs and services are offered without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex or disability.

### Nondiscrimination in the Instructional Program – 6121P

The CREC Council pledges to avoid discriminatory actions and seeks to foster good human and educational relations which will help to attain:

- Equal rights and opportunities for students and staff members in the school community.
- Equal opportunity for all students to participate in the total school program of the schools.
- Continual study and development of curricula toward improving human relations and understanding and appreciating cultural differences.
- Training opportunities for improving staff ability and responsiveness to educational and social needs.
- Opportunities in educational programs which are broadly available to all students.
- an appropriate learning environment for students which includes (1) adequate instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology, (2) equitable allocation of resources among CREC schools and (3) a safe school setting.

Each student, at the time they/they becomes eligible for participation, will be advised of their right to an equal opportunity to participate in school programs without discrimination of any kind.



## General CREC Policies

CREC has two major divisions that serve students: a magnet school system and a student services division. As a result, CREC creates policies that serve the general population of the organization. These policies apply to all students who attend CREC schools and programs. Policies cited in this handbook are applicable for all students who attend CREC schools and student services educational sites.

## Health and Safety

### Health and Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Policy 3516.1

The CREC Council ("Council") recognizes the importance of developing health and safety protocols to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the community during the COVID19 pandemic. The Council thus directs the Administration to develop health and safety protocols consistent with applicable laws, rules, regulations, requirements, and current guidance.

Compliance with such health and safety protocols shall be mandatory for all individuals while on CREC property or participating in a CREC-sponsored activity, unless a legally recognized exemption or exception applies. Failure to comply with such health and safety protocols may lead to disciplinary action for students and staff, in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and/or CREC policies.

The Administration shall provide notice of such health and safety protocols, by way of electronic mail, regular mail, website posting, student handbooks, employee handbooks, and/or any other appropriate methods.

### Student Health Services: Policy 5141

#### **School District Medical Advisor**

The CREC Council shall appoint a CREC medical advisor. The CREC medical advisor, in cooperation with the CREC Council and the board of health/health department for the school district, shall:

- Plan and administer each school's health program,
- Advise on the provision of school health services,
- Provide consultation on the school health environment, and
- Perform any other duties as agreed between the advisor and the appointing board of education.
- School health personnel shall:
  - Appraise the health status of students;
  - Counsel students, parents, and others concerning health issues;
  - Encourage resolution of health issues;
  - Help prevent and control disease;
  - Provide emergency care for student injury and sudden illness;
  - Maintain school health records.

#### **Health Records**

There shall be a health record for each student enrolled in CREC schools which will be maintained in the school nurse's room. For the purposes of confidentiality, records will be treated in the same manner as the student's cumulative academic record. (See [5125 Student Records](#)).

#### **Regular Health Assessments**

Prior to enrollment in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten and continuing thereafter as required by law, each child shall have a comprehensive health assessment by one of the following medical personnel of the parents' or guardians' choosing in accordance with the [Health Assessment Record Form](#) (HAR3) published by the Connecticut Department of Education as amended from time to time:

- A legally qualified physician;
- An advanced practice registered nurse;
- A registered nurse;

- A physician's assistant

A child will not be allowed to attend school unless health assessments are performed as required.

### **Health Assessments and Immunizations: Policy 5141.3**

(insert new policy)

### **Administration of Medications: Policy 5141.21**

Medications will be administered to students during school hours, school activities, athletic activities and extended day programs, in accordance with state laws and regulations and Department of Education Guidelines.

All medications will be administered by qualified school staff except that parents or guardians may administer medications to their own children on school grounds. In addition, in accordance with the provisions of law and the accompanying regulation, students may possess and/or self-administer medications; students with glycogen storage disease may test their own blood glucose levels; and students diagnosed with asthma or any other allergic condition may carry and use an inhaler or an EpiPen or similar device in the school.

All medications shall be handled, stored, and disposed of in accordance with the provisions of law and the administrative regulation accompanying this policy.

Documentation and record keeping shall be done in compliance with the provisions of law and the administrative regulation accompanying this policy.

### **Form for Authorization for Medication at School**

### **Communicable/Infectious Diseases: Policy 5141.22**

All children in Connecticut have a constitutional right to a free, suitable program of educational experiences.

CREC is committed to meeting the needs of students referred to its programs regardless of educational, physical and medical limitations when the programs are appropriate to meet their educational needs.

CREC recognizes its responsibility to work with member Local Education Agencies (LEAs) who need assistance in the resolution of educational problems. CREC will provide member LEAs with guidance and support in the provision of educational programming for students with Chronic Communicable Diseases.

Chronic Communicable Diseases include but are not limited to the following:

- Hepatitis A and B virus
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Herpes
- HIV

CREC also has a responsibility to provide safe learning, living and working environments for the students and employees participating in its programs. Policies and procedures for students with Chronic Communicable Diseases are developed in accordance with the responsibility.

CREC will work with member and/or sending LEAs, parents, students, staff, medical advisors and other relevant private and state agencies in the establishment of admission procedures and individualized processes to meet the needs of students with Chronic Communicable Diseases and will at the same time ensure a safe learning, living and working environment for its students and staff.

CREC will respect the right to privacy of the student with a Chronic Communicable Disease. Knowledge that a person has such a disease will be confined to those who have a direct need to know.

### **Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs): Policy 5141.7**

In order to assist individuals who may experience cardiac arrest on school property, on and after July 1, 2010, the CREC Council will maintain an automatic external defibrillator (AED) and personnel trained in

the operation of AEDs and the use of cardiopulmonary resuscitation at each school, subject to available funding. Such AEDs and personnel will be accessible during each school's normal operating hours, school-sponsored athletic practices and events on school grounds, and school sponsored events not occurring during normal school operating hours.

In addition, each school will develop an emergency action response plan addressing the appropriate use of school personnel in responding to incidents of sudden cardiac arrest or similar life-threatening emergencies on school grounds by July 1, 2010. Each school with an athletic department or organized athletic program will also develop an emergency action response plan addressing the appropriate use of school personnel in responding to such incidents during athletic events and practices on school grounds. Emergency action plans shall be approved and maintained by the Executive Director or their designee.

#### **Accommodating Students with Special Dietary Needs: Policy 5141.23**

The CREC Council believes all students, through necessary accommodations where required, shall have the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities.

In some cases, a student's disability may prevent them from eating meals prepared for the general school population.

Substitutions to the regular meal will be made for students who are unable to eat school meals because of their disabilities, when that need is certified in writing by a physician. Meal service shall be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the disabled student.

The nature of the student's disability, the reason the disability prevents the student from eating the regular school meals, including foods to be omitted from the student's diet, indication of the major life activity affected by the disability, the specific diet prescription along with the substitution(s) needed will be specifically described in a statement signed by a licensed physician. The district, in compliance with USDA Child Nutrition Division guidelines, will provide substitute meals to food-allergic students based upon the physician's signed statement.

An Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) shall be developed and implemented for students that are identified with food allergies and glycogen storage disease. The CREC Council recognizes that students with documented life-threatening food allergies are considered disabled and are covered by The Disabilities Act and Public Law 93-112 and Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A clearly-defined "504 Accommodation Plan" shall be developed and implemented for all such identified students in which necessary accommodations are made to ensure full participation of identified students in student activities. Such plan shall be signed by the appropriate staff, the parent/guardian of the student and the student's physician.

All schools are also responsible for developing and implementing guidelines for the care of students with food allergies and glycogen storage disease. Such guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, staff development, strategies for identifying students at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions, means to manage the student's allergy including avoidance measures, designation of typical symptoms and dosing instructions for medications.

CREC's plan for managing students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease shall be posted on the CREC website and/or on the website of each CREC school.

#### **Psychotropic Drug Use: Policy 5141.231**

The Capitol Region Education Council prohibits school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any child. For the purposes of this policy, the term "recommended" shall mean to directly or indirectly suggest that a child should use psychotropic drugs.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, school medical staff may recommend that a child be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit a Planning and Placement Team from discussing with parents and/or guardians of a child the appropriateness of consultation with, or evaluation by, medical

practitioners; or to prohibit school personnel from consulting with appropriate medical practitioners with the consent of the parents and/or guardians of a child.

#### **Suicide Prevention and Intervention: Policy 5141.5**

The CREC Council recognizes that suicide is one of the three leading causes of death among young people and is a concern to this school system and the community it serves. It is the policy of the Council to respond actively to any situation where a student verbally or behaviorally indicates intent to attempt suicide or to inflict self-injury or harm.

