

# *South Coast Educational Collaborative*



## *Policies & Procedures Manual*

*2025-2026  
School Year*

**2201 G.A.R. Highway**

**Swansea, MA 02777**

**508-379-1180**

**[www.scecoll.org](http://www.scecoll.org)**

*The policies and procedures that are explained in the following pages are for the overall good for all students and their families and staff at the South Coast Educational Collaborative. They are here to support and protect all.*

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### **The South Coast Educational Collaborative's Mission is:**

To provide students, families, educators, school districts, and agencies high-quality, cost-effective, value-added, and sustainable education, professional development, technical assistance, and resources that are informed by an enduring commitment to deep learning and deep learning and that are grounded in our core values, appropriate research-based content, and best practices.

### **CORE VALUES**

We, at South Coast Educational Collaborative, believe that:

- Respect for the natural environment and effective green enterprise practices are reflected in our daily operations and in the design and delivery of our products and services.
- South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) must be a reflective learning community for students and their families, staff, board members, and other members of the SCEC community.
- Wellness is an active process for staff and students to become aware of and make choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life.
- Our ultimate goal is to enable students to participate and contribute as fully as possible in the communities in which they live and to begin planning upon admission for transitioning to their home, school, or adulthood.
- The family unit and family-school collaboration are essential factors in supporting and sustaining a student's learning and development.
- The SCEC community is focused on teaching and learning and on continuous action research that creates the conditions necessary for optimal teaching and learning.
- Mutual respect, reflection, and collaboration are expected and infused into all partnerships.
- Staff productivity, especially team productivity, means exceeding expectations, increasing team efficiency, and enhancing individual team members' professional growth.
- Teams are best supported when they have compelling direction, the material, and data resources they need, incentives for excellent team performances, and targeted professional development and coaching.
- Cultural diversity among staff and students enriches and enhances all members of the Collaborative.

### **LEGAL STATUS OF SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE**

Educational Collaboratives are formed through an agreement among two or more school committees to provide educational programs or services for their member school districts. Currently, South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) is authorized by M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 4E and complies with M.G.L. Ch. 43 of the Acts of 2012 (*An Act Relative to Improving Accountability and Oversight of Education Collaboratives*).

SCEC was established in 1974 (as Cooperative Production Collaborative) with its original member school districts of Berkley, Dighton, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional, Seekonk and

Swansea. SCEC began with one program, providing educational services to a low-incidence, previously unserved special needs population. In 1984, the Somerset School District was welcomed as a new member, followed by Freetown-Lakeville Regional Schools in 2007, Taunton Public Schools in 2014, Dartmouth Public Schools in 2019, New Bedford Public School and Westport Community Schools in 2020, and Fall River Public Schools in 2022.

The Collaborative is governed by a Board of Directors. SCEC shall exist as a public entity. (*LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 4, M.G.L. Ch. 43 of the Acts of 2012*)

## **PUBLIC DAY SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

South Coast Educational Collaborative operates several approved public day special education school programs. An approved public day special education school program is defined as a program that provides special education services to eligible students in a facility serving primarily students with disabilities. Staff working in public day special education school programs must adhere to all Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education standards for such programs (603 CMR 18.00).

## **LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

South Coast Educational Collaborative adheres to 34 CFR 300.550, which requires that all students with disabilities, including students placed in separate classes or schools, are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with nondisabled students. When a student with a disability is removed from the general education environment due to the nature or severity of their disability, and their education in general classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily, it is always the goal to return the student to a less restrictive environment as soon as the IEP Team deems that the student is ready to do so.

**South Coast Educational Collaborative  
Organizational Chart**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Superintendents of School

Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, Fall River, Freetown-Lakeville  
Regional School District, New Bedford, Somerset-Berkley Regional School District, Somerset,  
Seekonk, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dr. David Heimbecker



**PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

Special Education Administrators, Principals,  
Teacher/Leaders,  
Facilitators, Teachers, Clinicians, Related  
Service Providers, Nurses,  
Director of Human Resources  
Director of Finance  
Director of Technology

**SUPPORT STAFF**

Administrative Assistants,  
Business Office Personnel,  
Paraprofessionals, Technology Staff

***South Coast Educational Collaborative***  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Mr. Jeffrey Schoonover, Superintendent, ***Chairperson***  
 Somerset Public Schools & Somerset Berkley Regional School District

Ms. Melissa Ryan, Superintendent,  
 Berkley Community Schools

Dr. June Saba-Maguire, Superintendent  
 Dartmouth Public Schools

Mr. William M. Runey, Jr., Superintendent  
 Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District

Dr. Tracy Curley, Superintendent  
 Fall River Public Schools

Dr. Barbara Starkie, Interim Superintendent,  
 Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District

Mr. Andrew B. O’Leary, Superintendent  
 New Bedford Public Schools

Ms. Rebecca Kidwell, Superintendent  
 Seekonk Public Schools

Mr. Scott Holcomb, Superintendent  
 Swansea Public Schools

Mr. John Cabral, Superintendent  
 Taunton Public Schools

Dr. Fran Roy, Superintendent  
 Westport Community Schools

***LEADERSHIP TEAM***

Dr. David R. Heimbecker, *Executive Director*

Jeffrey Booker, MEd	Lisa Fournier, EdD	Leah Paliotta, MS, CCC-SLP
Jennifer Bouchard, MEd	Francis Gallishaw, Jr. MEd	Jason Prozzo, MEd
Linda Cullen, MS, CCC-SLP	Lauren Horton. EdS	Evan Salvo, MEd
Michelle Dargon, JD, MS	David Marr, MEd	Raymond Steele, MEd
Jason Dorrance, MEd	Lisa Martiesian, EdM, MEd	Matthew Ulmschneider, MEd
Jennifer Faria, EdD	Kate Murphy, MA, CAGS	

## **COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) works cooperatively with sending member and participating public school districts to ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, children with disabilities are educated with children who do not have disabilities, are provided access to the general education curriculum, and are given opportunities to return to a less restrictive educational program.

Sending school districts have the lead responsibility for convening the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, which makes the initial and subsequent (every three years) eligibility determinations, develops the IEP, and decides upon an appropriate placement. However, SCEC administrators, educators and related service providers play a major role in determining whether a proposed placement in a SCEC school will meet a student's needs. SCEC administrators, educators and related service providers play a key role in delivering services in the IEP, assessing and communicating progress, developing subsequent IEPs and planning for the student's return to a less restrictive environment and/or post- secondary or adult life.

The current SCEC policies and procedures regarding referrals and admissions, the IEP process, progress reports, discipline policies, statewide testing implementation, transition planning and school district monitoring of student progress were developed, and are regularly reviewed, with input from the Leadership Team. Recommendations are then reviewed and approved by the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors.

## **REFERRALS & ADMISSION**

All student referrals to South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) are made by the Administrator of Special Education (or their designee) of the sending school district that is responsible for the student's education. Students from both member and participating communities may be enrolled in SCEC programs. The process of enrolling a student into a SCEC program is a collaboration with the sending school district and is designed to ensure that SCEC can meet the student's needs. It is also designed to ensure a smooth transition for students and parents/guardians, who agree that SCEC can meet the student's educational and therapeutic needs.

### **Referral Process**

1. The sending district's representative informs the parent/guardian and the student, if appropriate, that a referral is being made to SCEC and the reason for the referral.
2. The referring school district is responsible for preparing and sending a referral packet to the appropriate SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader /Teacher Leader. If the district representative is unsure which SCEC program or site is the best fit for the student, the referral packet may be sent directly to the SCEC central office, attention, Referrals, for review and routing.

The packet should include any additional reports, assessments, meeting notes, and/or other documents deemed relevant when considering the appropriate programming for the individual student and/or within the setting to which the student has been

referred.

This packet must include all the following **required elements**.

- Completed SCEC *Referral Form*
  - Signed *Authorization to Release Confidential Information Form*
  - Current IEP & N1 Notes
  - Cognitive/Developmental assessment; and/or Neuropsychological assessment
  - Early Intervention assessment, if applicable
  - Clinical Psychological assessment; and/or Psychiatric assessment
  - Social History
  - Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavioral Checklists
  - Vocational assessment, if applicable
  - Recent Progress Reports and Report Cards, if applicable
  - Assistive Technology Assessment, if applicable
  - Statewide Testing Scores and transcript (high school students only)
  - ACCESS and WIDA scores, if applicable and all relevant information if the student is an English learner.
  - Relevant specialist reports or assessments (e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language therapy, adapted physical education, assessment of special health needs, functional behavioral assessment, psychological assessment, etc.)
2. SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader reviews the referral packet, ensuring that it is complete, and then enters the referral into the SCEC Referral Tracking System. Within five (5) school days of the receipt of the referral packet, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader will notify the sending district representative that the referral packet has been received and if the packet is complete. If the packet is incomplete, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader will request the additional documents necessary to proceed.
  3. SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader will make an initial determination regarding the appropriateness of the referral. The referral may be brought to the SCEC Senior Leadership Team to determine if another South Coast Educational Collaborative school site may be more appropriate.
  4. The sending district is informed of the determination of possible program placement by the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader within ten (10) school days or sooner of the receipt of the complete referral packet.
  5. If the referral is deemed appropriate, the parent/guardian is contacted to arrange a tour of the proposed program, at which time additional information may be gathered. If possible, other team members, i.e., RSPs, Clinicians, etc., should be available to gather information related to their specialties.
    - a. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader may decide to visit the student in their current placement.
    - b. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader interviews the student and/or the parent/guardian, when they may gather further information regarding the student. Additionally, the student and/or

- the parent/guardian will be advised of all policies and procedures involved in attending the school, including behavioral expectations, code of conduct, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and all services and requirements of the school placement.
- c. Should the student enroll at SCEC, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader will complete the *Intake Form*.
  - d. If the sending district, parent/guardian, and the student agree to proceed to the admissions process, the parent/guardian will be provided an *Admissions Packet* which includes the school's *Student-Family Handbook*, a current school calendar, all relevant policies and procedures, and all mandated forms to be completed. These forms must be returned, completed, and signed prior to the student's first day of attendance in the program.
  - e. The sending district must provide a signed *Placement Consent* form indicating the change of placement. The PL-1 must attach to a current, signed IEP.
6. If it is determined that SCEC cannot meet the needs of the referred student, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader will inform the sending district of this decision in writing as soon as possible.
  7. If a student is deemed to be appropriate for the proposed program and the parent/guardian is in agreement, then the following admissions procedures are adhered to.

### **Admissions Process**

1. SCEC will not enroll eligible students under the provisions of 603 CMR 28.00 unless approved to do so by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
2. Prior to admission, it is the responsibility of the sending district to provide to the parent/guardian a written copy of the parent's/guardian's rights as described in 603 CMR 18.05 (4).
3. Prior to admission, SCEC shall provide to the parent/guardian and the sending district a written copy of the program's policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:
  - a. The *Student-Family Handbook*, which includes a written copy of SCEC's positive behavioral intervention and supports policy and the student code of conduct, including policies and procedures regarding physical restraint and suspension.
  - b. School calendar
  - c. Code of Conduct (included in *Student-Family Handbook*)
  - d. Visitor Policy (included in *Student-Family Handbook*)
  - e. *Signed Authorization for Program Specific Consultants*
  - f. *Consent for Evaluation* if formal assessments are requested upon enrollment.
4. No student will be placed in a SCEC school setting until documentation is provided from a licensed health care provider of a complete physical examination of the student, conducted not more than twelve (12) months prior to admission, and an updated record of immunizations per the most recent guidance from the

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH). The results of all physical exams become part of the student's health record.

5. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader and School Nurse, acting as designees of the SCEC Executive Director, shall ensure that all requirements are met before a student is admitted to a SCEC school. This includes the administration of medication, as no medication shall be administered to a student or by a student without signed authorization from a licensed healthcare provider and the student's parent/guardian. Such authorization shall be secured prior to admission and must be renewed annually.
6. For each student enrolled, SCEC executes a contract with the sending school district which includes the following statements:
  - a. SCEC will comply with all elements of the student's IEP as documented by detailed written reports of progress submitted to the Special Education Administrator.
  - b. SCEC will allow the sending district to monitor and evaluate the education of the student and will make available, upon request, any records pertaining to the student to authorized school personnel from the school district and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
  - c. SCEC will allow the sending district and/or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to conduct announced and unannounced site visits and to review all documents relating to the provision of special education services to the student.
  - d. SCEC will afford the student all the substantive and procedural rights held by the student.
  - e. SCEC does not discriminate in the enrollment of students or in the employment of personnel based on sex, race, limited English-speaking ability, color, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or place of residence.
  - f. Annual or per diem tuition and payment schedule.

If the student comes from a family where English is not the primary language spoken, then all intake forms will be translated into the family's primary language. Translated forms, with their English counterparts, will be sent to the parent/guardian prior to the student's enrollment, to be completed by the parent/guardian.

### **LENGTH OF PROGRAMS/SCHOOL CALENDARS**

Prior to the beginning of each school year, calendars are developed for each South Coast Educational Collaborative school site based upon the learning needs of the students within each program with the goal of maximizing high quality teaching, learning and professional development opportunities. SCEC develops school calendars which include at least 205 school days at each elementary, middle, secondary school, and community-based site.

The Collaborative ensures that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time and that every secondary

school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in state regulations. Time which a student spends at school for breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs does not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

School calendars are approved annually by the Board of Directors and the South Coast Educational Collaborative Federation representative. SCEC creates school calendars for its programs with the following number of scheduled student learning days per year:

**Elementary Level:**

Seekonk North K-5/205	205 days
Seekonk North K-5/220	220 days
SCEC at Berkley Community	220 days
SCEC at Palmer River Elementary	220 days
SCEC at Freetown Elementary	205 days
SCEC at George Austin Middle School	205 days

**Middle School Level:**

SCEC at Berkley Middle School	220 days
Seekonk North 6-8/205	205 days
Seekonk North 6-8/220	220 days
South Coast Middle Alternative School	205 days

**High School Level:**

Gallishaw High School	220 days
SCEC Gallishaw at Seekonk High School	205 days
SHINE Academy @ Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School	220 days

**Post-Secondary**

LIFE Academy	220 days
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Whereas state law, regulation, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provide flexibility to the Collaborative in the scheduling of days and hours, the Executive Director shall make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Directors for action.

For the information of staff, students, and families, the calendar will set forth the number of days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; and in-service days.

*(LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 15:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12, 603 CMR 27.0)*

## I. FOUNDATIONS & BASIC COMMITMENTS

### CIVIL RIGHTS POLICIES

South Coast Educational Collaborative is committed to ensuring that all students and their families are afforded all education-related civil rights to which they are entitled based on federal and state laws and regulations. All employees receive annual training on the following topics: non-discrimination, sexual harassment, student records, confidentiality, student learning time, bullying prevention and intervention, discriminatory harassment, child abuse prevention and reporting, anti-hazing (high school level), physical restraint, suspension, and least restrictive environment. In addition, all employees attend a three-hour workshop each year presented by SCEC's legal counsel, specifically on the topic of special education and civil rights. The purpose of these workshops is to present, discuss and answer questions about current legal issues in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding civil rights and educational services.

#### Non-Discrimination

South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, gender, gender identity, place of residence, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, ancestry, limited English-speaking ability, place of birth, age, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability in the administration of its educational policies, administrative policies, scholarship or loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs or in employment. The Board's policy of non-discrimination will extend to students, families, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business.

*(Source: MASC Policy; LEGAL REFS: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended by EOA of 1972, Title IX Education Amendments of 1972, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, M.G.L. 71B; 1, 76:5, 76:16.)*

The South Coast Educational Collaborative does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities:

- on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964);
- on the basis of sex (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972);
- on the basis of age (Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975);
- on the basis of place of residence (Title VIIB of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001);
- on the basis of native language (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)
- on the basis of disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended by the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008);
- on the basis of sexual orientation or religion (M.G.L., Chapter 71 and 151B);
- on the basis of gender identity (M.G.L., Chapter 4, Section 7); or
- on the basis of pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition

## **Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity**

SCEC is committed to ensuring that it is free from discrimination in education and employment and to ensuring equal opportunity in education and employment for all its students and employees. Collaboratives, as public entities, have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. SCEC will do its part by:

1. Promoting the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encouraging positive experiences in human values for children, youth, and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups.
3. Working toward a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Using all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully considering, in all the decisions made within the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.
6. Initiating a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION ON BASIS OF DISABILITY**

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall, because the Collaborative's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, and activities of the Collaborative or be subject to discrimination. Nor shall the Collaborative exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association.