The CREC Council recognizes the need for youth suicide prevention procedures and will establish program(s) to identify risk factors for youth suicide, procedures for intervention, training for teachers, school personnel and students, and identify appropriate referral services.

The CREC Council recognizes that suicide is a complex issue and that, while school staff members may recognize a potentially suicidal youth, they cannot make clinical assessments of risk or provide in-depth counseling.

Any school employee who has knowledge of a suicide threat or intent must report this information immediately to the building principal or their designee, who will, in turn, mobilize the school crisis intervention team. The student's parent/guardian will be notified and an appropriate referral made.

#### **Alcohol, Drugs, and Mood Altering Substances: Policy 5131.6**

All CREC Schools and Programs will educate, prevent and intervene in the use and abuse of all drugs, alcohol and mood altering substances.

#### **Smoke-Free Environment: Policy 1331**

##### **Students/Employees/Public**

In accordance with law and to promote the health and safety of all students and staff, CREC prohibits all employees, students, and members of the public from smoking or using tobacco or tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems or vapor products, in all school facilities, buildings, and buses or other CREC transportation vehicles at all times, including at athletic events, field trips and meetings. This prohibition extends to all facilities and grounds that CREC owns/operates, contracts for, or leases in order to provide educational services, routine health care, daycare, or early childhood development services.

##### **Staff and Public**

An ongoing program of staff support and counseling will be offered to staff who wish to break the smoking habit.

#### **Pesticide Application Policy: Policy 3524.1**

The Capitol Region Education Council has adopted an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy for pest control within our buildings and grounds. IPM utilizes all available pest control methods such as sanitation, structural maintenance and exclusion, maintaining proper soil PH, fertility and moisture, trapping and/or biological controls along with the judicious use of pesticides to maintain pest populations at or below an acceptable level. Pesticides may be applied if a pest population has been identified through periodic monitoring, and alternative methods of control have not been effective. The least toxic pesticide would be used first.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that students, employees and parents/guardians receive adequate notice, in conformity with applicable statutes, prior to pesticide application in school buildings and on school grounds. Further, effective July 1, 2000, CREC will only employ certified pesticide applicators for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds.

CREC shall:

- Provide notice of planned pesticide application to students, parents/guardians and employees in the manner required by law.
- Post the areas scheduled to receive pesticide application(s).
- Maintain written records for five years of all pesticide applications.
- Provide continuing instruction to those students who, based upon written medical request, find it necessary to absent themselves during the period of application.
- Inform annually parents/guardians and staff of CREC'S pest application/management policy.
- Establish a registry of parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use and provide such notice as required by law.
- Provide the name of the school administrator or designee that can be contacted for further information.

Pest control applicators employed by CREC shall provide the school contact person (Supervisor of Maintenance, Head Custodian) with notice at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the date and time the pesticide application is to occur, including in such notice the brand name, concentration, rate of application, pesticide label, material safety data sheet, list of the area or areas where the pesticide is to be applied and any use restrictions required by the pesticide label. Prior to the application, the applicator shall provide the school contact person with a written pre-application notification containing the following information:

- The brand name, rate of application and any use restrictions required by the label of the herbicide or specific pesticide.
- The area or areas where the pesticide is to be applied.
- The date and time the application is to occur.
- The pesticide label and the material safety data sheet.
- Pesticide applications will not be performed within any building or on the grounds of the school during regular hours or during planned activities unless an emergency application is necessary to eliminate an immediate threat to human health. When this occurs, all children and staff will be removed from the area and not allowed to return until it is safe to do so according to the pesticide label.

A determination of an immediate health threat may be made by the Executive Director or designee whereas the licensed applicator can make an emergency lawn care pesticide application for human health protection. In such case CREC shall notify students, parents and guardians of the area to be treated through our emergency notification system, School Messenger.

The Executive Director or designee may require the pest control applicator to make the required postings in accordance with all applicable statutes and with District policy and regulations. The name and address of the applicator shall be a part of any posting. Pesticide purchases shall be limited to amounts authorized by the Executive Director or designee for use during the year. Pesticides shall be stored in a secure site not accessible to students or unauthorized staff. They shall be stored and disposed of in accordance with EPA registered label directions and applicable state statutes. The Executive Director shall prepare and disseminate regulations for the implementation of this policy.

## Confidentiality and Protections of Student Data

### [Media Access to Students: Policy 1112.5](#)

The Council recognizes the important role the media serves in reporting information about CREC's programs, services and activities. Therefore, the Council will make every reasonable effort to provide media access to students.

School administrators shall be authorized to grant permission and set parameters for media access to students in their respective schools. The media may interview and photograph students involved in instructional programs and school activities including athletic events, provided their presence will not be unduly disruptive and shall comply with Council policies and district goals.

Media representatives shall be required to report to the administration for prior approval before accessing students involved in instructional programs and activities not attended by the general public. Media representatives wishing to photograph or identify particular students must obtain parental or guardian approval as well. Such permission shall not be required before photographs, videotapes, and/or articles referring to students involved in athletic events may be published.

Parents/guardians who do not want their student interviewed, photographed or videotaped by the media shall inform the school principal accordingly.

Information obtained by media representatives directly from students does not require parent/guardian approval prior to publication by the media.

Parents/guardians who do not want their student interviewed or photographed by the media may direct their student accordingly.

Council employees may release student information to the media only in accordance with applicable provisions of the education records law and Council policies governing directory information and personally identifiable information.

Parents/guardians will be advised of the Council's media access to student policy at the time of the student's registration and each fall in the student/parent handbook

#### **Surveys of Students: Policy 6162.51**

Surveys can be a valuable resource for schools and communities in determining student needs for educational services. When a survey is used, every effort should be made to ask questions in a neutral manner to ensure the accuracy of the survey.

Administrators, teachers, other staff members and the CREC Council may use surveys for many purposes. Such purposes may include, but are not limited to, the need for student services, the determination of prevailing views pertaining to proposed policies and/or practices, or the determination of student knowledge and/or attitudes related to a specific subject or units. These are examples of surveys and not intended to be an all-inclusive listing. Administrative approval is required for surveys. Responses will not be used in any identifying manner.

Parents shall have the right to inspect all material that will be used for a survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of a federal program.

No student may, without parental consent, take part in a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information covering:

- Political affiliations
- Potentially embarrassing psychological problems
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Anti-social and demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of family members
- Legally privileged relationships
- Income

Surveys conducted for other agencies, organizations or individuals must have the recommendation of the Executive Director and the approval of the CREC Council as to content and purpose. The results of such approved surveys must be shared with the CREC Council.

## Student Protections

### Nondiscrimination: Policy 5162

The CREC Council complies with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities because of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, pregnancy, disability, or on any other basis prohibited by federal or state law. The prohibition of discrimination in educational programs or activities extends to academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, including athletics.

### Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect: Policy 5141.4

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) recognizes that it is the responsibility of employees designated by law to report suspected cases of child abuse/neglect or at-risk children in order to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect.

Mandated reporters include all school employees, specifically the Superintendent, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, school counselors, school paraprofessionals, coaches of intramural and interscholastic athletics, as well as licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists, social workers, and licensed behavior analysts, either employed by CREC or working in one of the CREC schools, or any other persons who, in the performance of their duties, have regular contact with students and who provide services to or on behalf of students enrolled in CREC schools. These individuals, when they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of eighteen has been abused; is in danger of being abused; has been neglected; has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm; has had a non-accidental physical injury or an injury which is at variance with the history of such injury, or an injury which was inflicted by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to such child by a responsible person; or is a victim of sexual assault and the perpetrator is a school employee, and the child is not enrolled in adult education are required to make a report.

Recognizing its responsibilities to protect children and in compliance with its statutory obligations, CREC shall provide in-service training, and all CREC employees shall complete all mandated training and refreshers regarding the requirements and obligations of mandated reporters.

State law prohibits retaliation against a mandated reporter for fulfilling their obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect. CREC shall not retaliate against any mandated reporter for their compliance with the law and CREC policy pertaining to the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Any person applying for employment with CREC shall submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Registry before the person may be hired. CREC shall not employ any person whose employment contract was terminated or who resigned from employment following a suspension after the Commissioner of Children and Families found reasonable cause to believe that a child was abused or neglected and recommended that such person be placed on the Child Abuse and Neglect Registry, if such person is convicted of a crime involving an act of child abuse or neglect or sexual assault of a child. CREC shall not employ any person whose employment contract was terminated or who resigned from employment if such person was convicted of failure to make a mandated report, regardless of whether an allegation of abuse or neglect or sexual assault was substantiated.

No later than January 1, 2016 a confidential response team shall be established to coordinate with the Department of Children and Families to ensure prompt reporting of suspected abuse or neglect, or sexual assault; and to provide immediate access to information and individuals relevant to the Department's investigation. The confidential rapid response team shall consist of the Superintendent, a teacher, a local police officer and any other person appropriate to the team's mission.

The Executive Director is authorized to establish regulations to ensure the reporting by personnel of suspected child abuse/neglect or children who are at-risk as specified in the Connecticut General Statutes.

### **Student Dismissal Precautions: Policy 5142.2**

No student may be released from school to anyone other than the parent, guardian or child protective services personnel and law enforcement officers pursuant to law, unless the name of the individual seeking release of the student appears on a list provided by the parent or guardian.

A student may be released to either parent unless a custodial parent supplies the building principal with a certified copy of a court order or divorce decree to the contrary.

The Executive Director shall develop procedures to enable parents and guardians to amend the list of persons authorized to obtain the release of their children.

## **Care and Security of School Environment**

### **Dress and Grooming: Policy 5132**

The administration is encouraged to establish any needed regulations consistent with this policy with input from staff, students and parents. Schools may implement school uniforms with the express approval of the Executive Director or their designee. The CREC Council encourages students to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of student dress may be applied whenever the mode of dress in question:

- Is unsafe either for the student or those around the student.
- Is disruptive to school operations and the education process in general.
- Is contrary to law.

No restrictions on freedom of dress and adornment will be imposed which

- Reflect discrimination as to civil rights.
- Enforce particular codes of morality or religious tenets.
- Attempt to dictate or adjudicate style or taste.
- Do not fall within the direct or implied powers of the CREC Council.

### **Care of Instructional Materials: Policy 6161.2**

The CREC Council may impose sanctions against students who lose or damage textbooks and other educational materials. The Executive Director is authorized by the Council to set regulations and adopt any guidelines necessary to carry out the wishes of the Council.

### **Video Surveillance; Policy 5131.111**

The CREC Council recognizes CREC's responsibility to maintain order and discipline on school property and in school vehicles. The CREC Council also desires to afford students and staff privacy in respect to the records maintained by CREC. The CREC Council recognizes the value of electronic surveillance systems in monitoring activity on school property and in school vehicles in furtherance of protecting the health, welfare and safety of its students and staff. The students and staff of the district recognize that their security and safety depends upon the capacity of the district to maintain discipline and that a certain amount of restraint upon the activities of students is assumed and expected.

The CREC Council having carefully weighed and balanced the rights of privacy of students and staff against the district's duty to maintain order and discipline, finds that it is appropriate to provide for the use of video camera surveillance in its transportation vehicles and on school grounds as follows:

- The district shall notify its students and staff that video surveillance may occur on any school property or on any transportation vehicle. The district shall incorporate said notice in the student handbook;
- The use of video surveillance equipment on transportation vehicles shall be supervised by the district transportation supervisor. The use of video surveillance equipment on school grounds and on other district property shall be supervised and controlled by the building administrator or other responsible administrator;
- The use of video recordings from surveillance equipment shall be subject to the other policies of the district including policies concerning the confidentiality of student and personnel records; 4.



Video surveillance shall only be used to promote the order, safety and security of students, staff and property.

## Student Wellness

### **Student Nutrition and Physical Activity: Policy 6142.10**

Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy) The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. CREC is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total educational experience. In a healthy school environment, students will be exposed to, and participate in, positive nutritional and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement. In accordance with federal and state law, it is CREC's policy to provide students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require all meals served to meet or exceed the stricter of either the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the "Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools".

In developing goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school based activities that promote student wellness, CREC will, as required, review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques.

### **Goals for Nutrition Promotion and Education**

The goals for addressing nutrition education include the following:

- Schools will support and promote good nutrition for students consistent with applicable federal and state requirements and guidelines.
- Schools will foster the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn.
- Nutrition education will be part of CREC's comprehensive standards-based school health education program and curriculum and will be integrated into other classroom content areas, as appropriate.
- Schools will link nutrition education activities with existing coordinated health programs or other comparable comprehensive school health promotion frameworks.
- Healthy snacks for the classroom, healthy packed lunches, and non-food alternatives for classroom celebrations will be strongly encouraged.
- Staff will be strongly encouraged to model healthful eating habits.

### **Goals for Physical Education and Activity**

- The goals for addressing physical education and activity include the following:
  - Schools will support and promote an active lifestyle for students.
  - Physical education will be taught in all grades and shall include a standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that fosters the development of movement skills, enhances health-related fitness, increases students' knowledge, offers direct opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively in a group setting, and encourages healthy habits and attitudes for a healthy lifestyle
  - Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in CREC's physical education program.
  - Recess and other physical activity breaks, before and after school activities, and walking and bicycling to schools, where safe to do so, are supported by CREC.
  - Schools will work toward providing sixty minutes of physical activity daily for students (as a best practice).
  - All elementary school students shall have at least twenty minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide space, equipment and an environment that is conducive to safe and enjoyable

- activity. A planning and placement team may develop a different schedule for a child requiring special education and related services.
- School employees shall not deny a student's participation in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline or punishment, nor should they cancel it for instructional makeup time. Further, any student in kindergarten through grade twelve shall not be required to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline.
  - Physical activities will be integrated across the curricula when possible.

### **Other School Based Activities to Promote School Wellness**

CREC will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. CREC will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

CREC schools will coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or CREC's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and be complementary with the wellness policy.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate. School-based activities focused on promoting healthy lifestyles will be incorporated into the daily efforts of the school community.

### **Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools**

Students will be offered and schools will promote nutritious food choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and My Plate, published jointly by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, and guidelines promulgated by the Connecticut Department of Education in addition to federal and state statutes and national health organizations.

In addition, in order to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity, the Executive Director or designee shall establish such administrative procedures to control food and beverage sales that compete with CREC's nonprofit food service in compliance with the Child Nutrition Act. CREC shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and will ensure that all foods sold, served, or made available to students separately from school meals meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. All beverages sold, served, or made available to students on school premises will be healthy choices that meet the stricter of either state statute or USDA beverage requirements.

### **Reimbursable School Meals**

Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.

### **Marketing**

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA "Smart Snacks in School" nutrition standards. Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. As the District/School Nutrition Services/Athletic Department/PTA/PTO reviews

existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the CREC wellness policy.

### **Food Exemptions**

CREC will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

### **Community Input**

CREC will develop and implement methods of communicating with, and educating, parents and staff regarding this policy. The Executive Director or designee will provide opportunities, suggestions and comments concerning the development, implementation, periodic review and improvement of the student wellness policy from community members, including parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, teachers of health and/or physical education, school health professionals, members of the CREC Council, school administrators, and the public. A Wellness Committee composed of a variety of members (following state mandates) will be established to develop, and guide the implementation of, procedures consistent with established policy.

### **Monitoring**

CREC designates the Executive Director or their designee to ensure compliance with this policy and any administrative regulations. The Executive Director or designee is responsible for retaining all documentation of compliance with this policy and any regulations, including, but not limited to, each school's three-year assessment and evaluation report and this wellness policy and plan. The Executive Director or designee will also be responsible for public notification of the three-year assessment and evaluation report, including any updates to this policy made as a result of CREC's three-year assessment and evaluation.

CREC shall develop a plan designed to achieve the involvement requirements in the development, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of this policy.

The Executive Director or designee shall provide periodic implementation data and/or reports to the CREC Council concerning this policy's implementation sufficient to allow the Council to monitor and adjust the policy. CREC, as required, will retain records and documents pertaining to the wellness policy which shall include the written school wellness policy, documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, documentation of the triennial assessment of the wellness policy and documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirement.

### **Evaluation of Wellness Policy**

In an effort to measure the implementation of this policy, the Executive Director or designee will be responsible for ensuring that each school meets the goals outlined in this policy. To ensure continuing progress, CREC will evaluate implementation efforts and their impact on students and staff at least every three years.

CREC will make available to the public an assessment of the implementation; the results of the three-year assessment and evaluation, including the extent to which the schools are in compliance with policy; and a description of the progress being made in attaining the goals of this policy.

The Student Wellness Policy shall be made available annually, at a minimum, to students and families by means of school registration, student handbooks and CREC's website. Availability shall include the policy, including any updates to and about the wellness policy and the Triennial Assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals of this policy. In addition, the annual notification shall include a

description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals; summary of each school's wellness events or activities; contact information for the leader(s) of the wellness policy team; and information on how individuals and the public can get involved.