**Definition:** A "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the Collaborative. An "individual with a disability is a person who has (1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. A "qualified student with a disability" at the elementary and secondary level refers to a student with a disability who is "of an age at which students without disabilities are provided elementary and secondary educational services; of an age which it is mandatory under state law to provide elementary and secondary educational services to a student with disabilities; or a student to whom the state is required to provide a free appropriate public education under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Reasonable Modification:** The Collaborative shall make reasonable modifications in policies,

practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination based on disability, unless the Collaborative can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

**Communications:** The Collaborative shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the Collaborative shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the Collaborative. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the Collaborative shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities.

**Auxiliary Aids and Services:** "Auxiliary aids and services" includes (1) qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and (4) other similar services and actions.

**Limits of Required Modification:** The Collaborative is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the Collaborative shall be made by the Board of Directors after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. The decision shall be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

**Notice:** The Collaborative shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the Collaborative. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the Board of Directors and Executive Director find necessary to apprise such persons of the projections against discrimination assured them by the ADA.

**Compliance Coordinator:** The Collaborative shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under ADA. The Collaborative shall make available, to all interested individuals, the name, office address, and telephone number of the designated employee(s) and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA. The Collaborative receives federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. Additionally, the Collaborative believes that:

1. Discrimination against a qualified handicapped person solely based on handicap is unfair; and
2. To the extent possible, qualified individuals with a disability should be included in the

mainstream of activity in a school community. Accordingly, employees of the school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this committee to ensure non-discrimination on the basis of disability.

The Compliance Coordinator for SCEC is:

**Dr. Jennifer Faria**  
**South Coast**  
**Educational Collaborative**  
**2201 GAR Highway**  
**Swansea, MA 02777**  
**508-962-5872**  
[Jfaria@scecoll.org](mailto:Jfaria@scecoll.org)

*(SOURCE: MASC; LEGAL REFS: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, M.G.L. 71B: 1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972) Title II, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, BESE Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 3/28/78)*

## **TITLE IX /SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **Philosophy**

The South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) Board of Directors affirms its policies concerning Title IX and it further re-affirms its commitment to provide an educational and work environment free from discrimination, including harassment based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, place of residence or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal.

SCEC does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates including in admission and employment, as required by Title IX.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to SCEC's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

**SCEC's Title IX Coordinator is:**

**Mickey Dargon**  
**South Coast Educational Collaborative**  
**Director of Human Resources/Payroll**  
**Title IX Coordinator**  
**2201 G.A.R. Highway      Swansea, MA 02777**  
**mdargon@scecoll.org**  
**508-379-1180      774-644-8883**

SCEC's Title IX Coordinator may delegate specific duties to one or more designees as the Title IX Coordinator finds appropriate.

SCEC's non-discrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located below. SCEC has adopted these

grievance procedures to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints made by students, employees, or other individuals who are participating or attempting to participate in its education program or activity, or by the Title IX Coordinator, alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX or the Title IX regulations.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the procedures below.

## Definitions

Under state law, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment under Massachusetts law when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's advancement (quid pro quo harassment);
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions;
- Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties; or
- The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Under Federal law, sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct ("quid pro quo harassment");
- 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 recipient's education program or activity ("hostile environment harassment"); or
- "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30)

SCEC will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment of which it has actual knowledge and which are alleged to occur in SCEC's programs and activities, including locations, events, and/ or circumstances in which the school district exercises substantial control, in a way that is not deliberately indifferent.

The following additional definitions apply:

**"Actual knowledge"** means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to any employee of the district, except that this standard is not met when the only official of the district with actual knowledge is the respondent (where the respondent is an employee). Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability or constructive notice is insufficient to constitute actual knowledge. Complaints will be addressed whenever the district has actual knowledge of the allegation.

**"Administrative leave"** means placing an employee on leave pursuant to state law. Nothing in the Title IX

regulations precludes a recipient from placing a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a grievance process, provided that Massachusetts laws are followed.

**“Consent”** means cooperation in act or attitude pursuant to an exercise of free will of a conscious person with informed knowledge of the nature of the act or actions. A current or previous relationship shall not be sufficient to constitute consent. Consent will not be found when submission to the act or actions is undertaken due the influence of fear, fraud, forcible compulsion, threats, and/ or the complainant possessed any legal incapacity to consent at the time of the act or actions. Consent is a defense to all types of sexual harassment.

**“Complainant”** means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

**“Deliberate indifference”** means a response to sexual harassment that is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

**“Emergency removal”** means the suspension or expulsion of a student on an emergency basis, consistent with state law. Nothing in the Title IX regulations precludes a district from removing a respondent from the district’s education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the district follows all procedures under Massachusetts law, undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

**“Formal complaint”** means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment and requesting that the district investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

**“Respondent”** means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

**“Supportive measures”** means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient’s educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures. The Collaborative must maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the recipient to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures

## **Complaints and Reports of Sexual Harassment**

Upon receiving actual notice of alleged sexual harassment without a formal complaint, staff members must

notify the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator must then contact the complainant within five school days of receiving the complaint and do the following:

- Discuss and offer supportive measures;
- Consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- Explain that supportive measures may be received with or without filing a formal complaint;
- Determine whether the complainant wishes to file a formal complaint; and
- Explain to the complainant the purpose of filing a formal complaint.

The Title IX Coordinator must document in writing the supportive measures offered/provided or why no supportive measures were offered/provided. Complainant and respondents must be offered supportive measures even if they do not file a formal complaint.

If the complainant declines to file a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator must consider whether to sign a formal complaint and start an investigation despite the complainant’s preferences. This decision may be appropriate when safety or similar concerns lead the Collaborative to conclude that a non-deliberately indifferent response to actual knowledge of Title IX sexual harassment could reasonably require the Collaborative to investigate and potentially sanction a respondent. A Title IX Coordinator’s decision to override the complainant’s decision not to file a formal complaint must be documented in writing along with an explanation of why this decision was necessary in order to avoid deliberate indifference.

Formal complaints may also be filed directly with the Title IX Coordinator by a complainant in person, by mail, by email, or by telephone at any time, including during non-business hours.

The contact information for the Title IX Coordinator is:

**Mickey Dargon**  
**South Coast Educational Collaborative**  
**Director of Human Resources/Payroll**  
**Title IX Coordinator**  
**2201 G.A.R. Highway      Swansea, MA 02777**  
**mdargon@scecoll.org**  
**508-379-1180      774-644-8883**

The complaint may be written by the complainant, or it will be reduced to writing by either the school employee who receives the complaint, the building Principal, or the Title IX Coordinator. Whether the complaint is reduced to writing by a student, parent, guardian, or staff member, the written complaint should include the name of the complainant, the name of the alleged victim (if different), the name of the respondent, the location of the SCEC program where the alleged discriminatory action occurred, the basis for the complaint, witnesses (if any), and the corrective action the complainant is seeking. This information will be made on or transferred to a discrimination/ harassment complaint form maintained by SCEC.

There is no time limit or statute of limitation on timing to file a formal complaint. However, at the time of filing a formal complaint, an alleged victim must be participating or attempting to participate in a program or activity of the Collaborative. Additionally, the Collaborative has discretion to dismiss a formal complaint where the passage of time would result in the district’s inability to gather evidence sufficient to reach a determination

regarding responsibility, or when the district loses responsibility for the respondent (e.g., the respondent no longer attends or is employed by the district).

If the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined in this policy even if proved, did not occur in the Collaborative's education program or activity, or did not occur against a person in the United States, then the Collaborative must dismiss the formal complaint under these procedures, but could investigate it under other policies and procedures. The Collaborative must send written notice of any dismissal.

Investigations to allegations of sexual harassment will be prompt and the formal process will be completed within a sixty-school day timeframe where feasible. There may be a temporary delay of the grievance process or the limited extension of time frames for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action. Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

### **Written Notice**

Before any investigation can begin, the district must send written notice to both parties including sufficient details. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known. The written notice must include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may inspect and review evidence. The written notice must inform the parties that the Collaborative's code of conduct prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If additional allegations are added during the course of the investigation, additional written notice must be provided.

### **Informal Resolution**

Where appropriate, after notice has been issued, the Title IX Coordinator should also consider offering the parties an option for informal resolution (e.g., mediation). Informal resolution may only be offered after a formal complaint is filed, and the parties must give written consent to engage in this process. Informal resolution may not be used if the allegation is against an employee respondent. Facilitators of informal resolution will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator and must not be biased against any of the parties.

Informal resolution is entirely voluntary. Complainants may elect to pursue formal procedures at any step in the process of making their complaint, even if informal resolution has already begun. Similarly, respondents may elect to follow formal procedures and decline informal resolution.

If the complainant and the respondent feel that their grievances have been sufficiently addressed via informal resolution, then no further action needs to be taken. This voluntary conversation must occur within thirty (30) school days after receiving the complaint of discrimination or harassment, unless both parties agree otherwise. The results of an informal resolution shall be maintained by the facilitator, in writing.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution from the informal process, or if they do not choose informal resolution, then they can begin the formal complaint procedure described below.

### **Investigation**

If informal resolution is not offered to or accepted by the parties, the Title IX Coordinator will designate an investigator and a decision maker, who may not be the same person. The Title IX Coordinator is free to cast themselves as investigator, where appropriate.

The investigator must not be biased against any of the parties at the outset of the investigation. The investigator will be responsible for interviewing parties and witnesses, finding facts, and making determinations related to credibility, all of which will go into a written report. The investigator must avoid all questions that are protected by legal privilege, unless the privilege has been waived, and should avoid asking about the complainant's sexual history unless it is directly relevant to prove consent to the conduct at issue or to prove that the conduct was committed by someone other than the respondent.

Prior to completion of the investigative report, the Collaborative will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least ten days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report.

The investigator must avoid making any final determinations of responsibility for sexual harassment.

Findings should be written in a factual way in an investigative report. Credibility determinations may not be based on an individual's status as complainant, witness, or respondent.

During the investigative process and any further hearings, complainants and respondents have a right to have advisors of their choice participate in all aspects of the proceedings. The Collaborative will provide both parties with written notice of investigative interviews, meetings, and hearings, with sufficient time to prepare.

### **Findings of Responsibility**

After the investigator has completed the investigation, the designated decision-maker will be assigned to determine final responsibility or lack thereof for violating Title IX. The decision-maker must not be biased against any of the parties at the outset of this process.

Before the district can determine responsibility, an investigative report will be sent to the parties and the decision-maker will offer both the complainant and respondent the opportunity to submit proposed relevant, written questions to ask of any party or witness, to respond to questions posed by another party, and to offer additional limited follow-up. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

After this process is complete, the decision-maker will create a written determination regarding whether sexual harassment has occurred using a preponderance of the evidence standard.

A “preponderance of the evidence” means that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred. The decision-maker shall further recommend what action, if any, is required. If it is determined that sexual harassment occurred, the Collaborative will take steps to prevent the recurrence of the harassment and correct its discriminatory effect on the complainant and others if appropriate. Such remedies may include supportive measures.

The written determination must be issued to both parties simultaneously and must include:

- (A) Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- (B) A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;
- (C) Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- (D) Conclusions regarding the application of the recipient’s code of conduct to the facts;
- (E) A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions the recipient imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity will be provided by the recipient to the complainant; and
- (F) The Collaborative’s procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal (a copy of, or direct reference to, this policy will suffice).

Formal disciplinary actions may be imposed in the event that the preponderance of the evidence indicates a violation of this policy, up to and including expulsion or termination. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with due process rights under State law and any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

As indicated above, these procedures do not limit the Collaborative from removing a student or employee from a program or activity on an emergency basis based on immediate threats to people’s physical health or safety or placing an employee on administrative leave during the pendency of the investigation.

### **Records**

A record will be maintained for a period of seven years of any actions, including supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment and district staff will document the basis for the district’s conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent.

### **Training**

The district will ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of the recipient’s education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

The Collaborative will ensure that decision-makers receive training on any technology to be used in interviews and on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant,.

The Collaborative also must ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance to create an

investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

Any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.

### **Appeals**

Any party may appeal the decision in writing to the Executive Director within five (5) school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure or a dismissal on the following bases:

(A) Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;

(B) New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and

(C) The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

The Collaborative will notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties. Both parties will have a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The Executive Director or designee, as a further impartial decision-maker, will review the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the investigation and the conclusions, and issue written findings to both the complainant and respondent within thirty (30) school days of the appeal.

Contact information for the Executive Director

**David Heimbecker, EdD**  
**Executive Director**  
**2201 GAR Highway**  
**Swansea, MA 02777**  
[drh@scecoll.org](mailto:drh@scecoll.org)

### **External Grievance Procedure**

Any student, parent or employee who chooses not to use the Collaborative's internal grievance procedures or who is not satisfied with the Collaborative's internal grievance procedures may file a complaint of discrimination or harassment with an appropriate state or federal agency.

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:

The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education

5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place  
Sixth Floor, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone 617-994-6000, TTY: 617-994-6196

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of parents:  
The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education  
5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of employees:  
The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education  
5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place  
Sixth Floor, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone 617-994-6000, TTY: 617-994-6196

OR  
The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203  
Phone: 1-800-669-4000

### **Referral to Law Enforcement, Other Agencies**

Some alleged conduct may constitute both a violation of District policies and criminal activity. The building Principal, coordinator, Superintendent, or designee will refer matters to law enforcement and other agencies as appropriate under the law or District policy, and inform the complainant/ alleged victim of the right to file a criminal complaint.

### **Retaliation**

Complainants and those who participate in the complaint resolution process or who otherwise oppose in a reasonable manner an act or policy believed to constitute discrimination are protected from retaliation by law and District policy. The coordinator or designee will inform all involved individuals that retaliation is prohibited, and that anyone who feels that they have experienced retaliation for filing a complaint or

participating in the resolution process should inform the coordinator. The coordinator will investigate reports of retaliation and, where retaliation is found, take separate remedial and disciplinary action.

### **Discriminatory Harassment**

Some student and employee misconduct that falls under the anti-bullying policy may also trigger responsibilities under one or more of the federal antidiscrimination laws enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The statutes that OCR enforces include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d *et seq.*) which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681 *et seq.*) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et seq.*). Section 504 and Title II prohibit discrimination based on disability. OCR also enforces the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. § 6101 *et seq.*) and the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act (20 U.S.C. § 7905). The U.S. Department of Education's regulations implementing these statutes are in 34 C.F.R. parts 100, 104, and 106. Under these federal civil rights laws and regulations, students are protected from harassment by school employees, other students, and third parties.

Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling; graphic and written statements, which may include use of cell phones or the Internet; or other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful or humiliating. Harassment does not need to include intent to harm, to be directed at a specific target, or to involve repeated incidents. Harassment creates a hostile environment when the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent to interfere with or limit a staff or student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by SCEC. When such harassment is based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, place of residence, limited English speaking ability, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity or pregnancy or pregnancy related issues, it violates the civil rights laws that OCR enforces.

SCEC employees are responsible for addressing discriminatory harassment incidents brought to their attention as follows:

**Reporting:** Students or employees, who believe that they are a target of discriminatory harassment, observe an act of discriminatory harassment, or have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report harassment. Parents/guardians and members of the community are encouraged to report an incident of discriminatory harassment as soon as possible. All SCEC employees shall immediately report any instance of discriminatory harassment they have witnessed or became aware of, to the school's SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee. Confidentiality shall be used to protect the person who reports discriminatory harassment, provides information during an investigation of discriminatory harassment, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of discriminatory harassment. *(Please see Appendix B for Reporting Form)*

**Investigation:** Before fully investigating the allegations of discriminatory harassment, the

SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting a student or employee who has reported discriminatory harassment, a student or employee who has witnessed discriminatory harassment, a student or employee who provides information during an investigation, or a student or employee who has reliable information about a reported act of discriminatory harassment.

When responding to discriminatory harassment, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. The specific steps in the investigation may vary depending upon the nature of the allegations, the source of the complaint, the age of the student(s) involved, the size and administrative structure of the school, and other factors. In all cases, the inquiry will be prompt, thorough and impartial.

Upon determining that discriminatory harassment has occurred, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the discriminatory harassment, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and prevent the discriminatory harassment from recurring. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will promptly notify the parent/guardian of the target in cases involving a student and the employee, in instances involving an employee, as well as the aggressor, of the results of the investigation, and of the procedures for responding to it.

Appropriate steps to end discriminatory harassment may include but are not limited to:

- separating the alleged harasser and the target.
- providing counseling for the target and/or alleged harasser.
- providing disciplinary action against the alleged harasser.
- providing training or other interventions not only for the alleged harasser, but also for the larger school community.
- providing additional services to the student who was harassed to address the effects of discriminatory harassment.
- reviewing current policies against discriminatory harassment and updating them as needed.

Appropriate steps to prevent further discriminatory harassment may include but are not limited to:

- making sure that the harassed student(s) and their families know how to report subsequent problems.
- conducting follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new instances of harassment or retaliation.
- responding promptly to address continuing or new problems by initiating skills training and/or clinical supports to foster resilience and increase social competency.