## National Lunch Program

### Food Service-Charging Meals: Policy 3542.43

The goal of the food service program is to provide students with nutritious foods that will enhance learning. The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious meals in pleasant surroundings we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition. Although not required by law, because of CREC's participation in the Child Nutrition Programs, the CREC Council authorizes administration to establish a system to allow a student to charge a meal to their automated prepayment account.

### Free and Reduced Price Meals and Afterschool Snacks: Policy 3541.31

CREC will participate in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast and Afterschool Snack Programs. Authorization is granted to the Executive Director or their designee to act on behalf of CREC Council for the purposes of participating in these programs. All applicable State and Federal guidelines will be followed.

## Technology Use

### Internet/Computer Networks Use: Policy 6141.321

The Internet and electronic communications (e-mail, chat rooms and other forms of electronic communication) have vast potential to support curriculum and student learning. The Council believes they should be used in schools as a learning resource.

Use of the Internet and electronic communications requires students to think critically, analyze information, write, clearly use problem-solving skills, and hone computer and research skills that employers demand. Use of these tools also encourages an attitude of lifelong learning and offers an opportunity for students to participate in distance learning activities, ask questions of and consult with experts, communicate with other students and individuals, and locate material to meet educational and personal information needs.

The Council believes the educational opportunities inherent in these tools far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material not consistent with the education goals of CREC. However, the Internet and electronic communications are fluid environments in which students may access materials and information from many sources, including some that may be harmful to students. CREC acknowledges that while it is impossible to predict with certainty what information students might locate or come into contact with, it shall take all reasonable steps to protect students from accessing material and information that is obscene, pornographic or otherwise harmful to minors, as defined by CREC. Students shall take responsibility for their own use of CREC's computers and computer systems to avoid contact with material or information that may be harmful to minors.

### **Blocking or Filtering Obscene, Pornographic and Harmful Information**

Software blocks or filters material and information that is obscene, pornographic or otherwise harmful to minors, as defined by the Council, from reaching all CREC computers having Internet or electronic communications access. Students shall report access to material and information that is obscene, pornographic, harmful to minors or otherwise in violation of this policy to the supervising staff member. If a student becomes aware of other students accessing such material or information, they shall report it to the supervising staff member.

### **No Expectation of Privacy**

CREC computers and computer systems are owned by CREC and are intended for educational purposes at all times. Students shall have no expectation of privacy when using the Internet or electronic communications. CREC reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store (at any time and without prior notice) all usage or endue of usage of CREC computers and computer systems, including all

Internet and electronic communications access and transmission/receipt of materials and information. All material and information accessed/received through CREC computers and computer systems shall remain the property of CREC.

### **Unauthorized and Unacceptable Users**

Students shall use CREC computers and computer systems in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner.

Because technology and ways of using technology are constantly evolving, every unacceptable use of CREC computers and computer systems cannot be specifically described in policy. Therefore, examples of unacceptable uses include but are not limited to, the following:

No student shall intentionally access, create, transmit, retransmit or forward material or information that:

- Promotes violence or advocates destruction of property including, but not limited to, access to information concerning the manufacturing or purchasing of destructive devices or weapons;
- Is not related to CREC education objectives;
- Contains pornographic, obscene or other sexually oriented materials, either as pictures or writings that are intended to stimulate erotic feelings or appeal to prurient interests;
- Harasses, threatens, demeans, or promotes violence or hatred against another person or group of persons with regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, disability or handicap;
- Is for personal profit, financial gain, advertising, commercial transaction or political purposes;
- Plagiarizes the work of another;
- Uses inappropriate or profane language offensive in the school community;
- Is knowingly false or could be construed as intending to purposely damage another person's reputation;
- Is in violation of any federal or state law, including but not limited to copyrighted material and material protected by trade secret;
- Contains personal information about themselves or others, including information protected by confidentiality laws;
- Uses another individual's Internet or electronic communications account without permission from that individual;
- Impersonates another or transmits through an anonymous remailer; and
- Accesses fee services without specific permission from the system administrator.

### **Security**

Security on CREC computer systems is a high priority. Students who identify a security problem while using the Internet or electronic communications must immediately notify a system administrator. Students shall not demonstrate the problem to other users. Logging on to the Internet or electronic communications as a system administrator is prohibited.

Students shall not:

- Use another person's password or any other identifier;
- Gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to CREC computers or computer systems; and
- Read, alter, delete or copy, or attempt to do so, electronic communications of other system users.

Any user identified as a security risk, or as having a history of problems with other computer systems, may be denied access to the Internet and electronic communications.

### **Safety**

Students shall not reveal personal information, such as home address or phone number, while using the Internet or electronic communications. Without first obtaining permission of the supervising staff member,

students shall not use their last name or any other information that might allow another person to locate their. Students shall not arrange face-to-face meetings with persons met on the Internet or through electronic communication.

### **Vandalism**

Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges and may result in school disciplinary action and/or legal action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious or intentional attempt to harm, destroy, modify, abuse or disrupt operation of any network within CREC or any network connected to the Internet, operation of any form of electronic communications, the data contained on any network or electronic communications, the data of another user, usage by another user, or CREC-owned software or hardware. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses and the use of encryption software.

### **Unauthorized Software**

Students are prohibited from using or possessing any software that has been downloaded or is otherwise in the user's possession without appropriate registration and payment of any fees owed to the software owner.

### **Assigning Student Projects and Monitoring Student Use**

CREC will make every effort to see that the Internet and electronic communications are used responsibly by students. Administrators, teachers, and staff have a professional responsibility to work together to monitor students' use of the Internet and electronic communications, help students develop the intellectual skills needed to discriminate among information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels, and evaluate and use information to meet their educational goals. Students shall have specifically defined objectives and search strategies prior to accessing material and information on the Internet and through electronic communications.

All students shall be supervised by staff while using the Internet or electronic communications.

### **Student Use is a Privilege**

Use of the Internet and electronic communications demands personal responsibility and an understanding of the acceptable and unacceptable uses of such tools. Student use of the Internet and electronic communications is a privilege, not a right. Failure to follow the use procedures contained in this policy will result in the loss of the privilege to use these tools and may result in school disciplinary action and/or legal action. CREC may deny, revoke or suspend access to CREC technology or close accounts at any time.

Students and parents/guardians shall be required to sign the CREC Acceptable Use Agreement annually before Internet or electronic communication accounts shall be issued or access shall be allowed.

### **CREC Makes No Warranties**

CREC makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, related to the use of CREC computers and computer systems, including access to the Internet and electronic communications services. Providing access to these services does not imply endorsement by CREC of the content, nor does CREC make any guarantee as to the accuracy or quality of information received. CREC shall not be responsible for any damages, losses or costs a student suffers in using the Internet and electronic communications. This includes loss of data and service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet and electronic communications is at the students' own risk.

### **[Computers: Web Sites/Pages: Policy 6141.322](#)**

The CREC Council allows schools/programs to create and maintain world wide web sites for educational purposes. Web sites are avenues for educating, providing information, communicating and expressing creativity. Web sites shall be used to share information about school curriculum and instruction, school-authorized activities, and other information relating to our schools and our mission. Web sites shall also provide instructional resources for staff and students.

Materials displayed on web sites are published on the Internet. Therefore, the content should be of professional quality and consistent with the education mission of the school system. Web sites shall follow standards for ethical behavior with regard to information and technology by showing respect for the principles of intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights and the responsible use of information and technology. Pages shall reflect an understanding that both internal and external audiences will be viewing the information.

Any pages or links representing CREC schools/programs shall follow guidelines and responsibilities pertaining to content standards, student records, copyright, and technical standards.

### **Website Accessibility**

CREC is committed to ensuring accessibility of its website(s) for students, parents/guardians, staff, and members of the community with disabilities. CREC will provide equal and integrated access in compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations, so that students, parents/guardians, staff, and members of the public with disabilities are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same benefits within the same timeframe as those without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use; and so that they are not excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any district programs, services and activities delivered online.

All existing, new, and updated web content produced by CREC and/or provided by third-party developers will conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA and the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Application Suite (WAI-ARIA), developed by the Web Accessible Initiative, or any updated equivalents.

Inquiries and/or complaints regarding inaccessible content may be addressed to the CREC webmaster, at [webmaster@crec.org](mailto:webmaster@crec.org). Upon notification of inaccessible content, CREC shall communicate with the reporting party as soon as possible in order to provide access to the information. Written complaints regarding inaccessible content will be investigated promptly.

## Policies and Practices Supported in Collaboration with Local School Districts

As with any school district there are specific implementation implications for policies at each program. The same is true for CREC Student Services. The students that are served in these programs also have protections and supports that apply to them by their local school districts. CREC works in collaboration with each local school district to provide these protections, supports, and services in accordance with federal and state laws. This includes protections provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 under the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. CREC policies are applied within the scope of this collaboration.

### Student Services and Legal Protections

#### Special Education: Policy 6171

The CREC Council accepts its legal duties and responsibilities for providing special education programs for the students of the school district.

The Executive Director is directed to develop a comprehensive plan for compliance with all of the requirements of federal and state law for the education of all individuals with exceptional needs residing in or attending school in the school district.

The CREC Council requests that the plan be in harmony with the school district's financial abilities, with the availability of special facilities needed and the availability of trained and certified personnel.

#### Physical Restraint and Seclusion: Policy 5144.11

No student will be physically restrained except as an emergency intervention to prevent immediate or imminent injury to the student or to others, provided that restraint is not used for discipline or convenience and is not used as a substitute for a less restrictive alternative.

No student will be placed in seclusion except as an emergency intervention to prevent immediate or imminent injury to the student or to others, provided the seclusion is not used for discipline or convenience and is not used as a substitute for a less restrictive alternative.

In the event of such restraint or seclusion, the student's parent or guardian will be notified of each incident by telephone, email or otherwise no later than 24 hours of the incident. Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide such notification immediately after such physical restraint or seclusion is initiated. Parents, guardians and LEAs will also be provided a copy of the written incident report for each incident of restraint or seclusion within two business days of the incident.

Injuries caused by the use of restraint and/or seclusion shall be reported to the State Board of Education. Such a report shall specify whether the use of such seclusion was in accordance with an individualized education program or whether the use of such physical restraint or seclusion was an emergency.

A record shall be kept of each instance of the use of physical restraint or seclusion on a student and shall specify whether the use of seclusion was in accordance with an individualized education program or whether the use of physical restraint or seclusion was an emergency, including the nature of the emergency necessitating such use. Such information shall be included in an annual compilation of the district's use of restraint and seclusion on students. Such annual compilation shall be provided to the State Department of Education and to the State Board of Education.

#### **Transportation**

CREC's Student Services Programs rely on the local school districts to provide transportation to and from the program. Any transportation that may be required upon arrival to a program, such as to a job site or on a field trip, will be managed by the CREC Student Services Program.



## Confidentiality and Protections of Student Records

### Student Records; Confidentiality: Policy 5125

Educational records will be kept for each student and will reflect the physical, emotional, social and academic aspects of a student's development in the educational process.

It is the policy of the CREC Council that staff will comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding confidentiality and access to all students' records. Procedures shall be implemented to ensure strict confidentiality of student records while providing proper parental and/or student access to records. Availability of these policies and procedures shall be made known annually to all parents/guardians of children within the district.

### Use and Disclosure of Medical Information (HIPAA) – 3512P

CREC complies with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, as amended ("HIPAA"), and implementing regulations.

The CREC Council has set aside and designated as "the CREC Health Care component" CREC programs that either participate in health insurance billing or are funded by grants which require HIPAA compliance.

All CREC programs identified under the Health Care Component shall comply with the security and privacy provisions of HIPAA.

The CREC Council directs the Executive Director or designee to take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with HIPAA. Compliance activities shall include appointing Privacy and Security Officers, conducting an audit to determine applicability of HIPAA to CREC operations, recommending policies to the Council, implementing administrative regulations, including record keeping procedures, maintaining Business Associate Agreements with identified parties, preparing necessary documents, conducting employee training and all other activities necessary to ensure compliance.

### **Retention of Records**

Students that attend CREC's Student Services Programs are under the responsibility of local school districts; therefore each local school district maintains the student's educational records. Any educational records or student data that CREC Student Services Programs has or maintains is either a copy of the student's record obtained from the local school district or is an original creation of a CREC staff member that is shared with the local school district to be housed in the student's educational record. All copies of the student's record that are used by CREC will be maintained for up to one year subsequent to the student's exit from the CREC's Student Services Program. Upon the one year anniversary of the exit date, all copies of such records will be returned to the district or destroyed.

## Assessment, Grading and Graduation Requirements

### Grading/Assessment Systems: Policy 6146.1

The CREC Council seeks, through performance objectives in its instructional program, to make achievement both recognizable and possible for students.

The issuance of grades on a regular basis serves to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance, to inform the student, the student's parents/guardians and counselor of their progress, and to provide a basis for bringing about change in student performance, if such change seems necessary.

The CREC Council requires the administration to develop, implement, and enforce a uniform grading and reporting system that accurately and meaningfully assesses the academic performance of each student. The grading system shall recognize and support teachers as the ones having the primary responsibility for the assignment of grades, based upon the teachers' consistent and objective evaluation of each student's mastery of the subject area.

The CREC Council shall approve the grading and reporting system upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools.

### **Grade Adjustment**

The grade given to each student shall be the grade determined by the teacher of the course, and the determination of the student's grade by the teacher, in the absence of clerical or mechanical mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency, shall be final.

Any and all changes to a student's assigned grade, whether rendered by a teacher or an administrator, shall be documented in writing and maintained in the student's education records, along with a detailed description of the reasons in support of the change, with a copy to the teacher and the parent or guardian.

### **Graduation Requirements**

CREC Student Services Programs collaborates with each local school district to meet the intended graduation requirements as prescribed by their local policy and the student's Planning and Placement Team (PPT) decision. In the absence of such decisions, CREC Student Services will defer to the CREC Magnet School's Graduation Requirements and the student's PPT as prescribed in CREC Policy 6146.

### **Statewide Assessments**

CREC Student Services Programs collaborates with each local school district to meet the requirements for statewide assessments as prescribed by their local policy and the student's Planning and Placement Team (PPT) decision.

## Program Related Policies and Practices

### Program Information and Admission

#### Program Information

The mission of the Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center is to provide compassionate and individualized programming, to students in grades 6–12, and to identify their unique behavioral, social/emotional and academic needs in order to enable them to return to the most appropriate and least restrictive educational environment and to meet with ongoing success.

Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center provides individualized educational and clinical programming within a therapeutic milieu. Some students are referred for a 40-day diagnostic placement, while other students are placed for a longer term, such as a semester or two. The reasons for referral to FVDC are varied and our program aims to be flexible and accommodating in meeting students' needs. We utilize a trauma-informed team approach and work closely with families and sending school districts to create individualized plans. Our goal is to help determine the educational setting and support students need to be successful in school.

Students at FVDC receive instruction in a small classroom setting, with a low student to staff ratio. The program offers rigorous instruction in mathematics, English, science and social studies provided by certified special education teachers. Curriculum is aligned with Connecticut Core Standards. Additionally, if students require course offerings that are not available in the program (such as a foreign language or a particular elective), virtual learning opportunities may be provided through an online educational platform. Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center teachers provide oversight and support with online learning.

Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center certified school social workers provide high quality, clinical services to all students in the form of individual and group counseling. The clinicians work closely with the educational staff and families to address student social emotional and behavioral concerns. Our social workers help to identify community supporters and partner with a variety of social service agencies and outside clinical providers.

#### Program Hours and Calendar

FVDC school hours are from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm daily. Staff hours are from 8 am until 3 pm. The 2024-2025 School Calendar is included in the Appendix.

#### Intake Process

The FVDC intake process involves an in-person tour and informational session for the student and family/guardian with the FVDC Program Director. In addition, social workers conduct a thorough clinical intake prior to the initiation of a diagnostic placement.

#### Program Contacts

Name	Title	Email
Sara Steinberg, Ph.D., BCBA-D	Program Director	<a href="mailto:ssteinbergforman@crec.org">ssteinbergforman@crec.org</a>
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## Attendance

### Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal: Policy 5113

Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education. Time lost from class is a lost instructional opportunity. The CREC Council requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent. Guidelines for addressing absences and tardiness are contained in the individual school parent-student handbooks.

### Excused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten days of the student's return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes and meets one of the following criteria:

- For absences one through nine, if the student's parent approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation.
- For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter if the student's absences from school are for one of the following reasons.
  - Student illness. All student illnesses must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence.
  - Student's observance of a religious holiday.
  - Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
  - Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required).

- The lack of transportation that is provided by a district other than the one the student attends.
- Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by CREC administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.
- A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, will be granted ten days of excused absences in any school year to visit the parent or legal guardian.