## COMPLIANCE OFFICERS AND REPORTING

The following individual(s) have been designated and are available to address questions or concerns regarding the SCEC's non-discrimination policies with respect to educational activities.

### Section 504 Compliance Officer

To file a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment by the South Coast Educational Collaborative on the basis of disability, or to make an inquiry concerning the application of Section 504 and the ADA/ADAAA and their respective implementing regulations, please contact:

**Dr. Jennifer Faria**  
**South Coast Educational Collaborative**  
**2201 GAR Highway**  
**Swansea, MA 02777**  
**508-962-5872**  
[Jfaria@scecoll.org](mailto:Jfaria@scecoll.org)

### Civil Rights Compliance Officer

To file a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment by the South Coast Educational Collaborative based on race, color, national origin, age, domicile, native language, sexual orientation, religion, or gender identity, or to make inquiry concerning the application of any of the above laws or regulations, please contact:

**Mickey Dargon**  
**South Coast Educational Collaborative**  
**2201 GAR Highway**  
**Swansea, MA 02777**  
**774-644-8883**  
[MDargon@scecoll.org](mailto:MDargon@scecoll.org)

All written complaints should state in detail the basis of the complaint, the names of the persons involved and any dates relevant to the specific complaint. These inquiries may also be referred to:

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**Office for Civil Rights**  
**John W. McCormack Building**  
**5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor**  
**Boston, MA 02109**  
**(617) 289-0111**

*(SOURCE: MASC; LEGAL REFS: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal, Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375, Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, M.G.L. 76.5; Amended 2011/ M.G.L. 76:16, M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq., (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972), BESE regulations 603 CMR 26:00 Amended 2012. BESE regulations 603 CMR 28.00)*

## II. POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATING TO PERSONNEL

### PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING

The Collaborative will strive to attract, secure, and retain the highest qualified personnel for all professional positions. The selection process will be based, in part, on seeking candidates who will devote themselves to the education and welfare of the students and/or adults participating in SCEC programs, as well as investing in and utilizing practices of equity and diversity to meet the needs of our students.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director or their designee to determine the personnel needs of the Collaborative and to locate qualified candidates. No position may be created without the approval of the Executive Director and/or their designee. The Collaborative's goal is to employ and retain personnel who are motivated, who will strive always to do their best, and who are committed to providing the best educational environment for every student.

It will be the duty of the Executive Director to see that persons considered for employment meet or are eligible to meet the certification and contract requirements called for by the position being sought.

The following guidelines will be used in the selection of personnel:

1. There will be no discrimination in the hiring process due to age, sex, creed, race, color, national origin, limited English-speaking ability, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or place of residence.
2. The quality of instruction is enhanced by a staff with a wide variation in background, educational preparation, and previous experience.
3. The administrator responsible for the hiring of a staff member establishes a representative screening committee for reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, and consulting required references. The administrator has the final say in determining who will be recommended for hire but it is expected that the screening committee's input will be a factor in the decision.
4. The verification of candidate's credentials, including professional references will be provided to Human Resources before any recommendation for hire is made.
5. Final determination of new hires, salary, and benefits (based on Union contracts for Union hires) for new hires shall rest with the Executive Director and/or their designee.

*(Source: MASC Policy; LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:6; 71:38; 71:38G; 71:39; 71:45; 71:55B Massachusetts Board of Education, 603 CMR 7:00 and 44:00)*

### CORI POLICY

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 385 of the Acts of 2002, *An Act Further Protecting Children*, requires that all schools conduct criminal background checks on current and prospective employees, consultants, volunteers, school transportation providers and others who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Criminal offender record information (CORI) is obtained from the Criminal History Systems Board at least every three years during an individual's term of employment or service with SCEC. When a person is charged with a crime in a Massachusetts state or federal court, that person "has a CORI."

In addition, in compliance with G.L. c. 459 of the Acts of 2012, *An Act Relative to Background Checks*, SCEC employees must submit to national fingerprint-based criminal background checks. All employees who began working at SCEC on or after July 1, 2013 are required to complete the fingerprinting-based criminal background check. Fingerprinting appointments are made through The State Applicant Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS) MorphoTrust USA IdentoGo™ registration website.

With respect to pre-employment screening, CORI and fingerprinting access are used as a final step in the process of screening all prospective applicants for employment, where such applicants are otherwise in all respects qualified for the position in question. At the time that SCEC determines that an applicant is qualified for employment, CORI and fingerprinting checks will be implemented by the designated SCEC Human Resources employee. The said applicant will be hired only upon the recommendation of the Criminal History Systems Board.

SCEC reserves the exclusive right concerning any employment decision made pursuant to Chapter 385 of the Acts of 2002 and G.L. c. 459 of the Acts of 2012. SCEC may consider the following factors when reviewing CORI and fingerprinting reports: the type and nature of the offense(s), the date of the offense(s) and whether the individual has been subsequently arrested, as well as any other factors SCEC deems relevant. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant for employment. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CORI and fingerprinting checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable laws or regulations.

SCEC maintains CORI and fingerprinting records for all employees and re-submits for CORI access on each employee every three (3) years after the employee's initial and subsequent CORI checks. CORI histories are shared only with SCEC's Executive Director and SCEC's legal representatives who follow up as needed.

## **FINGERPRINTING**

Per Massachusetts state law, all individuals who participate in public school activities must undergo a fingerprint-based national background check. All candidates, including all prospective and new employees, trainees, and people who would like to complete student teaching placements and/or clinical placements must complete the fingerprinting process at their own expense prior to starting at South Coast Educational Collaborative.

Family members wishing to attend a field trip may also need to undergo a fingerprint-based national background check.

## **TRAINING AND ORIENTATION FOR NEW EMPLOYEES**

The Leadership Team ensures that all new employees are trained on all required topics according to the following schedule:

### ***Immediately at the Time of Hire:***

- SCEC's mission, vision, and core values
- SCEC's administrative organization

- Contract information (wages, benefits, etc.)
  - Responsibilities respective to employee’s position

***Within One Week of Employment:***

- Student records/confidentiality policies and procedures
- Evacuation and emergency procedures (Safe Schools Program Plan)
- Positive behavioral supports/code of conduct/disciplinary procedures
- Policy for missing and runaway students
- Conflict of Interest Law, including completion of the online ethics assessment

***Within One Month of Employment:***

- American Heart Association®’s Heartsaver® First Aid, CPR and AED certification
- Prevention and reporting of child abuse and neglect
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (*included in this manual*)
- Universal precautions
- Medication administration procedures
- Transportation safety
- Physical restraint policies and procedures
- Suspension policies and procedures
- Crisis Prevention and Intervention - Full Training (Crisis Prevention Institute®)
- Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Core Curriculum, and curriculum alignment
- Statewide Testing security and testing policies and procedures and/or MCAS-Alternate Assessment policies and procedures (for professionally licensed staff)
- Civil rights (including discrimination and harassment)
- Use of technology, including social media
- 7D licensure

New employees are trained according to the SCEC training calendar if the training falls within the above schedule. If not, special training is arranged for the new employee so that the orientation schedule is followed.

Furthermore, anyone seeking a placement at SCEC for a training site, for a semester or longer, regardless of professional discipline, is expected to participate in all employee trainings, as allowed by their agreed upon schedule.

For specific information regarding a training placement at SCEC, please contact the Main Office.

**STAFF CONDUCT**

All South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) employees have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as these affect their work, the policies of the Board of Directors, and the procedures designed by administration to implement them.

Each employee is responsible for maintaining a high standard of cooperation, efficiency, and

integrity in their work with South Coast Educational Collaborative. If an employee's conduct falls below the standard, they may be subject to disciplinary action. The following standards of employee conduct must be adhered to. This list is not comprehensive, and employees must use good judgment and common sense in their conduct.

All staff members will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern for SCEC's mission, the well-being of students and the ethics of the profession.

Essential to the success of Collaborative's operations and instructional programs are the following specific responsibilities, which will be required of all personnel:

- Support and enforcement of policies of the Board and the Collaborative
- Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified.
- Concern for and attention to their own and the Collaborative's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students including the need to ensure that students are always under supervision to ensure their care and protection.
- Employees may not report to work under the influence of intoxicants, or non-prescription/illegal drugs or use such substances on SCEC property (owned or leased).
- Employees must follow the directions of their supervisors.
- Employees are expected to maintain consistent and reliable attendance. Any absence or tardiness shall be reported to the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader no later than one (1) hour before the expected work time.
- Employees must perform their assigned duties in an efficient, effective, and cooperative manner.
- Employees are expected to work in a professional capacity. Any differences with colleagues shall be resolved outside of the view of students and shall not allow these differences to impact the educational process and the work being performed.
- Employees are expected to conduct themselves in such a way so that common decency and the morality of the community are not violated.
- Employees must not make derogatory or false accusations that discredit other employees or supervisors.
- Employees may not remove SCEC money, merchandise, or property without permission.
- Employees are expected to always exhibit honesty and integrity.
- Employees are prohibited from using abusive or profane language towards a student, a fellow employee, a parent/guardian/caretaker, or a member of the general public.
- Employees may not engage in inappropriate personal relationships with students and/or members of students' families. (*Please refer to Employee Use of Computers/Internet/Social Media*)
- Any type of harassment will not be tolerated.

## **EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE**

Because of the critical importance of consistent educational services to our children, regular attendance is essential for all employees. Employee absences require special adjustments to cover the absent employee's duties and responsibilities. Therefore, it is each employee's responsibility to maintain a satisfactory attendance record. Attendance and punctuality are considered when determining continued employment. Employees should be in their classroom or other assigned area and ready to begin work at or before the scheduled time.

## **CALLING IN SICK PROCEDURES**

Employees are expected to be at work unless they are ill. If you are ill, you must call your designated supervisor as soon as you know you will be using a sick day, but no later than one hour before your start time. Please refer to your contract for additional sick leave information.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS ON PREMISES**

Individuals bringing personal equipment or materials to a South Coast Educational Collaborative facility do so at their own risk. SCEC is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSURES**

In the event of snow or other weather emergencies, school may be canceled or delayed. School cancellation and delay announcements are made on local radio and television stations (<https://www.ribroadcasters.com/station-list/>) and their respective broadcast websites. Staff and parents/guardians are encouraged to register for the text message alerts when school is closed or delayed. If school is canceled for the school district in which a program is located, then that program is also canceled. If school is delayed for the school district in which a program is located, then the opening of the program will also be delayed. For instance, if the SCEC program is in Seekonk, then the program will follow the determination of Seekonk Public Schools. Main office employees follow the cancellation and delay schedule of the Swansea Public School District.

There may be times when students are dismissed early from school due to weather. Educational personnel will contact each parent/guardian/caretaker to ensure that a responsible adult will be at home to accept the student.

## **STAFF ATTIRE/DRESS CODE POLICY**

South Coast Educational Collaborative expects all employees to wear professional attire suitable for the school environment and the day's activities.

In addition, and at other SCEC sites, common sense should prevail when considering appropriate attire. When working with students, items such as flip-flops, open-toed shoes, expensive jewelry, dangling earrings, short-shorts, midriff tops, muscle shirts, sexually provocative clothing, and clothing with provocative or profane language or symbols, are not acceptable and may increase the risk of injury. Employees working in district school buildings are required to follow the teacher dress code outlined in the host school's handbook.

Questions about appropriate attire should be directed to an employee's supervisor.

## **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

The Collaborative will provide a drug-free workplace and certifies that it will:

- Notify all employees in writing that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the Collaborative's workplace and specify the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibitions.

- Establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace; the Collaborative’s Policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace; and available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and the penalty that may be imposed on employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.
- Make it a requirement that each employee whose employment is funded by a federal grant be given a copy of the statement as required.

### **NO SMOKING/NO VAPING POLICY**

South Coast Educational Collaborative complies in full with the federal *Pro-Children Act of 1994 [Section 1041 of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, P.L. 103-227, 20 USC 6081]*, which prohibits smoking inside facilities used for preschool, elementary, or secondary education or library services for children. Specifically, students, staff, and visitors may not smoke in any SCEC owned or leased building or school building on SCEC property. Smoking is also prohibited in all SCEC vehicles and during all school-sponsored community experiences or school-related activities.

At SCEC, the same policy applies to “vaping.”

### **STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

SCEC recognizes that its employees have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens, including campaigning for an elected public office and holding an elected or appointed office.

Employees are prohibited from seeking support or contributions for political parties or candidates from employees, students, or family members during regular work hours. No employee is authorized to use their professional association with SCEC for the purpose of affecting an election or nomination for office of any candidate for public office.

In connection with campaigning, an employee will not use any SCEC’s facilities, equipment, or supplies; discuss their campaign with SCEC personnel, students or families during the workday; or use any time during the workday for campaigning purposes. Under no circumstances will students be pressured into campaigning for any employee. *(Source: MASC Policy; LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71.44)*

### **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Information about staff members is required for the daily administration of the Collaborative and/or its programs, implementing salary and other personnel policies, budget and financial planning, responding to appropriate inquiries about employees, and for meeting the Board of Directors' education reporting requirements. To meet these needs, the Executive Director will implement a comprehensive and efficient system of personnel records maintenance and control under the following guidelines:

1. A personnel folder for each present and former employee will be accurately maintained in the central administrative office. In addition to the application for

employment and references, the folders will contain records and information relative to compensation, payroll deductions, evaluations, and any other pertinent information.

2. The Executive Director and/or their designee will be the official custodian for personnel files and will have responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law.
3. Personnel records are considered confidential under the law and will not be open to public inspection. Access to personnel files will be limited to persons authorized by the Executive Director or their designee for use for the reasons cited above.
4. Each employee will have the right, upon written request, to review the contents of their own personnel file.
5. Employees may make written objections to any information contained in the file. Any written objection must be signed and dated by the staff member and will become part of the employee's personnel file. Further, no negative comment will be placed in a staff member's file unless it is signed and dated by the person making the comment and the staff member is informed of the comment and afforded the opportunity to include his written response in the file.
6. Lists of school system employees' names and home addresses will be released only to governmental agencies as required for official reports or by the laws.

*(Source: MASC Policy; LEGAL REFS.: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Sec. 438, P.L. 90-247, Title IV, as amended 88 Stat. 571-574 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and regulations. M.G.L. 4:7; 71:42C).*

Employees are expected to update their emergency contact information annually and as changes occur. This information shall be securely stored at the SCEC Main Office and at the program site to maintain employee confidentiality. In the event of an emergency, SCEC staff will contact the person identified as the emergency contact with relevant information and/or will send the emergency contact information with emergency medical personnel. At no time will information be provided over the telephone to persons whose identity cannot be authenticated.

## **PROVISION OF SCHOOL CALENDAR**

Employees will be given a copy of their school's calendar at the time of hire and before the beginning of each school year. Employees are responsible to become familiar with the calendar, noting all school days, professional days, vacation weeks and holidays. School calendars are also posted on the SCEC website.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST LAW**

The *Conflict-of-Interest Law* seeks to prevent conflicts between private interests and public duties, to foster integrity in public service, and to promote the public's trust and confidence in that service by placing restrictions on what state employees may do on the job, after hours, and after leaving public service.

All **employees must** familiarize themselves with the *Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law for State Employees*. Within one week of being hired, each employee must access <https://massethicstraining.skillburst.com/> to take the online ethics reform test. To register, please do the following:

1. Register as a new user at <https://massethicstraining.skillburst.com/>

2. Create an account by providing your first and last name, in addition to your work email.
3. Select your organization, “South Coast Educational Collaborative”
4. Click on “Get Access”
5. Complete the one-hour training.

Further, each SCEC employee **must**, every two (2) years, access the same link to take the online ethics reform test. In addition, each year, every SCEC employee is provided with a summary of the *Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law for State Employees*, and they are required to sign a written acknowledgement that they have been provided with such a summary.

## **INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAM**

Beginning and newly hired educators and other professionals are assigned to a trained mentor throughout their initial year of teaching and/or their first-year teaching at South Coast Educational Collaborative. All beginning paraprofessionals are also assigned to a trained mentor during their first year of employment. All SCEC mentors are required to participate in a ten (10) hour Mentor Training Program prior to being assigned to a beginning or newly hired educator.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Professional development is one of SCEC’s most important activities and an essential part of recruiting and retaining highly qualified personnel. All staff members will be encouraged to increase their skills and competencies beyond those they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties and assistance from supervisors.