The student and parent or legal guardian will be responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teachers prior to the student's absence, and for ensuring that the assignments are completed by the student prior to their return to school from such absence.

Written documentation of student absence should include a signed note from the student's parent; a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent regarding the absence; or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or a licensed medical professional; as appropriate. Documentation should explain the nature and reason for the absence as well as the length of the absence. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence. Steps will be taken to allow non-English speaking parents to submit documentation in their native language.

### **Unexcused Absences**

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless it meets one of the following criteria:

- The absence meets the definition of an excused absence (including documentation requirements); or
- The absence is the result of school or district disciplinary action.

### **Tardiness to Class**

Continued tardiness on the part of any student will be viewed as a very serious matter. Promptness to class is extremely important. Students are expected to be in their places, ready for work, at the bell.

### **Requests for Early Dismissal**

No school, grade, or class may be dismissed before the regularly scheduled dismissal time without the approval of the Executive Director or their designee.

No student may be permitted to leave school at any time other than at regular dismissal without the approval of the student's parent/guardian. If a court official with legal permission takes custody of a student, or if a police officer arrests a student, the parent/guardian shall be notified by the administration.

Permission for leaving school early must be granted by the principal or designee according to each individual case.

### **Program's Practices for Implementing the Attendance Policy**

Consistent school attendance is critical to students' educational and social-emotional development. It is of the utmost importance that students attend Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center on a regular basis. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success. We recognize that many students who are referred to FVDC have struggled with school attendance in the past. We make every effort to collaborate with students and families to re-establish consistent attendance patterns.

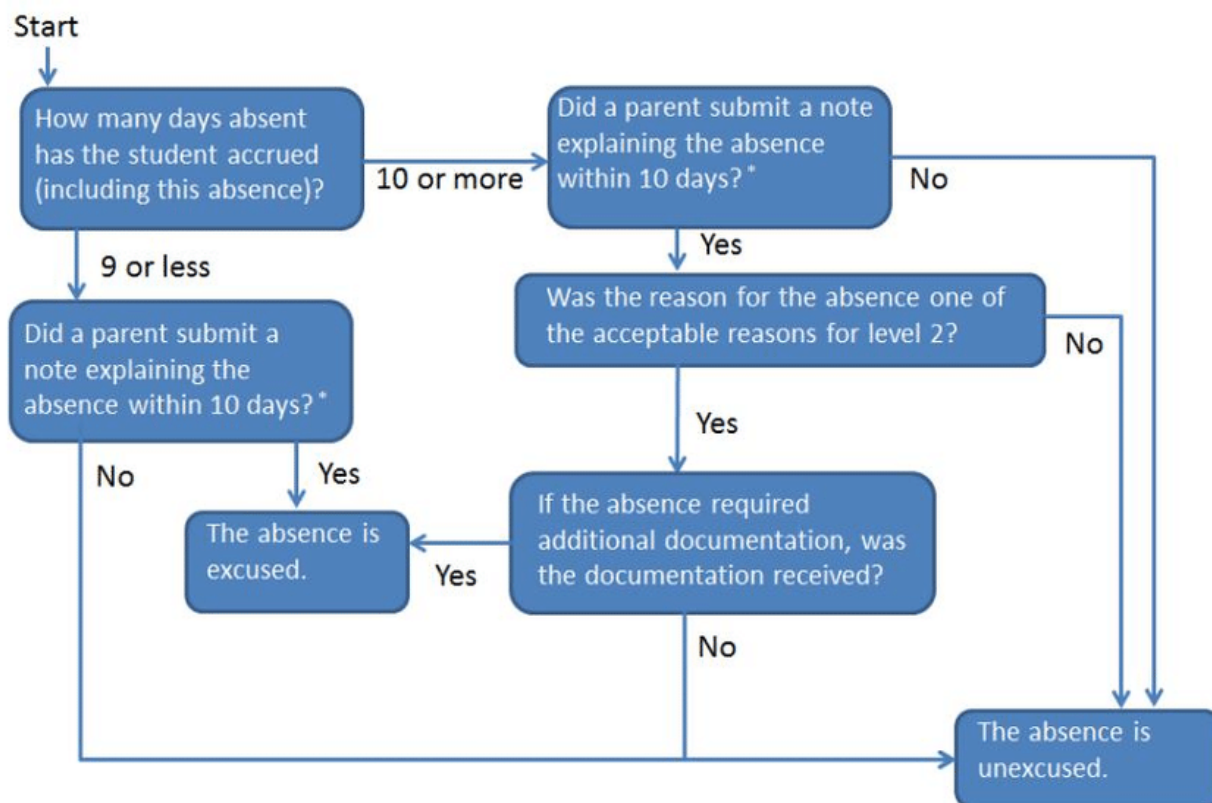
### Attendance Documentation

Parent or guardian notes and other documentation are central to determining whether a student's absence is excused or unexcused. While a note from a parent or guardian will likely be the most common form of documentation, other methods of reporting a student's absence are acceptable. For example, a parent or guardian can report the student's absence in person to an authorized school official, such as an office assistant. The table below details the different types of acceptable absence documentation and the required elements for each type.

Parent or Guardian Note	In-Person Explanation from Parent or Guardian to an Authorized School Team Member
Dates of absence	Dates of absence
Reason for absence	Reason for absence parent or guardian reports
Signature of parent or guardian	Name of parent or guardian reporting the absence
	Date and location of the report by parent or guardian
	Signature of team member receiving the report

**If your student is going to be absent please contact the FVDC office by 9:00 am and indicate the reason for the absence. As noted above, a written note is required in order for the absence to be considered "excused".**

The following flow chart illustrates how the school determines if an absence is considered “excused”:



*Note:* Absences due to a sending school district not providing transportation do not require documentation and are considered excused. Absences due to disciplinary action by the district do not require documentation and are considered neither excused nor unexcused. They are considered disciplinary absences.

### **Truancy: Policy 5113.2**

The Capitol Region Education Council believes that regular school attendance is essential to the academic success of students. The Executive Director is authorized to establish procedures for monitoring school attendance so as to identify students ages 5-18 inclusive who are truant and to enlist the cooperation of the LEA, of parents and, when necessary, the juvenile justice system, in order to address the problem when it arises.

### **Program’s Practices for Implementing the Truancy Policy**

A student age five to eighteen, inclusive, with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant.

An attendance meeting will be scheduled for any student attending FVDC who has four unexcused absences in one month or ten accumulated unexcused absences. The parent/guardian is required to attend this meeting with the program director and the student’s clinician.

The goal of the attendance meeting is

- To create an action plan to support the student’s regular attendance at school.
- To work collaboratively with the family.

If the attendance situation does not improve following multiple meetings and support plans in place, Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center will request a meeting with the sending school district and the parent/guardian to collaborate in addressing continued attendance concerns.

If the parent/guardian does not support the school's effort to address the attendance issue, Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center may be required to seek further support from outside agencies/resources, such as the Department of Children and Families.

## Instruction and Student Activities

### Program Curriculum and Instructional Practices

CREC's Student Services Programs strongly supports the alignment of general education curriculum within the design of individualized education programs. CREC's Student Services Programs uses the curriculum designed and aligned across all CREC schools and programs, including the CREC magnet schools. For further information see [https://www.crecschools.org/for\\_parents/curriculum](https://www.crecschools.org/for_parents/curriculum).

Students at FVDC receive instruction in a small classroom setting, with a low student to staff ratio. The program offers rigorous instruction in mathematics, English, science and social studies provided by certified special education teachers. Curriculum is aligned with Connecticut Core Standards. Additionally, if students require course offerings that are not available in the program (such as a foreign language or a particular elective), virtual learning opportunities may be provided through an online platform. Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center teachers provide oversight and support with online learning.

### Homework and Home Programs: Policy 6154

CREC education schools/programs emphasize learning experiences which communicate the value of learning as an individualized, life-long process. In this spirit all CREC schools/programs will assess the relevance of specific homework assignments in the light of student developmental level, instructional goals and objectives and long-range transition preparation requirements from special needs to regular education, and/or from school to career. Homework objectives are considered a critical part of the student's preparation for return from a CREC special education program to a less restrictive setting.

Homework assignments may vary from program to program, across curriculum areas, and through the course of individual instruction programs. However, the goals of homework assignments shall be to provide meaningful tasks which will increase the individual performance from supported to independent application of skills, provide skill enhancement through technical practice, develop creative problem-solving abilities, and/or assist students in generalizing skills to real-life settings.

Objectives may include:

- Reinforce, support and supplement school experiences.
- Consolidate learning through drill and practice.
- Provide the opportunity for review and research.
- Build independent learning and work habits.
- Share educational materials, programs and activities cooperatively between the school and the home.
- Increase communication about learning activities between the school and the family and between the family and the student.
- Promote the generalization of learning to the home and other environments.
- Utilize community resources in the learning process.
- Structure time beyond the school day to continue and/or reinforce the learning process.

### School Sponsored Trips: Policy 6153

To the extent the budgetary resources and safety of the students permits, the CREC Council encourages and sanctions student trips or other out-of-district school activities, including participation in interscholastic events, community civic projects and international travel which are of value in helping achieve each participating student's educational objectives.



The school staff, under the direction of the administration, shall take all reasonable and prudent steps to safeguard the physical and educational welfare of participating students. The administration may place restrictions upon a student's participation when in the staff's judgment their welfare requires it.

## Student Expectations, Behavior Supports, and Discipline

### Program Expectations and Behavioral Supports

At Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center, we believe that students can best grow and develop academically, socially and emotionally when the environment is safe and positive. The following expectations promote a healthy and productive school milieu.

#### **Our program focuses on three primary behavioral expectations:**

- **Be Safe**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Responsible**

We model these expectations throughout the day and team members use teachable moments in the school community to promote positive and healthy interactions.

At Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center, we utilize a school-wide behavior system in which student behavior and participation is tracked using Student Success Sheets. Students earn points during each class period throughout the day for exhibiting expected behaviors (safe, respectful, responsible). We utilize this data to track progress and reflect on areas of continued need. This data is shared with parents and sending districts at PPT meetings.

We incorporate daily earned incentives for students based on meeting identified program expectations. We also schedule raffles, field trips and special events to reinforce positive behaviors.

### Discipline: Policy 5144

#### **Policy Statement**

The CREC Council believes that good student behavior in a school is extremely important in creating the kind of educational environment in which students will be able to realize their greatest opportunities for growth. Good discipline habits assume consideration for the rights and privileges of others, cooperation with all personnel in the school community, basic self-respect as well as respect for real and personal property, pride in one's work and achievement within one's ability.

The development of good discipline practices is an on-going interactive process that begins early in a child's life and continues throughout their life. The school/program becomes a critical part of this process because it has the responsibility to teach and guide students to achieve good self-discipline. Each school/program will develop expectations that affirm positive behavioral outcomes for students and align practices around these expectations. Each school/program will engage the parents/guardians and community members in the development of these practices. School and home must work together in an effort to help and guide children toward achieving good self-discipline.

Students will be taught behavioral expectations as part of the school curriculum in all grades and all CREC schools and programs will have a scientifically research-based model of positive behavioral supports.

The purpose of this Discipline Policy is to encourage accountability for students' behavior and to assist them to recognize and learn proper decisions so they can become independent and productive members of our democratic society.

In applying reasonable disciplinary measures, administrators and staff are encouraged to use their expertise and knowledge of individual students in light of the facts and circumstances accompanying acts or incidents in question. Such measures may involve, but are not limited to, removal, suspension, or recommendation for expulsion. Whatever measure is employed, the discipline must always be fair and dignified.

### **Scope of this Policy**

#### *Conduct on School Grounds or at a School-Sponsored Activity*

Students may be disciplined for conduct on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process and/or violates a publicized CREC policy.

#### *Conduct off School Grounds*

Students may be disciplined for conduct off school grounds if such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violative of a publicized CREC policy. In making a determination as to whether such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the Administration and the Council may consider, but such consideration shall not be limited to, the following factors: (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; (2) whether other students from the school were involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in section Conn. Gen. Stat. § 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred; and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

In making a determination as to whether such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the Administration and/or the Council may also consider whether such off-campus conduct involved the illegal use of drugs.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion - means an exclusion from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days and shall be deemed to include, but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which such student was assigned at the time such disciplinary action was taken, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond a period of one (1) calendar year. All expulsions will be referred to the home school district.

- The CREC Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall recommend expulsion proceedings to sending districts in all cases involving any of the following students:
  - a preschool student who was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, on or off school grounds or at a preschool program-sponsored event; or
  - a student in grades Kindergarten to twelve on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity who, (a) was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, as defined in C.G.S 53a-3; or (b) off school grounds, possessed a firearm or possessed and used such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or (c) on or off school grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as defined in C.G.S 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering, or administering is subject to criminal penalties under C.G.S. 21a-277 and 21a-278.
- The CREC Superintendent of Schools or their designee may recommend expulsion proceedings to sending districts in all cases involving any of the following students: a student in grades three to twelve, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity whose conduct is violative of a publicized school policy and either endangers persons or property; or is seriously disruptive of the educational process; or off school grounds has engaged in conduct that is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is violative of a publicized school policy.

The CREC Superintendent of Schools shall forward the recommendation to the sending LEA, if determined to be necessary and appropriate.

If the sending LEA declines to conduct an expulsion hearing per the CREC Superintendent of Schools recommendation, CREC shall do so, in accordance with C.G.S. 10-233d.

CREC's Executive Director or their designee shall create administrative regulations regarding student discipline in accordance with this policy.

### **Program's Practices for Implementing the Discipline Policy**

Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center prioritizes trauma-informed and restorative practices when addressing behavioral issues and concerns. Staff work diligently to proactively teach students skills to recognize, identify and understand emotions as well as develop practical emotional regulation strategies. When conflict arises, we utilize a restorative approach so that students may reflect on their own feelings, as well as others involved in conflicts. Following conflicts with members of the school community (students or team members), students process with the clinical team and/or administration to discuss the incident and to talk about ways to prevent future conflicts or behavioral situations. We emphasize the importance of learning from our mistakes and developing improved strategies to manage challenging situations.

Using restorative practices in lieu of traditional discipline allows us to:

- Address harm done as a result of student behavior involving offender, victim and community
- Provide the opportunity for victim voice and choice
- Require the offender to take responsibility for harm done and make amends
- Utilize specific strategies with students that may include: student to student conferencing, letters of apology and/or community service within the program setting

On occasion, based on the nature of the behavioral issue, the Program Director may determine that additional consequences are warranted, such as in-school suspensions (ISS) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS). A parent meeting is required for student re-entry following any out-of-school suspension (OSS).

The overall goal of emotional literacy work and restorative discipline is to build and maintain strong relationships, reduce incidents of negative behavior and enhance the positive culture and climate of Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center.

### **School Climate**

#### **Bullying –Safe School Climate Plan: Policy 5131.911**

The Capitol Region Education Council is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and CREC's Safe School Climate Plan, CREC expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by CREC; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by CREC.

CREC also prohibits any form of bullying outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including recommendation for expulsion, in accordance with CREC's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law. CREC does not expel students. CREC may recommend that the local board of education enrolling the student in a CREC program expel a student in accordance with the law.

For purposes of this policy, "Bullying" means (A) the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or (B) a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to their property;
- Creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- Infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
- Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

For purposes of this policy, "Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

For purposes of this policy, "Teen dating violence" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

Consistent with the requirements under state law, the CREC Council authorizes the Superintendent or their designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan to address the existence of bullying and teen dating violence in schools. As provided by state law, such Safe School Climate Plan shall include, but not be limited to, provisions which:

- Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports;
- Enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence;
- Require school employees who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employees witness or receive a report of bullying or teen dating violence, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;
- Require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and teen dating violence and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this policy and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
- Require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;

- Include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
- Provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and teen dating violence;
- Require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation; such notification shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the students against whom such act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed and the policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying and teen dating violence;
- Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying or teen dating violence to a meeting to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school; and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a separate and distinct meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- Establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying or teen dating violence in such school; and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying or teen dating violence in such school, make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- Direct the development of case-by-case interventions, that may include both counseling and discipline, for addressing repeated incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying or teen dating violence incidents by the same individual;
- Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying or teen dating violence;
- Direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying or teen dating violence was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying or teen dating violence;
- Require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal or designee believes that any acts of bullying or teen dating violence constitute criminal conduct;
- Prohibit bullying and teen dating violence (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by CREC, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by CREC, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying or teen dating violence (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying or teen dating violence was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
- Require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
- Require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220a.

Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and CREC's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

The CREC Council shall approve the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to this policy and submit such plan to the Department of Education for its review and approval. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Department of Education, CREC shall make such plan available on CREC's website as well as on the website of each CREC school or program and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in CREC's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

### [Hazing: Policy 5131.91](#)

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times.