Opportunities for professional growth may be provided through such activities as follows:

- Planned in-service programs and workshops offered within the Collaborative which may include participation by outside consultants.
- Membership on curriculum development committees, drawing personnel from within and outside the Collaborative.
- Designated time for visits to other classrooms and programs and for attendance at conferences, workshops, and other professional meetings.
- Leaves of absence for graduate study, research, and travel.
- Partial payment of tuition for approved courses. *(See Tuition Reimbursement Procedures in Appendix C)*
- The Executive Director and/or their designees will have authority to approve or deny released time for conferences and visitations, and reimbursements for expenses, provided such activities are within budget allocations for the purpose. *(See Travel Procedures in Appendix C)(Source: MASC Policy)*

## **LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION**

Educators employed by South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) must be licensed and highly qualified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in the relevant educator field(s) and level(s). Non-DESE-licensed related service providers must be licensed or certified by the applicable professional and/or Massachusetts state agency. All licensed and certified employees have the responsibility to ensure that their educator licenses/endorsements/specialist certifications are current.

Licensure and re-licensure may be earned through a variety of routes. Educators and related service providers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education licensing regulations by accessing their website at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/>. SCEC educators and related service providers are responsible for working toward and achieving re-licensure. SCEC offers its employees a variety of opportunities for education, professional learning, training, and support through this process, but individual professionals retain sole responsibility for remaining in good standing regarding licensing under the appropriate licensure board.

Although SCEC educators and related service providers are responsible for maintaining current licensure/certification status, SCEC central office staff may contact you with questions or reminders about your status. *It is important that you respond to all such inquiries in a timely fashion.*

*All Consultants hired by SCEC will be certified and/or licensed in the area in which they are consulting.*

## **INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

The re-licensure process requires all educators to prepare an *Individual Professional Development Plan* for each five-year renewal cycle. The plan must be consistent with the educational goals of South Coast Educational Collaborative and enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning. Educators may need to modify the plan based on evolving school improvement goals. The four steps to re-licensure for educators with a professional level license are as follows:

- Align professional development goals with SCEC goals.
- Obtain supervisor's approval.
- Complete appropriate professional development activities and maintain records of such activities.
- Obtain supervisor's endorsement and apply for re-licensure.

All other professional staff are required to develop *Individual Professional Development Plans* and engage in professional development by attending approved workshops and conferences and/or pursuing continued education.

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

All South Coast Educational Collaborative staff are required to engage in professional learning. SCEC organizes eighteen (18) professional learning days per year in which all employees participate. Professional learning activities are planned to meet the needs of all staff.

This includes every third Wednesday of each month when there is an early release day for students. All employees are required to participate in monthly meetings dedicated to the goals outlined in SCEC's Strategic Plan and DESE's Strategic Objectives. These goals include transitioning from a schooling-focused approach to an educating-focused approach, and fostering the development of students, staff, and leaders as changemakers. The meetings will cover various topics, including but not limited to:

- State-mandated trainings
- Individualized Education Program development
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Deeper learning pedagogy

These meetings will be held at program sites and will be no longer than one (1) hour in length unless agreed upon prior to the meeting. The remaining time shall be devoted to lesson planning and other classroom responsibilities.

On an annual basis, SCEC provides training on the following topics:

- Analyzing and accommodating the diverse learning styles of all students
- Confidentiality of student records
- Civil rights responsibilities (e.g., equal education opportunity; preventing and responding to incidents of discriminatory harassment; etc.)
- Positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Physical restraint (Crisis Prevention Institute®)
- Suspension
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
- American Heart Association®'s Heartsaver® First Aid, CPR and AED programs
- Statewide Testing
- Partnership of Readiness for College and Careers (where applicable)
- Safe Schools Program Plan (emergency and evacuation policies and procedures)
- Prevention and reporting of child abuse and neglect
- Medication delegation and universal precautions
- Risk Management
- Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and curriculum alignment
- Transportation safety

## **Research**

There are times when professional learning involves more formalized instruction that is expected to lead to a post-secondary degree, certification, or other credentialing. These formal venues often require the completion of specific assignments which might involve an intersection between employees' work and studies. We ask that employees inform the Program Administrator and Director of Professional Development/Learning of their enrollment in such programs so that the guidance and support needed to complete your course of study while complying with SCEC policies related to Quality Assurance, Confidentiality, and the use of human participants can be provided. The Google Classroom associated with Life-Long Learning will also have additional resources available to support those who seek to advance professionally.

## **Quality Assurance/Research Policy**

To help evaluate the merits of any research project and to consider the ethical and legal factors contributing to the data collection process, SCEC created the Quality Assurance Team (QAT),

which consists of at least three members. Of the three, at least one member will hold an advanced degree with coursework and experience in research design. The Chair of the committee shall be named by the Executive Director of SCEC. The Chair, with the approval of the Executive Director, shall name the other members to the Committee.

The purpose of the QAT is to review each research proposal in keeping with the standards and expectations outlined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services regulations, 34A CFR §97.103, as well as the United States Department of Education regulations, 34 CFR §98.3 and 34 CFR §98.4, Commonwealth of Massachusetts 104 CMR 31.00, and the relevant professional ethics and standards offered by professional organizations for working with human subjects, i.e. American Psychological Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, etc.

### **Definition of Research:**

For the purposes of this policy, SCEC defines research as a systematic process of gathering information to answer specific questions, make advances in practice, to gain insights, and to make comparisons using scientifically accepted, valid, and reliable methods. Such methods might include but are not limited to the use of surveys, interviews, record reviews, analysis of archival classroom-based data, and direct or recorded observations.

### **Scope of Research Endeavors:**

SCEC encourages and tries to support staff efforts to be life-long learners and recognizes that in the pursuit of higher education, staff may need to engage in scientific research projects. These efforts can range from the completion of a simple classroom assignment required for course credit to the completion of more complex inquiry in fulfillment of a doctoral research project or dissertation. Regardless of the complexity, level of detail, or purpose of the research, anyone wishing to access either staff or students as participants in the study will need to follow the steps listed below to secure written administrative approval, consent from staff or guardians, and assent from students.

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as limiting SCEC teachers, staff, and students from conducting surveys, polls, or observations as part of a well-designed classroom lesson. Similarly, there are evaluations of students that occur within the scope of educational practice, such as the completion of a functional behavior analysis, which employ systematic data collection and the manipulation of conditions to determine appropriate educational programming for a particular student. Such activities should not be considered under the purview of this policy. Surveys, polls, or observations in the service of program development should be reviewed by the QAT prior to data collection.

### **Use of Human Subjects:**

Anytime a scientific inquiry involves direct contact with people, whether or not there are any experimental manipulations, the process is considered to be involving human subjects. As such, issues of consent need to be considered.

For research projects involving staff members employed by SCEC, a written or electronic

consent, submitted as part of the proposal under review to be reviewed by QAT and, needs to include the following:

- Institutional affiliation and purpose of the project.
- Expectations and time required
- Risks and benefits associated with participating
- Specific statement of the voluntary nature of the staff member's participation
- Specific statement regarding the confidentiality of responses
- Specific statement regarding the impact of the project on employment status

Likewise, research projects involving students or families will require specific written or electronic parental/guardian permission (consent) and student assent, and a copy of the permission slip must accompany the proposal. The consent/assent form must include the following:

- Institutional Affiliation and purpose of the project
- Expectations and time required
- Risks and benefits listed
- Specific statement of the voluntary nature of participation
- Specific statement regarding the confidentiality of responses
- Specific statement that participation will not impact the education of the student

The exception to securing such consent occurs when the data being collected is a routine process already occurring in the classroom, representing archival data that can be identified for use by a researcher; when comparing instructional practices for the purpose of improving student outcomes; and when systematic data collection occurs for the purpose of commenting on educational progress toward IEP goals.

**The following process must be followed by those wishing to conduct research that is intended for publication or public presentation:**

1. Discuss the idea with their direct SCEC supervisor or members of the Leadership Team in cases where an independent consultant seeks access to SCEC.
2. Submit the proposal with appropriate review of the literature to ground the thesis, procedures, and data collection process within sound empirical foundations. If the proposal is related to a specific class assignment, the proposal should include a copy of the actual class assignment as provided by the instructor along with the instructor's name and contact information.
3. Obtain approval from their institutional affiliate's Institutional Review Board (IRB) which may occur concurrently while the SCEC Quality Assurance Team (QAT) reviews said proposal.
4. The QAT will work collaboratively with the investigator to meet all the requirements for the ethical treatment of students and staff while maintaining scientific integrity.
5. A final determination of approval/disapproval should be made within three weeks of receiving the proposal.
6. For approved projects, affiliation agreements shall be executed to document the collaboration specific to the research being conducted. No such affiliation agreement will

be necessary for time-limited class-specific assignments.

7. The QAT reserves the right to request intermittent updates regarding the data collection process.

#### **Internal program development and review:**

1. The QAT will hold at least one meeting each semester with the option to discuss proposed projects and other issues via email communication.
2. The QAT will act as a resource when considering the proposals given their expertise in research methods and in the ethical and legal requirements for working with human subjects.
3. Should the program leadership consider the findings worthy of publication in a professional and public venue, the QAT will act as the internal review board, collaborating with and guiding program leadership in the process of program evaluation.
4. Recognizing that much of what we might do as program evaluation would be considered exempt from the HHS regulations regarding the use of human subjects according to 34A §97.104, the role of the QAT would be supportive in nature to promote empirically strong processes upon which to make decisions about programming.

#### **EDUCATOR EVALUATION**

All South Coast Educational Collaborative educators and administrators are evaluated according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's regulations, 603 CMR 35.00.

To assure a high quality of teacher and administrator performance and to advance the instructional programs of the schools, a continuous program for teacher, related service provider, nurse, clinician, and administrator evaluation has been established by the Executive Director and Board of Directors. Regular reports will be made to the Executive Director concerning the outcomes of these evaluations.

The evaluation process includes:

1. The development and periodic review of techniques and procedures for making evaluations.
2. Interpretation of the information gained in the evaluative process in terms of the objectives of the instructional program.
3. The application of the information gained to the planning of staff development and in-service training activities, which are designed to improve instruction and increase teacher competence.

The evaluation process will include self-evaluation, supervisor-initiated observations, and teacher-initiated observations.

The formal evaluations will be written and will be discussed by the supervisor and the person being evaluated. The discussions may either precede or follow the writing of the evaluation

document. Copies of the written document will be signed and dated by both parties and retained in the personnel files of the teacher or administrator. In addition, the individual will receive a signed copy. The signature should indicate that the evaluation has been read and discussed. A signature does not indicate agreement with said evaluation.

The written evaluation should be specific in terms of the person's strengths and weaknesses. Areas where improvement is needed should be clearly set forth, and recommendations for improvement should be made. Subsequent evaluations should address any improvement or to any continuing difficulty that is observed.

*(Source: MASC; LEGAL REF : M.G.L. 69:1B; 71:38; 71:38Q; 150E; 152B, 603 CMR 35:00, Contract Reference, South Coast Educational Collaborative Federation's Agreement).*

***Please refer to the Educator Evaluation Framework posted on the DESE website at***

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/model/default.html>.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

During day-to-day responsibilities, employees of South Coast Educational Collaborative are exposed to sensitive information related to the students, families, and colleagues. Our job is to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure.

Employees **must not:**

- Discuss of specific students or their families in open/public areas where other students, members of the larger school community, or the general public might overhear.
- Copy or to remove from the work site confidential student records.
- Reference specific students or student behaviors that are identifiable on social media given the potential disclosure that can occur.
- Discard written information that contains identifying information. These documents need to be shredded.

Maintaining the privacy of confidential information of fellow employees is also the responsibility of the SCEC community. Employee compensation and related information is a personal matter and should not be discussed with co-workers, families or other individuals who do business within the Collaborative. Any concerns in this regard should be discussed solely with Supervisor(s) and/or Union representative(s). Employee health information must also be respected as private and requires confidentiality.

## **EMPLOYEE USE OF COMPUTERS/INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA**

Network and electronic resources, such as computers, other hardware, software, e-mail, and Internet access are tools that South Coast Educational Collaborative provides its employees to assist them in their work. These resources are proprietary SCEC property and are subject to review or access by SCEC at any time.

The Executive Director and Educational Administrators will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not

distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

1. Improper fraternization with students using social media or other electronic means.
2. Staff may not friend or follow current students on social media.
3. All electronic contacts with students should be through SCEC's computer and telephone system, except in emergency situations.
4. Class or student organization pages, accounts, or groups will be created only in conjunction with a SCEC staff member. All groups must include the appropriate administrator as a member. Access to and control of the page will remain with the SCEC staff member.
5. Staff members will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the Collaborative.
6. Inappropriate contact via phone or electronic device is prohibited.
7. Inappropriateness of posting content with sexual content
8. Inappropriateness of posting content exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
9. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
10. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.
11. SCEC provides internet access for instructional purposes only, and it is not to be used by students or staff for personal use. The use of personal handheld devices, such as but not limited to, cell phones and tablets, should be limited to after school hours. Texting, emailing, video chatting, and photographing, as well as other types of social media exchanges by staff or students is disruptive to the educational process and not allowed during the school day. (Please see the policy relative to photographing students.) Because SCEC provides technology for the completion of assignments, the need to use a personal, handheld device for instructional purposes should be rare and should only occur with the approval of the program administrator.

### **Use of Technology**

All SCEC employees are expected to utilize technology to improve productivity and to enhance learning for all students. Use of technology includes, but may not be limited to:

- **E-mail**: All SCEC employees are provided with an email account at the time of employment. E-mail is to be used for intra-Collaborative and other SCEC-related communication ONLY. Personal emailing and texting are prohibited during work hours. All employees are expected to check their SCEC e-mail regularly and respond to all communications appropriately and in a timely manner.
- **School Brains (IEP Management System)**: Staff responsible for IEP development and/or student evaluations receive initial and ongoing training in the web-based IEP management system. Once trained, they are expected to follow all established procedures and protocols for managing student information, including IEPs, Progress Reports, and other student-related data for which they hold full or partial responsibility.
- **Laptop Computers, Desktop Computers and Tablets**: All employees have access to a laptop or a desktop computer and/or a tablet for the purpose of conducting SCEC-related work only. Assigned technology may not be used for personal business.
- **ADP Labor Management**: SCEC utilizes the ADP system for labor management and payroll services. This system makes it possible for employees to record their weekly hours accurately. We continuously strive to improve our processes to ensure data

accuracy and employee satisfaction. Therefore, we stress the importance of all employees following business protocols and staying up to date on the most current changes and improvements within the business office.

- **Social media:** In this age of instant communication and rapidly changing technology, SCEC’s policy regarding the use of social media is designed to be proactive and to aid with understanding and setting appropriate boundaries. The term “social media” refers to *any network-based system that enables people to interact with one another online via user-generated content, messaging, and other interactive tools*. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to blogs (e.g., Twitter), social networks (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat), video sharing (e.g., YouTube), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), and image sharing.

SCEC acknowledges the First Amendment rights of employees to speak out on matters of concern through all media. However, inappropriate content authored by employees that interferes with the educational mission of SCEC is not acceptable and is subject to disciplinary action. SCEC reserves the right to regulate the use of social media by employees, regardless of whether the technology used belongs to SCEC, when such use:

- Interferes with the educational process;
- Disrupts the work of South Coast Educational Collaborative;
- Breaches confidentiality obligations;
- Creates a hostile work environment;
- Violates federal or state law, federal or state regulations, or SCEC rules and regulations; or
- Is inconsistent with professional codes of conduct.

### **Social media activity sponsored by South Coast Educational Collaborative**

If an employee wishes to use social media sites for instruction or to conduct meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements, etc. for educational purposes or for a school-based activity, regardless of whether the technology used belongs to SCEC, the employee must comply with the following rules:

- The employee must first obtain permission from his or her supervisor prior to setting up the site;
- Access to the site may only be permitted for educational purposes related to instruction;
- The site must be closed to the general public and moderated;
- Parents/Guardians must have access to any sites their children have been invited to join;
- In the case of third-party sites, the site must be regularly monitored by the employee;
- The site must be accessible to the employee’s supervisor at all times.

### **Personal Social Media Activity**

- By identifying yourself as an employee of SCEC, you become a representative of the organization and shall not post in ways that damage the reputation of SCEC.
- Never discuss, share, or post *anything* that is considered to be confidential information.
- Appropriate professional boundaries with students, families, and colleagues are required.
- Any access to personal social media activities while on school property, during school time, or using SCEC equipment must comply with all policies and may not

interfere with an employee's duties at work.

- SCEC has the right to monitor all employee use of SCEC computers and other SCEC electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of personal privacy in any personal communication or post made through social media while using SCEC computers, cellular telephones, or other SCEC information technology. All posts must comply with federal, state and SCEC confidentiality policies.

The Executive Director or their designee will periodically conduct computer/ internet audits to see if staff have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the Executive Director or their designee will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **USE AND RETURN OF SOUTH COAST-OWNED TECHNOLOGY**

Selected South Coast Educational Collaborative employees are issued laptops, tablets, cellular phones, or other technology to use in the course of their employment responsibilities. All such technology devices must be maintained *only* by SCEC's Technology Department. When the employee severs employment with SCEC, all technology devices must be returned to their supervisor.