#### **General Statement of Policy**

- No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing.
- No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate hazing.
- Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- Hazing activities are seriously disruptive to the educational process in that they involve students and violence or threats of violence. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and/or after school hours.
- A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to initiate another person or to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.
- The school district will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

#### **Definitions**

- "Hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to:
  - Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, or placing a harmful substance on the body. 5131.91(b) Students Hazing III. Definitions (continued)
  - Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to a risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  - Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  - Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.
  - Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations

### **Sexual Harassment: Policy 5145.5**

The CREC Council does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, including employment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is forbidden, whether engaged in by students, supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers subject to the control of the Council. The Council is committed to safeguarding the right of all students of the school district to a learning environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: (1) An employee or third party subject to the district's control conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the district on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; (2) Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the district's education program or activity; or (3) Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking.

Any student who believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment should report the matter immediately so that investigation may begin at once and appropriate corrective action may be taken. Upon learning of, or having reason to suspect, the occurrence of sexual harassment, school team members shall ensure that an investigation is promptly commenced and appropriate corrective action is taken, whether or not the victim reports the matter.

The Executive Director is directed to develop and implement specific procedures on reporting, investigating and remedying instances of sexual harassment.

A copy of this policy and its accompanying regulation shall be distributed to staff and students and posted in appropriate places.

### **Program's Practices for Implementing the Bullying, Hazing and Harassment Policies**

Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center and Capitol Region Education Council are committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center has the following procedures in place to support a positive school climate and to address reports of bullying and teen dating violence:

- Students can anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence by placing notes in the clinical team mailboxes
- Students and parents/guardians are informed of the process to report acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence at the beginning of the school year via the student handbook and classroom presentations
- Parents/guardians can file written reports of suspected bullying or teen dating violence
- FVDC team members participate in an annual training regarding bullying and safe school climate at the beginning of each school year
- FVDC staff who witness acts of bullying or teen dating violence or who receive reports of bullying or teen dating violence are required to notify the FVDC Safe School Climate Coordinator (Program Director) of such acts or allegations in a timely manner (oral report within 24 hours, written report within 48 hours)
- FVDC Safe School Climate Coordinator investigates reports of bullying and/or teen dating violence in a timely manner
- Parents of students involved in any reports or investigations are notified of the outcome of the investigation and are included in safety planning when appropriate
- A Safe School Climate Specialist works with the school based team, the

students and parents/guardians to create student support plans as needed to address allegations of bullying and/or teen dating violence and to promote a safe climate for all students in the program

## Program Security and Safety

### Visits to the Schools: Policy 1250

CREC encourages visits by citizens, residents, and parents/guardians to all school buildings. In order to promote a safe and productive educational environment for all students and staff, CREC requires all visitors to receive prior approval from the school principal/program director or their designee before being permitted to visit any school building. CREC, through the administration, reserves the right to limit visits in accordance with administrative regulations.

Upon arrival, all visitors must comply with this policy and the accompanying regulation and any other applicable building security procedures, including, but not limited to, utilizing security buzzers for access; complying with requests for photo identification; reporting directly to and signing in and out at the visitors' reception area/main office of the school; prominently displaying visitors' badges or other identification required for visitors to the school buildings; confining themselves to those areas of the buildings and grounds for which the visitors have authorized access; and complying with directives of school officials at all times.

### Students Search and Seizure: Policy 5145.12

Students are protected from unreasonable searches and seizures under the guarantees of the Fourth Amendment.

School/program administrators may search students and/or their effects only when they have reasonable suspicion that the search will lead to evidence of a violation of law, CREC policy, administrative regulation or school/program rule. School/program administrators may detain students when the seizure is reasonable at its inception and it is reasonably related to the incident that prompted the seizure.

Students and/or their effects (such as bookbag, purse, cell phone, or automobile) may be searched if there is reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence of a violation of law, CREC policy, administrative regulation or school/program rule. There must be cause to believe that the search of the particular student will result in finding evidence of particular misconduct (in contrast with a general search of a number of students without reasonable suspicion as to the particular student or students searched); the scope of the search must be reasonably related to the reason for the search (for instance, if the search is for a handgun, searching the student's wallet is unreasonable); and the search must not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex, the legitimate privacy expectations of the student, and the nature of the infraction.

Strip searches of students shall not be conducted. All searches of students shall be carried out in the presence of another adult witness.

Use of drug-detection dogs and metal detectors, or similar detective devices may be used only upon the express authorization of the CREC Executive Director.

Desks and school lockers are the property of CREC and are loaned to students. The school/program administrator or designee shall maintain an accurate list of all locker assignments and either a master key or combinations to all lockers. At the time students are assigned a locker they shall be informed that school authorities may conduct random periodic inspections of school lockers and desks. A school/program administrator may search a student's desk or locker for the presence of and seize any contraband, weapons, or the fruits of a crime. Search of a student's effects contained in a locker or desk must be justified by reasonable suspicion that the search will lead to evidence of a violation of law, CREC policy, administrative regulation or school/program rule.

Administrators shall document all student searches and seizures.



### **Program's Practices for Implementing the Search and Seizure Policy**

In the event that there is reason to suspect that a student is in possession of unauthorized material or contraband, they will be searched. A minimum of two team members will, in a private setting, ask the student to empty pockets, take off jackets and sweatshirts, socks and shoes. Searches of students, their personal property, desk or locker will be conducted according to FVDC School and CREC policy.

*Please note:* In individual circumstances in which there is concern that students have brought hazardous or unsafe materials into the school setting, individualized entry plans may be developed in which a student's backpack is checked by school personnel upon entry in the morning. Additionally, in individual circumstances in which students have not followed the Center's aforementioned technology policy, that student may be asked to turn in all personal electronics upon entry. In these cases, students will have an individual container that will be locked in a secure storage area for the length of the program day. Personal electronics will be returned to students as they depart or during earned recreational time at the end of the day.

### **Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness: Policy 6114**

#### **General**

All CREC employees are responsible for promoting student and employee safety, including fire prevention measures and development of awareness among students and employees about the importance of effective emergency procedures.

The Executive Director shall develop system-wide emergency procedures, and principals/program directors shall maintain specific building regulations and procedures for fire, bomb threats, civil defense, and other emergencies.

#### **School Security and Safety Committee**

Each school year a school security and safety committee shall be established at each school/program. The membership of such committee shall include a local police officer, a local first responder, a teacher, an administrator, a mental health professional, and a parent or guardian of a student enrolled at the school; and may include any other persons deemed necessary, such as a custodian or property manager, a local emergency management director, a local public health director, an information technology manager, a transportation coordinator, or school nurse.

The school security and safety committee shall be responsible for assisting in the development of the school's security and safety plan and for administering such plan.

The school security and safety plan shall be an all-hazards approach to emergencies and shall conform to the security and safety standards developed by the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP). Such plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated each year, and shall be submitted to DESPP/DEMHS.

### **Program's Practices for School Closures and Other Emergencies Responses**

- FVDC follows the SIMSBURY school district regarding closings, delayed openings and emergency closings due to inclement weather.
- If FVDC is closed, no transportation will be provided.
- If FVDC is on a delay but your home town is on a regular schedule, vans will run on a delay.
- If FVDC is open but your home town is closed, transportation will not be provided from your town. You may drive your student to and from school that day.
- If FVDC is on time and your district has a delay, the van will operate on a delay.
- If FVDC has a full day, but your district has an early release due to weather, the van will pick your student up early.
- In the event of a school closure or delay, families will receive notification via our School Messenger system (text, phone). Closures and delays will also be

posted on Eyewitness News 3 (<https://www.wfsb.com/>).

***There is no perfect solution to transporting students in bad weather. Vans operate slower to be safe and delays occur due to accidents and poor road conditions. We appreciate your patience, understanding, and cooperation during inclement weather situations.***

#### **[Crisis Response: Policy 5141.6](#)**

The CREC Council is committed to averting and resolving crises that may occur and may involve students, faculty, staff, or the total school community. Through its educational programs, student assistance teams, student support personnel, and other strategies and mechanisms, the public school system will strive to prevent crisis situations and to prepare its community members to address crises as they occur, and circumstances that may pose the threat of crisis.

School personnel, through training and with the aid of specialists, shall strive to identify possible crises and to intervene early and appropriately in the lives of children and families where the danger exists.

## **Appendix**

### **[Health Assessment Record](#)**

### **[Authorization for Medication at School](#)**

### **[Program Calendar](#)**

### **Bullying, Hazing and Harassment**

**[FVDC - Report Form for Alleged Bullying \(9.8.20\) Word.docx](#)**