### **STAFF MEETINGS**

All employees are required to participate in regularly scheduled and impromptu staff meetings as designated by their supervisor(s) or the Technology Department.

### **EMPLOYEES REGISTERING COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

*For Employees who are Members of the South Coast Educational Collaborative Federation (Union):*

The purpose of the grievance and arbitration procedure is to resolve grievances at the lowest possible administrative level. The Federation ("Union") carefully investigates to determine whether the complaint is true and justified before submitting it to any step of the procedure. Employees who are members of the Union should refer to their Unit Contract for specific information and timelines about the grievance and arbitration procedure. In general, the steps are as follows:

1. The Complainant discusses the issue with their immediate supervisor.
2. If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved, the Complainant submits a written description of their grievance to their immediate Supervisor.
3. The immediate Supervisor discusses the problem with the Complainant, then the Supervisor provides their decision in writing to the Complainant. If the grievance is denied, the Supervisor gives reason(s) for the denial in writing.
4. If the grievance is not resolved with the immediate Supervisor to the satisfaction of the Complainant and the Union, the issue is submitted in writing to the Executive Director or their designee.
5. The Executive Director or their designee discusses the problem with the Complainant, and the Executive Director gives reason(s) for the denial in writing.

6. If the grievance is not resolved with the Executive Director to the satisfaction of the Complainant and the Union, the Complainant submits the grievance in writing to the Board of Directors
7. The Board of Directors reviews the matter and determines whether it will hold a meeting with the grievant at its next regularly scheduled meeting
8. The Board of Directors renders its decision in writing.
9. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the Complainant and the Union, the grievance may be submitted to arbitration.

*\*Please refer to your contract for specific timelines*

***For Employees who are not Members of the South Coast Educational Collaborative Federation Union:***

For employees who are not members of the South Coast Educational Collaborative Federation, all grievances and complaints should be submitted to the Executive Director, first verbally and then in writing. All grievances and complaints will be addressed thoughtfully, seriously, professionally and in a timely manner.

**EMPLOYEE INJURIES**

Employees must *immediately* inform a supervisor of any injury and complete a written injury report using the appropriate form within twenty-four (24) hours of an injury. The report must be faxed (508-379-1231) to the South Coast Educational Collaborative Business Office immediately. The original must be signed by the Employee's Supervisor, then forwarded to the Business Office as soon as possible with a copy to the Employee's Supervisor.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

All employees are covered by the provisions of the *Massachusetts Workers' Compensation Act, General Laws of the Commonwealth, Chapter 152*.

**PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT**

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act prohibits employment discrimination based on pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, such as lactation or the need to express breast milk for a nursing child. It also describes employers' obligations to employees who are pregnant or lactating and the protections these employees are entitled to receive. Generally, employers may not treat employees or job applicants less favorably than other employees or applicants based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions and have an obligation to accommodate pregnant workers. Under this Act:

- Upon request for an accommodation, SCEC has an obligation to communicate with the employee in order to determine a reasonable accommodation for the pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition. This is called an "interactive process," and it will be done in good faith. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment that allows the employee or job applicant to perform the essential functions of the job while pregnant or experiencing a pregnancy-related condition, without undue hardship to SCEC.
- SCEC will accommodate conditions related to pregnancy, including post-pregnancy conditions such as the need to express breast milk for a nursing child.

Nursing mothers are provided a fifteen (15) minute break in a private, safe space for the express purpose of pumping their breast milk.

- SCEC will not require a pregnant employee to accept a particular accommodation, or to begin disability or parental leave if another reasonable accommodation would enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the job without undue hardship to SCEC.
- SCEC will not refuse to hire a pregnant job applicant or applicant with a pregnancy-related condition if an applicant can perform the essential functions of the job position with reasonable accommodation.
- SCEC will not require medical documentation about the need for an accommodation if the accommodation requested is for: 1) more frequent restroom, food or water breaks; 2) seating; 3) limits on lifting no more than 20 pounds; and 4) private, non-bathroom space for expressing breast milk. SCEC may, however, request medical documentation for other accommodations.

## **WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) expects all its employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. All employees must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all laws and regulations. All employees must comply with SCEC's policies and procedures and report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower policy.

This policy is intended to encourage and enable SCEC employees and others to raise concerns within the organization prior to seeking resolution outside the organization. If one suspects an employee has violated any policy or procedure, one should notify one's supervisor or the Executive Director. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. Supervisors are required to report suspected violations of policies and procedures to the Executive Director, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations.

All reports will be investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if warranted. Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. While it is hoped that employees feel comfortable bringing complaints forward to administration, if necessary, violations may be submitted anonymously.

## **PUBLIC POSTINGS**

South Coast Educational Collaborative maintains on site and makes available for public review the following:

- For each school site, program information, including a statement of purpose and a general description of the educational program.

- SCEC’s Organizational Chart (*Policies and Procedures Manual: centrally located at each school site and at the main office*);
- Tuition information (*on file at main office, available upon request*);
- Documentation of the current approval and/or licensing status (*for Public Day School programs: posted in centrally located area at program sites; also, on file at central main office*);
- Documents granting authority to operate the school (including but not limited to occupancy and fire inspection certificates), including documents that fully identify ownership, and, as applicable, the names of officers, boards, charters, partnership agreements, articles of organization and by-laws (*Collaborative Agreement: posted at www.scecoll.org and available at the main office upon request; listing of Board of Directors included in Policies and Procedures Manual: centrally located at each school site and at the main office*);
- All required policies and procedures (*Policies and Procedures Manual, Student-Family Handbooks, and Comprehensive Health Care Manual are centrally located at each school site and the main office*);
- First aid, medical and emergency procedures are conspicuously posted at each school site, including emergency telephone numbers and the location of the nearest telephones within each building.

## HEALTH POLICIES

*All South Coast Educational Collaborative employees are required to obtain certification in the American Heart Association®’s Heartsaver® First Aid, CPR and AED programs within **thirty (30) days of hire and are required to maintain active certification, thereafter, meaning you must become recertified within thirty (30) days of your certification expiration date or there is the possibility of termination.** SCEC provides these trainings at no cost to its employees on an annual basis.*

### Universal Precautions

All employees are expected to implement universal precautions to prevent contact with blood-borne pathogens or other potentially infectious materials. Engineering and work practice controls, including the use of protective equipment, are utilized to eliminate or minimize exposure to employees. Training is provided to all employees on an annual basis.

### Hepatitis B

South Coast Educational Collaborative employees are encouraged to be immunized against Hepatitis B. The employee can receive the Hepatitis B vaccine through their primary care provider or through their local public health nurse.

### Chickenpox (Varicella)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health places chickenpox (varicella) on the list of diseases requiring susceptible students and staff to be excluded from school in the case of exposure to the disease. “Susceptible” means anyone without a reliable history of chickenpox.

All employees must provide information about their chickenpox immunity status. A reliable

history can constitute the employee's self-report of having had the disease as a child, a physician-certified history of varicella disease, or immunity proven by laboratory titer or vaccination. An employee without a reliable history has three options:

- If the employee is exposed to chickenpox, the Department of Public Health requires that the employee be excluded from school/work from the 10th day to the 21st day after exposure to the disease;
- The employee can receive the varicella vaccine from their primary care physician;
- The employee can determine immunity status by having their primary care physician perform a laboratory titer test

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEES**

Employees are directed to consult their South Coast Educational Collaborative Federation Union Contract for information concerning the following:

### **Salary and Compensation Policies**

- Benefits
- Sick Leave
- Bereavement Leave
- Educational Leave
- Maternity Leave
- Personal leave
- Jury Duty
- Grievance and Arbitration Procedure
- Sustainability Model
- Involuntary Transfers
- Vacancies and Promotions
- Evaluations
- Term of Employment/Layoffs
- Resignation or Retirement

### III. POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATED TO STUDENTS

#### EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In recognition of the diverse characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the Collaborative will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race, limited-English speaking ability, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, place of residence, physical and intellectual differences, pregnancy, or pregnancy related condition.

To accomplish this, the Collaborative and its staff works to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts Access to Equal Educational Opportunity regulations, which prohibit discrimination in public school admissions and programs.

This means that every student will be given equal opportunities in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, support services, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

*(Source: MASC February 2019; LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375, Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972, M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971), BESE regulations 603 CMR 26:00, BESE regulations 603 CMR 28.00, The McKinney-Vento Act and Title I Part A, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015).*

#### SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students which will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the South Coast Educational Collaborative shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes. The goals of the Collaborative's special education programs are to allow each student to grow and achieve at their own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and return to their community school as soon as possible, if determined to be appropriate by their special education team. The Collaborative will secure properly trained personnel to work with students with special needs.

*(Source: MASC Policy; LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 94-142 adopted 1/1/91) Rehabilitation Act of 1973, M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972), Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 7/1/81 603 CMR 28:00*

#### STUDENT-FAMILY HANDBOOKS

South Coast Educational Collaborative publishes four different *Student-Family Handbooks*, one for each of its four educational levels (elementary school, middle school, high school, and community-based programming). *Student-Family Handbooks* are available for public review at each school site and at the central office and are distributed to all parents/guardians/caretakers, students, and school site personnel on an annual basis. Newly enrolled students receive a

*Student-Family Handbook* at the time of admission. *Student-Family Handbooks* are reviewed and updated as needed. Parents/guardians and students are required to sign an acknowledgement form stating that they have received the handbook and have read and understood certain key elements. SCEC educational administrators ensure that the *Student-Family Handbook* is made available in the primary language of a parent/guardian and/or student whose primary language is not English.

## **FAMILY STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to play an active role in the educational process. Parent/guardian support and cooperation are necessary to provide the best possible education. Parents/guardians are invited to visit and participate in their child's school program at their convenience and according to the established Visitor Policy. From time to time, families are invited to attend forums to obtain information about and discuss topics of interest or concern, such as community integration, legal issues, positive behavioral support in the home, and post-secondary employment and living options. In addition, parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to participate in the parent/guardian committee(s) established by their own school district.

South Coast Educational Collaborative's leaders, educators and related service providers strive to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of communication to and from school. Ongoing relationships between parents/guardians and educators are encouraged to maximize the growth of the child both at home and school. Communications with parents/guardians are in clear and commonly understood words and are in both English and the primary language of the home if the primary language is other than English. Methods of communication may include but are not limited to:

- Scheduled parent/guardian-teacher conferences
- Participation in the SCEC Family Partnership Network
- Telephone calls, typically before or after school, may be utilized by the educator or the parent/guardian for communication.
- Parents/guardians are asked to provide an email address as an additional way to facilitate communication. Likewise, parents/guardians are provided the email address(es) of their child's educator(s).
- Visits to school: parents/guardians are welcome to visit their child's classroom(s) at their convenience. During class time, teachers may not always be able to speak with a parent/guardian but will be happy to make an appointment to do so. Visitors must first sign in at the school site's central office and follow all the school's rules for visitors. ***(Please see Visitor and Observation policies in Section V for further information).***
- Many of our schools provide a mechanism for daily communication with parents/guardians. If such a process is not in place, the parent/guardian may request this service.
- Parents/guardians are often invited to attend special events at their child's school, such as community experiences, art shows, dances, special topic forums, holiday events, etc.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT AND NOTIFICATION**

South Coast Educational Collaborative works with each sending school district to ensure that informed parent/guardian consent and notification is obtained as follows:

- The sending school district obtains written parental/guardian consent before conducting an initial evaluation or making an initial placement of a student at South Coast Educational Collaborative.
- The sending school district obtains written parental/guardian consent before conducting a re-evaluation.
- The sending school district obtains consent before initiating extended evaluation services.
- The sending school district advises the parent/guardian of the following:
  - A parent/guardian may revoke consent at any time.
  - Parents/guardians have the right to observe any program(s) proposed for their child if the child is identified as eligible for special education services.
  - A parent/guardian may discontinue special education and related services provided to his or her child by notifying the school district in writing that the parent/guardian revokes consent to the continued provision of all special education and related services to the child. The school district shall respond promptly by sending notice to the parent/guardian of the district's intention to discontinue all special education and related services to the student ten (10) school days from the date of the district's notice based on the parent's/guardian's revocation of consent.

In addition, South Coast Educational Collaborative ensures that informed parent/guardian consent and notification is obtained for, but not limited to, the following:

- Use of physical restraint;
- Implementation of IEP goals and services;
- Medication administration, including over-the-counter medications;
- Student participation in community experiences
- Use of technology at school;
- Use of photographing, videotaping and audiotaping;
- Authorization for use of outside consultants

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

As of August 2024, the parents/guardians of students in all SCEC programs have been provided the opportunity to join Dighton-Rehoboth's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). This local SEPAC advises on matters that pertain to the education, health and safety of the students in the program. SCEC launches notifications of all SEPAC meetings via SchoolBrains. Each launch invites families to come to the meeting and/or become involved in the SEPAC.

SCEC also encourages all SCEC families to join their local district's Special Education Parent Advisory Council.

## **FAMILIES WITH ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

Prior to enrolling a new student in a South Coast Educational Collaborative school site, a determination is made as to the primary language of the student's parent/guardian as well as that of the student. This information is documented on the *Admissions Form* (completed by an SCEC Educational Administrator) and the *Student Information Form* (completed by the student's parent/guardian) and the student's IEP. In addition, each family, upon student admission, is asked to complete a *Home Language Survey*, as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

SCEC makes arrangements for effective verbal and written communication with families in their primary language, if other than English, either through bilingual staff, securing an interpreter through the student's local education agency (LEA), and/or ensuring that important information and documents are available to families in their primary language. Communications are in simple and commonly understood words. Communications are in both English and the primary language of the home if such primary language is other than English. Where the parents/guardians or the student are unable to read in any language or are blind or deaf, communications are made orally in English or with the use of a foreign language interpreter, in Braille, in sign language, via TDD, or in writing, whichever is appropriate, and all such communications are documented.

It is the responsibility of the student's sending school district to secure interpreters for IEP and other meetings involving a family that requires such services. The sending school district ensures that any interpreter used is required to be fluent in the primary language of the home and be familiar with special education procedures, programs, and services. It is the responsibility of the sending school district to ensure that the IEP, all related IEP Student-Family Handbooks, Codes of Conduct, Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans, SCEC forms and notices (both written and verbal), and other SCEC documents are translated into each family's primary language, when required, and provided to the family in both English and the translated version. All translated documents will be reviewed by an interpreter fluent in the language of translation to ensure accuracy of the translation.

Prior to enrolling a new student whose parent/guardian's primary language is not English, the school administrator will ascertain for that student at least two persons who agree to be available to speak with the parent/guardian in their primary language to convey verbal messages. These interpreters may be a family member, a friend of the family, a staff person of SCEC, or an interpreter from the sending school district. Every such verbal conversation is documented in writing and placed in the student's file.

## **HEALTH CARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATIVE TO STUDENTS**

South Coast Educational Collaborative employs a licensed developmental pediatrician who is available for consultation as well as direct services to students. SCEC has School Nurses who consult with the physician to develop and oversee all health care policies and individual health care plans, and to supervise the school-based nursing staff.

SCEC has a written *Comprehensive Health Care Manual* which includes policies and procedures

regarding, but not limited to:

- Food and nutrition
- Provision of medical, nursing and infirmary care
- Medical and Behavioral Emergency Response Plans (MBERP)
- Emergency first aid and medical treatment
- Showering and Toileting
- Substance Abuse
- Administration of medications, including Narcan
- Preventive health care
- Wellness policy
- Universal precautions (protection from exposure based on allergy to food, chemical and other material)
- Protocol for accessing the developmental pediatrician

All employees are trained in, and are expected to be fully aware of, all health care policies and procedures. The complete *Comprehensive Health Care Manual* is centrally located at each school site and at the main office and is available to all staff and parents/guardians and the public.

### **POLICY FOR ADDRESSING HEALTH CARE CONCERNS**

If an employee has concerns about the health status or health care of a student, the employee must immediately report the concern to the School Nurse, and Educational Administrator. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader will determine an immediate course of action and will work together with the School Nurse until the issue is resolved.

### **POLICY ON STUDENTS WHO ARE PREGNANT**

The South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) does not discriminate in its education program or activity against any student based on the student's current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions.

#### **Title IX Coordinator**

When a student, or a person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student, informs any employee of the student's pregnancy or related conditions, unless the employee reasonably believes that the Title IX Coordinator has been notified, the employee will promptly provide that person with the Title IX Coordinator's contact information and inform that person that the Title IX Coordinator can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure the student's equal access to SCEC's education program or activity.

#### **Reasonable Modifications**

Specifically, SCEC must make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, or procedures as necessary to prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to SCEC's education program or activity. Each reasonable modification must be based on the student's individualized needs. In determining what modifications are required, SCEC will consult with the student. A modification that would fundamentally alter the nature of its education program or activity is not a reasonable modification. The student has discretion to accept or decline a reasonable modification.

Reasonable modifications may include, but are not limited to, breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking,

or using the restroom; intermittent absences to attend medical appointments; access to online or homebound education; changes in schedule or course sequence; extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations; allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby; counseling; changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest); elevator access; or other changes to policies, practices, or procedures.

The student may voluntarily take a leave of absence from SCEC's education program or activity to cover, at minimum, the period of time deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider. When the student returns to SCEC's education program or activity, the student will be reinstated to the academic status and, as practicable, to the extracurricular status that the student held when the voluntary leave began. To request tutoring in these circumstances, a family must fill out the home-hospital form.

SCEC will ensure that the student can access a lactation space, which will be a space other than a bathroom, that is clean, shielded from view, free from intrusion from others, and may be used by a student for expressing breast milk or breastfeeding as needed.

SCEC will only require supporting documentation that is necessary and reasonable to determine reasonable modifications. SCEC will not request documentation for reasonable modifications such as when a student who is pregnant needs a bigger uniform; when the student has previously provided the recipient with sufficient supporting documentation; when the reasonable modification because of pregnancy or related conditions at issue is allowing a student to carry or keep water nearby and drink, use a bigger desk, sit or stand, or take breaks to eat, drink, or use the restroom; when the student has lactation needs.

### **Certification to Participate**

SCEC will not require a student who is pregnant or has related conditions to provide certification from a healthcare provider or any other person that the student is physically able to participate in the recipient's class, program, or extracurricular activity unless:

- The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for participation in the class, program, or extracurricular activity;
- The recipient requires such certification of all students participating in the class, program, or extracurricular activity; and
- The information obtained is not used as a basis for discrimination.

### **POLICY ON USE OF VERBAL SCREENING TOOLS FOR SUBSTANCE USE RISK**

South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) recognizes the impact that substance use by youth can affect their health, safety, and well-being. Early identification and sustainable interventions are necessary for youth to achieve optimal health outcomes. Our ultimate goal at SCEC is for students to participate and contribute as fully as possible in the communities in which they live.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 71, Section 97 (as amended by

St. 2016, c.52, § 15); subject to appropriation, SCEC shall utilize the state approved, evidence-based C.R.A.F.F.T verbal screening tool to assess risk levels for substance use disorders, beginning in the 2017-18 school year. C.R.A.F.F.T. is a behavioral health screening tool for use with adolescents and is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Substance Use and Prevention (COSUP). Universal screening of adolescents and young adults, using validated tools, is a proactive approach to promoting healthy choices and identifying students at risk of harm from substance use. It is not a diagnostic tool. Screenings shall be conducted with sensitivity to various student population abilities, vulnerabilities, and needs.

Screenings shall occur on an annual basis of students in grades seven (7) and nine (9) in all appropriate SCEC middle and high school programs.

SCEC shall provide students and parents/guardians with written and verbal notification in their primary language prior to the start of the screening schedule. A student and/or the parent or guardian may opt out of the screening by written notification at any time prior to or during the screening. SCEC shall comply with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations relative to consent. Screening results shall be reported in a manner that does not identify students and in accordance with procedure outlined by Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), not more than ninety (90) days after completion of screenings.

SCEC employees shall adhere to policy on confidentiality protections and therefore, will not disclose any information received during a verbal substance use screening without prior written consent of the student, parent, or guardian, except in cases of immediate medical emergency or a disclosure is otherwise required by law. Such consent shall be documented on a form approved by DPH and shall not be subject to discovery or subpoena in any civil, criminal, legislative or administrative proceeding. No record of any screening shall be made in any form, written, electronic or otherwise, that includes information identifying the student.

SCEC acknowledges that M.G.L. c.71, § 97 is subject to appropriation, which means we may voluntarily implement the actions described in this policy but are not required to do so unless and until funding is appropriated.

***SOURCE/LEGAL REFERENCES:** The General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Massachusetts General Law. Chapter 71, Section 96: Substance use prevention and abuse education policies for public schools; The General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Massachusetts Session Law 52, Section 15: An Act Relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education, and Prevention.)*

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY & PROTOCOLS**

The goal at South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) is for students to participate and contribute as fully as possible in the communities in which they live. The health, safety and well-being of students are our highest priority. SCEC recognizes that student, family, and school collaboration is vital in supporting a student's learning and development. SCEC is committed to providing a high-quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment. The school environment is the place in which intelligence, capabilities, and skills are developed and enhanced. At SCEC, an educational/medical/health approach will be utilized

to help students decide not to use alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. Our school policy has been developed to maintain high standards of behavior and to underscore our commitment to maintaining healthy growth and development in our students, a respect for the quality of our educational environment and to maintain safety for our school community.

### **Student Support Team**

SCEC has established a Student Support Team (SST) to provide education, assistance, and support for students affected by their own or others substance-related problems. The SST at SCEC will consist of medical and clinical professionals including the student's mental health clinician, school nurse, and school psychologist where applicable; administrator; and teacher. With reasonable suspicion, the school administrator will refer the student to the SST for further exploration of a suspected or known substance-related problem. The SST will collaborate with the student and parents/guardian to develop a therapeutic plan on a case-by-case basis, providing recommendations for follow-up care. SCEC will maintain student confidentiality while promoting school-based efforts to combat substance abuse.

### **No Smoking/Vaping Policy**

South Coast Educational Collaborative complies in full of the federal Pro-Children Act of 1994 which prohibits smoking inside facilities used for preschool, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children. Specifically, students, staff, and visitors may not smoke in the school building, on school property or at any school-sponsored activity. Smoking is also prohibited in any school vehicle and during any school-sponsored community trips or other activities. No tobacco products, or nicotine delivery systems without a doctor's order, are allowed in school. The following will be included in the tobacco products policy vapes, JUUL's & e-cigarettes. Possession of all types of smoking paraphernalia including, but not limited to lighters, matches, cigarette rolling papers, electronic nicotine-delivery devices, vaporizers or any other types of flammable igniters are not permitted on school premises or other school related events; these articles will be confiscated. Parents/guardians will be informed and asked to make arrangements to pick up the confiscated items. With reasonable cause, the administrator reserves the right to initiate a search and confiscate any of the above items. Possession of these items will be cause for progressive discipline up to and including in or out of school suspension.

### **Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug (ATOD) Use Policy**

The possession, distribution, sale, or use of alcohol; tobacco products, including vapes/E-cigarettes; any controlled substance; synthetic (including but not limited to "K2", "Spice" and/or bath salts) substances; look-alike drugs; drug related paraphernalia; volatile substances; and illegal drugs on school grounds, at any school function, and in school vehicles is a violation of law and is strictly prohibited.

**AT NO TIME SHOULD A STUDENT BE IN POSSESSION OF ANY DRUG UNLESS SUCH DRUG HAS BEEN PRESCRIBED AND PHYSICIAN'S ORDERS ARE ON FILE WITH THE SCHOOL NURSE FOR SELF-ADMINISTRATION.**

SCEC will respond to the use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and misuse of prescription and over the counter medication through health education, medical/health assistance, progressive

discipline, and with possible referral to emergency medical treatment. Physical and psychological dependence on chemical substances creates health problems and is counterproductive to the goals of education. Therefore, use, possession, or sale of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs will not be permitted as it undermines the education process. Equally serious are the detrimental physical and emotional effects caused by alcohol and drug abuse.

It should be noted that whether someone is under the influence will be determined after a reasonable suspicion is raised in the mind of any staff person. Changes in behavior or physical appearance, self-admission, or information provided by a peer and substantiated by any other evidence raise reasonable suspicion.

Substance policy violations on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function, and in any school vehicle are subject to immediate consequences, including out-of-school suspension, possible expulsion for drug offenses and/or police involvement. Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol at a school-sponsored community activity will be barred from that activity and may be subject to disciplinary action. The school administrator will notify the parent/guardian of the violation and a search and seizure will be conducted by the appropriate authority.

### **Search and Seizure**

The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that a warrant is not required before a teacher or school administrator conducts a search of a student suspected of violating a school rule or criminal statute. Probable cause is not required before a student may be searched; rather, before conducting a search, the teacher or administrator must have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The search must be reasonable in its scope, as well as its inception.

Search of a student will only be performed, and seizure of a student's belongings will only take place, if there exists reasonable suspicion that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The search will be conducted in a manner reasonably related to its objectives and will not be excessively intrusive considering the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction. Whenever a personal search is deemed necessary, the student shall be advised of the reason for the impending search prior to its implementation. Search of a student may extend to articles of clothing such as pockets; and to the removal and search of outer garments such as hats/caps/headgear, jackets, coats, sweaters, sweatshirts, or shoes; and to items such as pocketbooks, lunch bags, book bags, athletic bags, or backpacks.

Should a student refuse to voluntarily comply with a request for a search, the student must be detained until parents, and, if necessary, police, can arrive at school to assist, as deemed appropriate. Should a search uncover any substances or contraband, such shall be turned over to the appropriate authorities or rightful owner, as appropriate, and suitable disciplinary action shall be taken. Search of a student or their belongings in accordance with the policy may take place at school or at any school sponsored event, on or off school property, or during the transportation to such event.

## **Responding to Violations of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug (ATOD) Policy**

Students violating SCEC's alcohol, tobacco, and drug policy will be subject to disciplinary action. To maintain equity in disciplinary actions, program administrators will be guided by district guidelines for the discipline of both elementary and secondary students in providing student consequences for defined student behaviors. It is expected that disciplinary actions be progressive in nature.

The goal of progressive discipline is prevention of a recurrence of negative behavior by helping students learn personal accountability. Discipline is the dual responsibility of the home and school. The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and equity while considering the individual circumstances in each incident of student misconduct. SCEC will actively engage parents/guardians in the Progressive Discipline approach by involving them in ongoing conversations about their student's achievement, well-being, and behavior. Essential to the implementation of progressive discipline is helping students who have engaged in unacceptable behavior to:

- Understand why the behavior is unacceptable and the harm it has caused
- Understand what they could have done differently in the same situation
- Understand the impact their behaviors have on others
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Be given the opportunity to learn prosocial strategies and skills to use in the future
- Understand the progression of more stringent consequences if the behavior re-occurs

## **Determining the Disciplinary Response**

In determining how to best address a policy violation, it is necessary to evaluate the totality of the circumstances surrounding the conduct. The following facts must be considered prior to determining the appropriate disciplinary measures:

- The nature, severity, and scope of the behavior
- The student's age and maturity
- The circumstances/context in which the conduct occurred
- The frequency and duration of the behavior
- The student's disciplinary record (including the nature of any prior misconduct, the number of prior instances of misconduct, and the disciplinary and guidance intervention measures applied for each).

## **Procedures**

These procedures are not exhaustive nor are they meant to be; rather these are guidelines for addressing inappropriate conduct and suggested disciplinary consequences. A range of discipline is possible within these guidelines, and school administrators have the discretion to impose more severe consequences than contained within these guidelines depending on the individual circumstances presented. Consequences may carry over from one school year to the next. Please be aware that some behavior warrants police investigation as the breach of conduct may also be a criminal offense.

***Step 1: Verbal warning with written report, Counseling, Referral to the Student Support Team***

The primary focus of this school intervention is medical evaluation, parent/guardian involvement, in-house team meeting and counseling. Step 1 creates an opportunity for the SST to discuss with the student and parent/ guardian the nature of the problem and/or violation of policy. SCEC will respond to the use of alcohol and illegal drugs through education, medical/health assistance, and discipline. The administrator will clearly describe student expectations and steps the student must take to improve his or her conduct, with the additional guidance from the SST and collaboration between the student and parent/guardian. The administrator will prepare written documentation of the verbal counseling. The student and parent/guardian will be asked to sign this document to demonstrate their understanding of the issues and the corrective action.

***Student Use, Possession and Distribution of ATOD:***

With reasonable suspicion, a SCEC staff member will notify the administrator of the nature of the concern.

If a student is suspected of being under the influence (i.e., exhibiting signs of impairment), the school nurse will be notified to assess potential medical risk. If the school team determines that the student is at risk for medical harm, the school nurse will refer the student to emergency medical treatment. SCEC emergency procedures will be followed, as applicable.

The principal will notify the parents/guardian and request a Parent - School Team meeting. If the student is not exhibiting signs/symptoms of compromised health, according to the school nurse's evaluation, the administrator will request the student's parent/ guardian pick up the student within a reasonable time frame. If a parent/guardian/caretaker is unavailable, the student will remain under in-school suspension for the remainder of the school day. Any class work missed because of the offense will be made up under in-school suspension on the following day. The administrator will convene the Student Support Team.

The sending school district will be notified of the offense by phone and/or in writing.

***Student Witness to Use, Possession and Distribution of ATOD:***

If at any time, a student is found to be in the presence of other student(s) using or distributing alcohol, tobacco, and/or drugs:

- A SCEC staff member will notify the administrator of the nature of the concern.
- All students involved may be subject to a search. Search of a student will only be performed, and seizure of a student's belongings will only take place, if there exists reasonable suspicion that the student, or students, have violated or is violating either the law or school policy.
- Administrator will inform the parent/guardian of the incident.
- Referral to Student Support Team for further exploration.
- Disciplinary action, with possible suspension, may occur.

If a student voluntarily confides an alcohol, tobacco and/or drug problem to a staff member, a

SCEC staff member will notify the administrator who will consult with the student's parent/guardian, SST, and the sending district to discuss recommendations with referral to treatment. The collaboration between the student, school team and the student's health care team will be prioritized.

### ***Step 2: Written warning, District Meeting & Ongoing SST Involvement***

The Step 2 written warning involves the student's parent/guardian, and the sending school district will be notified in writing of the offense. The student and parent/guardian will be asked to attend an emergency Team meeting to process the issue. During Step 2, the administrator will meet with the student, parent/guardian, and sending district to review the student's performance and conduct an individualized plan requiring the student's immediate and sustained corrective action. The written warning may also include a statement indicating that the student may be subject to additional discipline, as determined by the school administrator and the student's sending district, if immediate and sustained corrective action is not taken. At the discretion of the SST, a student with repeat occurrences may be asked to complete a medical evaluation prior to school remittance. Any treatment recommendations should be shared between the student, parent/guardian, SST, and sending district.

### ***Step 3: Suspension and final written warning***

Some performance, conduct, or safety incidents are so problematic and harmful, such as a student found selling or distributing drugs or alcohol at school, on school grounds, or at a school-sponsored event, that the most effective action may be the temporary removal of the student from in-school learning (i.e., out-of-school suspension). When immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of the student or others, the administrator may suspend the student pending the results of an investigation. Police will be notified immediately. The student's parent/guardian and the sending school district will be notified immediately. A follow-up team meeting will be convened to determine the course of action to be taken.

### ***Step 4: Recommendation for termination of enrollment and/or referral to treatment***

The last and most serious step in the progressive discipline process is a recommendation to attend and complete a drug rehabilitation program or termination of student enrollment. SCEC will make reasonable efforts to exercise the progressive nature of this policy by first providing warnings, issuing a final written warning and/or suspending the student before proceeding to a recommendation to terminate enrollment. If all referral to treatment options have been exhausted and a parent/student/SST meeting has been completed, student refusal to attend a drug rehabilitation program may result in student termination of enrollment.

SCEC reserves the right to combine and skip steps depending on the circumstances of each situation and the nature of the offense. Furthermore, students may be terminated from enrollment without prior notice or disciplinary action.

**LEGAL REFS.:** *M.G.L. Chapter 71, S. 37H and 37L; M.G.L. Chapter 76, S. 16 and 17; and MA Regulation 603 CMR 53. For more information, visit: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr53.html>*

## **ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS TO STUDENTS**

Medication may not be administered to students while at school unless such medicine is given to them by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent/guardian and under

the written directive of the student's personal physician (see below for exceptions). If a student has been approved for self-administration, a student who needs medication during the school day may be **reminded** to take the medicine by the school nurse or another individual designated by the school nurse in the student's medical administration plan. This provision only applies when the school nurse has a medical administration plan in place for the student. **Only** the school nurse, and **those listed** in the medical administration plan acting within the above restriction, may give any medication to any student.

### **Exceptions:**

- The Collaborative shall, through the Health Services Facilitator, register with the Department of Public Health and train personnel in the use of epinephrine auto-injectors.
- The Collaborative may, in conjunction with the School Physician and the School Nurses, stock nasal naloxone (Narcan) and trained medical personnel and first responders may administer nasal naloxone to individuals experiencing a life-threatening opiate overdose in a school setting.
- If the Collaborative wishes medical personnel to train non-medical staff in the administration of nasal naloxone, the Board of Directors shall vote to approve such training, and the Executive Director shall ensure that medical personnel have a written protocol which complies with medical directives and regulations from the Department of Public Health.

Following consultation with the school nurse, students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
2. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer prescription enzyme supplements.
3. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems.
4. Students with life threatening allergies may possess and administer epinephrine.

*(SOURCE: MASC; LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:54B Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00; 244 CMR 3.00)*

### **SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

South Coast Educational Collaborative leaders and other educators always ensure the appropriate supervision of students while they are engaged in any school related activity on or off school grounds. Written staffing plans for the employment of educators, related service providers, paraprofessionals and any other staff are developed, followed, and updated as needed. All staff providing or supervising the provision of educational and related services are appropriately certified or licensed in their professional areas.

## PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

It is the policy of the South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) to promote a safe and productive workplace and educational environment for its employees and students, and to ensure that every student in the South Coast Educational Collaborative is free from the use of physical restraint that is consistent with the Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations.

The South Coast Educational Collaborative abides by the provisions of 603 CMR 46.00, which differentiates the use of mechanical restraints as prescribed by a medical or related services provider and used for specific positioning or protective purposes from those used to restrict a student's freedom of movement for other reasons. 603 CMR 46.00 regulates the use of physical restraint on students in publicly funded elementary and secondary education programs.

SCEC has developed restraint prevention and behavior support procedures, in compliance with 603 CMR 46.04, which shall be annually reviewed by school staff and made available to parents/guardians. The following does not apply to those devices, such as standers, braces, or other medical or orthopedically prescribed devices, which are medically required and dually implemented by trained medical professionals or related service providers and documented in each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Collaborative personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

1. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious physical harm, and
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of physical restraint.

All South Coast Educational Collaborative employees are trained annually in physical restraint policies and procedures as well as crisis prevention and intervention. Physical restraint may be utilized only in accordance with 603 CMR 46.00 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations. Parent/guardian informed consent for the implementation of restraint is obtained annually. **SCEC prohibits the use of medication restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion.**

### Definitions:

The following definitions of forms of restraint are included in 603 CMR 46.02:

1. **Physical Restraint:** Direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement.
2. **Extended Restraint:** A physical restraint lasting longer than twenty (20) minutes.
3. **Physical Escort:** shall mean a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location
4. **Public Education Programs** shall mean public schools, including charter schools, virtual schools, collaborative education programs, and the school day of special education schools approved under 603 CMR 28.09, as provided in 603 CMR 18.05(5)(h), and school events and activities sponsored by such programs. The term "programs" may be used in 603 CMR 46.00 to refer to "public education

programs." For purposes of 603 CMR 46.00, public education programs shall not include the educational services provided within the Department of Youth Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health, and County Houses of Correction operated or contracted facilities.

5. ***School Working Day*** shall mean a day or partial day that students are in attendance at the public education program for instructional purposes.

### **Use of Physical Restraint**

- Only trained school personnel shall administer physical restraint of students. When possible, the restraint should be witnessed by at least one adult not participating in the restraint.
- SCEC prohibits the use of prone restraints except on an individual basis and when all of the following conditions have been met and properly documented:
  - The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or school personnel.
  - All other forms of physical restraint have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others.
  - There are no medical contraindications, as documented in advance by a licensed physician.
  - There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented in advance by a licensed mental health professional.
  - The program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency and the use of prone restraint is approved in writing by the principal or other administrator.
  - The program has documented all of the above before using prone restraint and maintains the documentation on file.
- Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or school personnel directive, a student's use of inappropriate language, or the use of verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent serious physical harm.
- School personnel shall use physical restraint:
  - only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm;
  - in a manner which prevents or minimizes any harm to the student because of the use of physical restraint; and
  - non-physical interventions would not be effective.
- Physical restraint may not be used when the student cannot be safely restrained because of medical conditions including, but not limited to asthma, seizures, cardiac conditions, communication-related disorders, obesity, or bronchitis.
- To ensure student safety, school personnel will review and consider a student's medical and psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavior intervention plans.
- Physical restraint may not be used as a standard response to a student and no Individual Education Program or written behavioral plan may include physical

restraint as a standard response to behavior.

- **If a student is to be restrained for a period longer than twenty (20) minutes,** school personnel shall first obtain the approval of the principal or other administrator in writing. This approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint, justifying the need for continued restraint.
- No restraint shall be administered in a way to prevent breathing or speaking.
- Physical restraint shall be discontinued as soon as possible. During the administration of physical restraint, school personnel shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student (temperature, color, respiration).
- The restraint shall be released immediately upon a determination that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm.
- Following the release of a student from a restraint, follow-up procedures must be implemented. These procedures shall include:
  - reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;
  - reviewing the incident with school personnel who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed;
  - discussion of whether follow-up with students who witnessed the event is necessary; and
  - the student who was restrained should be seen by the school nurse.

### **Physical Restraint Training Requirements**

- All SCEC school personnel receive training in the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and in the use of nonviolent physical interventions within the first month of each school year. Newly hired school personnel receive this training within one month of their start date.
- Policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually by the administrative leadership team.
- Physical restraint policies and procedures are made available to the parents/guardians of enrolled students on an annual basis via the Student-Family Handbook, and the parent/guardian must agree in writing to the physical restraint policies and procedures as outlined in the Student-Family Handbook.
- School personnel are trained annually on appropriate methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior and suicide, including individual crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student.
- Each principal/administrator is responsible for identifying and ensuring training for selected staff who may be involved in a physical restraint using the Crisis Prevention Institute nonviolent techniques.

At the beginning of each school year, the principal/administrator of each school program shall identify school personnel who are authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. Such school personnel shall participate in in-depth training (Crisis Prevention Institute) of at least sixteen (16) hours in length, with at least one refresher training occurring annually

thereafter.

### **Physical Restraint Reporting Requirements**

- All physical restraints, regardless of duration, are reported to the principal/administrator, if that principal/administrator was not involved in the restraint, verbally and by completing the approved Physical Restraint form. If the principal/administrator was involved in the restraint, the restraint must be reported to a school adjustment counselor/social worker or the school nurse. All designated administrators will be notified immediately, and written reports will be completed within twenty-four (24) hours of the use of physical restraint.
- The principal/administrator shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of physical restraint.
- The principal/administrator shall verbally inform the student's parent/guardian of the restraint within twenty-four (24) hours of the event. If the parent/guardian is not available by phone, the notification can be made by voice mail or email.
- The principal/administrator shall notify the parent/guardian by written report, in the parent's language of record, to be sent within three (3) school-working days. The written report may be sent by email.
- The principal/administrator shall provide the student and the parent/guardian with an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of the physical restraint and on the information in the written report.
- The following content shall be included in each written report:
  6. names and job titles of those involved, including observers;
  7. date and time the restraint began and ended;
  8. when applicable, the name of the principal/administrator who approved extending the restraint beyond twenty (20) minutes;
  9. description of the activity that occurred before the restraint (behavior that prompted the restraint, efforts made to de-escalate behavior, alternatives to restraints that were attempted and reason for initiating physical restraint)
  10. description of the administration of the restraint (holds used and reasons they were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; documentation of any injury to student and/or school personnel, if any, during the restraint; and any medical care provided);
  11. information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any consequences that may be imposed on the student;
  12. information regarding opportunities for the student's parent/guardian to discuss with the principal/administrator the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student, and any other related matter.
- The principal/administrator completes a review of the physical restraint:
  13. A weekly review will be conducted regarding any student who has been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal/administrator shall convene one or more review teams to assess the progress and needs of the student, with the goal of reducing or eliminating future restraint. This team will review and discuss the written restraint reports, analyze the factors that lead to the restraints, consider the action that may have contributed to the escalation of the student's behavior, and develop a written action plan.
  14. A monthly school wide review will be conducted. In this review, the

principal/administrator will consider patterns of restraints, duration of restraints and any injuries caused by the restraints. The principal/administrator will assess whether the restraint prevention policies need to be modified.

15. SCEC will collect and annually report data (according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's direction for data collecting methodology) regarding the use of physical restraints.
16. The principal/administrator shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) or the parent/guardian, upon request.
17. All restraint-related injuries must be reported to the SCEC main office. When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to student or school personnel, SCEC sends a copy of the written report to DESE no later than three (3) school days of the administration of the restraint.
18. SCEC also sends to DESE a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the principal/administrator for the thirty (30) day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. DESE shall determine if additional action by SCEC is warranted and, if so, shall notify SCEC of any required actions within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the required written report.

## **TIME OUT (INCLUSIONARY AND EXCLUSIONARY)**

### **Definitions**

- ***Time Out:*** A behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time out, a student must be continuously observed by school personnel, who shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time out must be clean, safe, sanitary and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.
- ***Inclusionary Time Out:*** When the student is removed from positive reinforcement or full participation in classroom activities while remaining in the classroom.
- ***Exclusionary Time Out:*** The separation of a student from the rest of the class either through complete visual separation or through actual physical separation.
- ***Seclusion:*** Involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time out. The use of seclusion is prohibited.

SCEC **utilizes both inclusionary time-out and exclusionary time-out.** These behavioral strategies may be initiated by school personnel and/or student elected. A student must be continuously observed by school personnel, who shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for timeout must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed and shall not exceed thirty minutes. The principal or other administrator may grant an extension beyond thirty minutes based on the individual student's continuing agitation.

**Use of Inclusionary Time Out:** The use of *inclusionary* time-out functions well as a behavior support strategy while allowing the student to remain fully aware of the learning activities of the classroom. *Inclusionary* time out includes practices used by school personnel as part of their classroom behavior support tools, such as "planned ignoring," asking students to put their heads down, or placing a student in a different location within the classroom (this does not include walled off "time-out" rooms located within the classroom; use of such areas is considered to be an *exclusionary* time-out). These strategies, used to reduce external stimuli in the student's environment while keeping the student physically present and involved in learning, have proven to be useful tools for classroom management.

**Use of Exclusionary Time Out:** *Exclusionary* time-out as a school personnel-directed behavioral support should only be used when the student is displaying behaviors which present, or potentially present, an unsafe or overly disruptive situation in the classroom. School personnel-directed *exclusionary* time out should not be used as a method of punishment for noncompliance, or for incidents of misbehavior that are no longer occurring. During an *exclusionary* time-out:

- The student must be continuously observed by school personnel;
- School personnel must be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times;
- The space used for *exclusionary* time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming.
- *Exclusionary* time-out must cease as soon as the student has calmed.

When a student is separated from the learning environment in an *exclusionary* time out, s/he must be in a safe and calming environment. For any *exclusionary* time-out that may last longer than thirty (30) minutes, school personnel must seek approval from the principal/administrator for the continued use of time out. The principal/administrator may not routinely approve such requests, but must consider the individual circumstances, specifically whether the student continues to be agitated, to determine whether time out beyond thirty (30) minutes is justified. If it appears that the use of *exclusionary* time out exacerbates the student's behavior, or the continuation of the exclusionary time out beyond thirty (30) minutes has not helped the student to calm, then other behavioral support strategies must be attempted.

*Exclusionary* time-out is an intervention that is reserved for use only when students are displaying behaviors which present, or potentially present, an unsafe or overly disruptive situation in the classroom. In such circumstances, the student may either ask to leave the classroom, or the student may be directed to a separate setting for the purpose of helping the student to calm down. Unless it poses a safety risk, school personnel must be physically present with the student who is in an *exclusionary* time-out setting. If it is not safe for school personnel to be present with the student, the student may be left in the time out setting with the door closed.

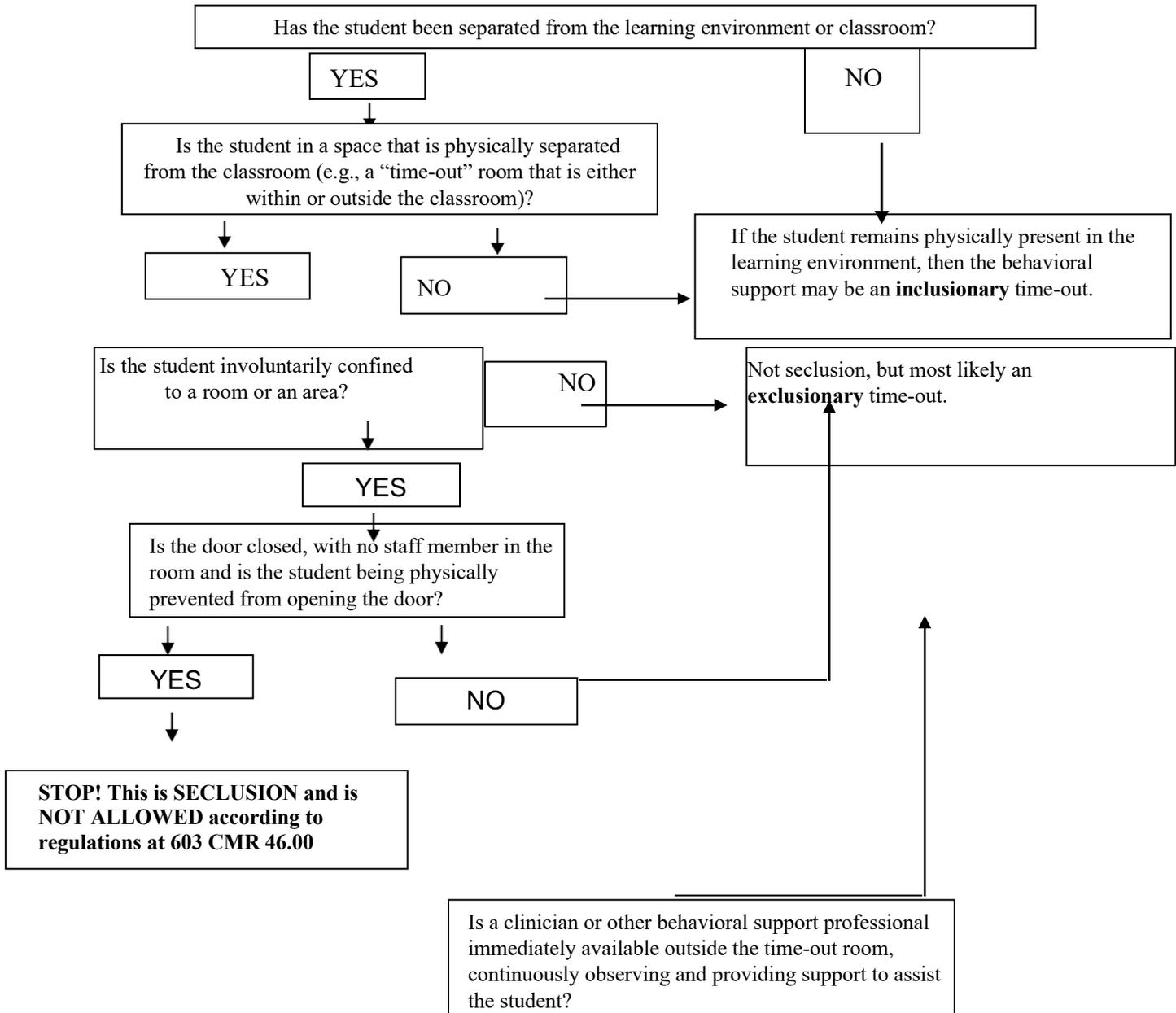
However, to ensure that the student is receiving appropriate support, a school counselor or other behavioral support professional must be immediately available outside of the time out setting where the individual can continuously observe and communicate with the student as appropriate

to determine when the student has calmed. Students must never be locked in a room. For students displaying self-injurious behavior, school personnel must be physically present in the same setting with the student. Exclusionary time out must end when the student has calmed.

Principals/administrators and school personnel are required to review the following flowchart to determine whether the time out is inclusionary or exclusionary, and to ensure that seclusion is not utilized:

*Please refer to Exclusionary Time Out vs. Seclusion Flowchart on the next page.*

## Exclusionary Time Out vs. Seclusion



*(LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37G; 603 CMR 46.00.*

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

All employees who work with children are *mandated reporters* and are required by law to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities. If any SCEC employee has a concern that a student under the age of eighteen (18) years may have been abused or neglected, they must immediately discuss that suspicion with the student's School Nurse, Counselor, Social Worker, and/or Educational Administrator. The School Nurse, Counselor, Social Worker, and Educational Administrator will confer as a team and if a determination is made that there is reasonable cause, they will report the incident to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as follows:

First by immediately calling the appropriate local area DCF office or **Child-at-Risk Hotline at (800)792-5200 on weekends, nights, and holidays.**

1. Massachusetts law requires mandated reporters to **immediately** make an oral report to DCF when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) years is suffering from abuse or neglect. The employee should report any physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse; or any indication of neglect, including malnutrition; or any instance in which a child is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth. The reporter will be asked to provide the following information:
  - a. The name, address, sex, date of birth or approximate age, present whereabouts of the report child or children, and any other children in the household;
  - b. The primary language spoken by the child and the child's caretaker;
  - c. If you are a mandated reporter: your name, address, telephone number, profession and relationship to the child;
  - d. The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect;
  - e. Any evidence or knowledge of prior injury, abuse, maltreatment or neglect;
  - f. Your opinion of current risk to the reported child and to any other child in the home or substitute care setting;
  - g. If the above information was given to you by a third party, the identity of that person, unless the third party has requested anonymity;
  - h. The circumstances under which you first became aware of the child's alleged injuries, abuse or neglect;
  - i. Any action taken to treat, shelter or assist the child; and
  - j. Any additional information you believe may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's injury or the person responsible.
2. Submitting the written report within forty-eight (48) hours.
3. Please go to the following website for more information and instructions

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-child-abuse-or-neglect-as-a-mandated-reporter>

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the Massachusetts state agency charged with the responsibility of protecting children from child abuse and neglect. A report may also be made to local police and/or the District Attorney if deemed necessary. Absolute confidentiality is required concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. All mandated reporters receive training from South Coast Educational Collaborative on an annual basis regarding how to recognize and respond to abuse and neglect.

Any mandated reporter who fails to file required oral and written reports can be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to \$5,000 and 2 ½ years in jail if the willful failure to report results in injury or death of a child. Although SCEC mandated reporters are required to notify the student's School Nurse, Counselor, Social Worker, and Educational Administrator and follow the protocol described

above, should the school team advise against filing, the staff member retains the right to contact DCF directly.

***Definitions:***

- ***Abuse:*** The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker that causes or creates a substantial risk of harm or threat of harm to a child’s well-being.
- ***Neglect:*** Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, or other essential care.
- ***Reasonable Cause:*** A basis for judgment that rests on specific facts, either directly observed or obtained from reliable sources, that supports a belief that a particular condition probably exists.
- ***Reportable Condition:*** A serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect, or the commission of any act by a caretaker with a child which constitutes a sexual offense under local criminal laws, or the physical dependence of a child upon an addictive drug at birth.
- ***Mandated Reporter:*** A professional acting in their professional capacity, such as doctors, teachers, and paraprofessionals who **MUST** report if they have reasonable cause to believe a case of abuse or neglect exists. Mandated reporters are protected from possible criminal or civil action as a result of having made a report. However, a mandated reporter can be penalized if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect (\$5,000 or 2.5 years in jail or both, and upon a guilty finding, report to a professional licensing authority).

*(LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. Ch. 119, S 51A.)*

## **DISABLED PERSONS PROTECTION COMMISSION**

The mission of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is to protect adults with disabilities from abusive acts and omissions of their caregivers through investigation, oversight, public awareness, and prevention. If any South Coast Educational Collaborative employee has concern that a student who is eighteen (18) years old or older may have been abused or neglected, they must immediately discuss that suspicion with the student’s School Nurse, Counselor, Social Worker, Educational Administrator, and/or Nurse/Leader. If the student’s School Nurse, Counselor, Social Worker, or Educational Administrator determines there is reasonable cause, a report of the incident will be filed with the DPPC.

The following information is helpful when filing a report of abuse. DPPC recognizes that it is not always possible to provide all the information and encourages you to call with whatever information you may have available to you.

Information on the victim:

- Complete name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Phone number
- Specifics regarding the victim's disability(ies) and care that is needed
- Information regarding the victim's competency
- Name, address and telephone number of guardian if victim has a guardian
- Identify any state agency that is involved with the victim

- Current location of the victim

The DPPC contact number is 800-426-9009 and the reporting instructions and forms can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/how-to-file-a-report-of-abuse-or-neglect>. (*LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. Ch. 19C*)

### **STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES**

To the extent practical and as required by law, the Collaborative will work with students who are homeless and their families to provide stability in program attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of students who are homeless not currently attending the program. Students who are homeless will be provided Collaborative services for which they are eligible, including Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and nutrition programs.

Students who are homeless are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship or similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
7. Migrant, living in conditions described in the previous examples; and/or
8. A child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (unaccompanied).

The Executive Director shall designate an appropriate staff person(s) to be the Collaborative’s liaison for students who are homeless and their families. The Homeless Liaison for the South Coast Educational Collaborative is:

**Kristin Aylward, LICSW**  
**Gallishaw High School**  
[Kaylward@scecoll.org](mailto:Kaylward@scecoll.org) 508-336-8213 ext. 252

### **Immediate Enrollment of Students who are Homeless**

1. The Collaborative in consultation with the student’s District will immediately enroll a student who is homeless, even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (e.g. previous academic records, records of immunization and other health records, proof of residency, etc.) or if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
2. The enrolling Collaborative/District immediately contacts the school the student last attended to obtain relevant academic and other records.
3. If the student who is homeless needs to obtain immunizations or other required health records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian (or the student, if an unaccompanied minor) to the homeless education liaison who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, screenings, or other required health records.

## **School Stability and School Selection**

In determining the best interest of the student, the Collaborative, in consultation with the student's District shall:

- Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin, including designated receiving schools, is in their best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent/guardian or (in the case of unaccompanied youth) the student; and
- Consider student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety, giving priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or (in the case of unaccompanied youth) the student.

## **Unaccompanied Youth who are Homeless**

The Collaborative works with the District's homeless liaison to ensure that unaccompanied students who are homeless are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging academic standards, are provided with the same college and career counseling as other students, and are informed of their status as independent students and are provided with verification of their status for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

## **Transportation for Students who are Homeless to and from the School of Origin**

The Collaborative will work with the student's District to ensure that comparable transportation or transportation that complies with state pupil transportation law is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied minor, the homeless education liaison), to and from the school of origin, in accordance with the following provisions:

- If the student who is homeless is continuing to attend their school of origin and continues to live in the District in which the school of origin is located, transportation to and from the school of origin is provided or arranged by the District; or
- If the student who is homeless is continuing to attend their school of origin but lives in an area served by another district, the district of origin and the district where the student is living agree on a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to and from the school of origin through the end of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed. If the districts cannot agree on a method, the responsibility and costs are shared equally.

## **Privacy and Records for Students who are Homeless**

Information about the living situation for a student shall be treated as a student educational record and shall not be deemed to be directory information. For each student who is homeless, the Collaborative will maintain student records, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs so records are available in a timely fashion when the student enters a new school or district.

## **Dispute Resolution**

If, after conducting a best interest determination based on consideration of the presumption clause (that keeping the student in the school of origin is in their best interest as outlined in the *School Stability and School Selection* section above) and student-centered factors, the Collaborative and the student's District determines it is not in the best interest for the student to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the student:

1. The student is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending

- final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals;
2. The school provides the student’s parent/guardian, or unaccompanied youth who is homeless with a written explanation of any decision related to school selection or enrollment made by the District, including the right of the parent/guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal the decision;
  3. The student or parent/guardian is referred to the homeless education liaison, who carries out the dispute resolution process prescribed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and, in the case of an unaccompanied minor, ensures that the student is immediately enrolled in the school the student seeks to enroll in pending resolution of the dispute;
  4. In the case of an unaccompanied minor, ensure that the student’s District homeless liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions, giving priority to the views of the unaccompanied minor and provides notice to the student of the right to appeal.

*(LEGAL REFS.: Title IX, Part A- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)*

### **INSTANCES REQUIRING IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION**

The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee of a South Coast Educational Collaborative school/program makes immediate notification to the parent/guardian/the sending school district’s special education administrator, and to any state agency involved in the student’s care or placement, first by telephone (immediately) and by letter (within two school days), and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, first by telephone (immediately) and by the completion of Form 2 (within two school days) of the following incidents:

- Death of a student;
- Filing of a 51-A report with the Department of Children and Families/Department of Children, Youth & Families, or a complaint to the Disabled Persons Protection Commission **against the school or a school staff member** for abuse or neglect of a student;
- Any action taken by a federal, state or local agency that might jeopardize the school’s approval with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
- Any legal proceeding brought against the school or its employees arising out of circumstances related to the care or education of any of its students regardless of state residency;
- The **hospitalization** of a student from Massachusetts or Rhode Island, including outpatient, urgent care, and emergency room visits, **due to physical injury at school** or previously unidentified illness, accident or disorder which occurs while the student is at school;
- A student from Massachusetts or Rhode Island who had an injury resulting from a **motor vehicle accident** during transport by school staff (including contracted staff) **which requires medical attention**;
- A student from Massachusetts or Rhode Island who had serious injury requiring emergency medical intervention resulting from a restraint;
- A student from Massachusetts or Rhode Island who has eloped from school;
- Emergency termination of a Massachusetts or Rhode Island student under circumstances in which the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of themselves or others; or
- Any other incident of a serious nature that occurs to a Massachusetts or Rhode Island student.

### **RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY AS IT RELATES TO STUDENTS**

The South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) has established certain protocols to ensure the safety of our school communities, the security of computer networks, and compliance with applicable law. All users should be aware of the following provisions:

1. **Network and Internet monitoring:** The SCEC locations and/or their host districts have software and systems in place that monitor and record all Internet usage. Users should have no expectation of privacy when browsing the web, sending or receiving emails, or using other electronic resources. Using SCEC accounts on a personal device exposes that device to the same oversight and monitoring systems as devices owned by SCEC.
2. **Filtering:** In accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), passed by the U.S. Legislature in January 2001 (Public Law 106-554), our schools shall employ filtering software to block access to inappropriate content on all computers with Internet access. SCEC, its schools, and districts certify that a policy of Internet safety and technology protection measures shall be enforced.
3. **Content Issues:** Users are restricted from accessing visual depictions of subject matter that are obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors. In compliance with CIPA, the SCEC policy and, if applicable, host districts’ policy, shall, in furtherance of this set of Acceptable Use Procedures regarding Internet safety, monitor the online activities of users. Using SCEC accounts on a personal device exposes that device to the same oversight and monitoring systems as devices owned by SCEC.

SCEC and host districts cannot be held responsible for misuse of material downloaded from any online service or for inappropriate or sexually explicit material being obtained through the network.

### **User-specific Provisions**

#### ***Students, administrators, staff, and faculty shall not:***

1. Use the network to access and/or transmit material in violation of any U.S. or Commonwealth law, including copyrighted material.
2. Access, download, display, transmit, produce, generate, copy, or propagate any material that is obscene or pornographic; advocates illegal acts; contains ethnic slurs or racial epithets; or discriminates based on gender, national origin, sexual orientation, race, color, ancestry, religion, handicap or age.
3. Degrade, damage, or disrupt equipment or system/network performance (for example, excessive bandwidth use that disrupts the network for other users).
4. Gain unauthorized access to network resources.
5. Permit or authorize any other person to use their name or login password.
6. Use an account of any other person or vandalize another user’s data.
7. Waste electronic storage space by saving unnecessary files or programs.
8. Download, install, load, or use programs without written permission of the Director of Technology or their designee.
9. Use the Internet for personal commercial purposes or for political lobbying.
10. Use inappropriate, offensive, foul, or abusive language.
11. Harass or annoy any other party with obscene, libelous, threatening, or anonymous messages, objectionable information, images, or language.
12. Knowingly make use of pirated software or violate software-licensing agreements.
13. Engage in the practice of “hacking” or knowingly engage in any other illegal or inappropriate activity using the network.

#### ***Students, staff and faculty must:***

1. Use the Internet and other electronic resources only for legitimate educational and Collaborative business purposes.
2. Respect commonly accepted practices of Internet etiquette including, but not limited to, use of

- appropriate language.
3. Be aware of potential security risks at all times and take all reasonable steps to minimize risks by, at minimum, logging off the network when a computer is unattended and reporting all unauthorized use of one's account to the Director of Technology.
  4. Avoid bulk emailing and forwarding emails of broad interest, such as virus alerts, to the larger community without prior approval from the Director of Technology.
  5. Treat all computer areas and equipment with the utmost care and respect.
  6. Protect their own and respect other users' IDs and passwords and regularly change passwords.
  7. Students may access the Internet only with adult supervision for a specific task.
  8. Abide by this procedure and specific host district policies, where applicable.

### ***Electronic Communication***

School and district resources for electronic communication shall be used for educational purposes only. Electronic communication done for and on behalf of the SCEC must be done with official SCEC email accounts provided to users and should not use any personal accounts.

Prohibited electronic communications include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of electronic communications to send copies of documents in violation of privacy or copyright laws.
2. Use of electronic communications to intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct Collaborative business.
3. Constructing electronic communications to appear to be from someone else.
4. Obtaining access to the files or communications of others for the purpose of satisfying idle curiosity, with no substantial Collaborative business purpose.

Users will conform to the rules of email archiving and document retention set forth by policy or applicable laws.

### ***Software***

Software which SCEC has standardized and uses widely throughout the Collaborative will be given priority in terms of installation, troubleshooting and training. Installation, troubleshooting and training for all other software used by faculty, staff, and students will be supported as time permits. Single copies of software are considered evaluation copies and will not be supported, installed on multiple computers, or made available from the network to multiple computers.

Software that makes the computers and network harder to maintain and support and that offers little or no benefit over comparable software will not be supported. Do not install any software on any SCEC computer without prior permission from the Director of Technology or their designee. The Director of Technology reserves the right to uninstall unsupported software or reimage any computer as necessary.

### ***Data Storage and Backup***

The Technology Department has the right to reimage any computer as necessary at any time, with and without prior notice. No personal data or files should be stored on a local machine or network server.

SCEC makes every effort to run regular backups on data and email hosted on its systems and networks; however, it cannot guarantee that, in the event of data loss or catastrophic failure, all information will be recovered.

### ***Hardware***

Regarding the use of equipment other than that owned by SCEC or the host school/district:

1. SCEC provides limited support for equipment brought in from the outside by any user.
2. If a computer network is provided that is designated for guests, users must only connect outside devices to these networks.
3. The Director of Technology has the right to confiscate or disconnect any outside equipment that interferes with operation of the system/network.
4. SCEC and host school/district are not responsible for damage to or loss of equipment brought in from the outside.

## *The Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)*

### **Definitions**

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Technologies that enable machines to mimic human intelligence, including but not limited to machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and robotics.

**AI System:** Any system or application that incorporates AI technologies.

The use of AI permeates every part of daily life, and SCEC acknowledges both the opportunities and challenges that it presents in the educational space. Routine ways in which AI has been used to date include word prediction in word processing and email technologies, individualized learning through curriculum-related applications, and monitoring systems designed to increase the safety of students during transportation.

SCEC asserts and reaffirms the augmentative role of generative AI in supporting the educational processes and outcomes and the value of the expertise of our staff in delivering high quality services. SCEC recognizes that AI might be helpful to staff and students, but that any use of AI should be undertaken only after careful review of the risks that it might impose. When evaluating the appropriateness of AI use, consider the following ethical principles:

1. **Transparency:** Does the AI system have a clear and easily understood algorithm for its decision-making?
2. **Fairness & Equity:** Does the AI system mitigate bias in the decision-making to ensure equitable outcomes across a diverse population?
3. **Privacy & Security:** Where is the data stored? Who has access to it? How is student data protected from unauthorized access and misuse?
4. **Accountability:** Are you willing to be responsible for the decisions made by the AI system and the outcomes resulting therefrom?
5. **Pedagogical Value:** How does the use of the AI application enhance teaching and learning, support educators, and/or promote personalized learning plans?

When AI systems are being used, there are guidelines that must be adhered to, including but not limited to the following:

1. No student-identifiable data are to be shared with any AI tool that is not HIPAA/FERPA compliant and that does not offer a business affiliation agreement that can be maintained at the main office.
2. Generative AI may be a valuable accommodation, such as for students who struggle with brainstorming activities, but is not to replace efforts to teach skills related to written language, critical thinking, and

creative problem-solving. Any such use of AI as an accommodation is to be considered in the context of a team meeting with clear specifications regarding how it is to be used for that particular student and what outcomes are expected from its use. The use of AI in the completion of academic assignments without its designation as an accommodation and without proper citation should be considered plagiarism.

3. Generative AI may be used to help staff craft clear, measurable, and concise goals and objectives as long as it does not require the sharing of confidential student information. The ultimate responsibility for the content and accuracy of any legal documents contained within the educational record remains with the educational and related services staff.
4. Staff are not to use generative AI to draft official reports or interpretations of test data, progress notes, or other narratives held within the educational record.
5. Staff should not be recommending or encouraging the use of educational platforms or digital therapeutics that give the illusion that an individual is responding in real-time. Whereas there may be some community-based providers who prescribe or suggest such tools to our students as part of their treatment plans, responsibility for their use remains with that provider. Clinical and related service providers may incorporate technologies that serve to enhance well-being more generally, as long as student data is not shared with a third party. For instance, if there is an account that is required, it is likely that the application is gathering data and is having access to information about the student; therefore, staff should not be encouraging its use.

### **PHOTO/VIDEO/IMAGE LIKENESS PERMISSION**

Still and video photography may be used to provide students and/or parents/guardians with visual feedback on the student's educational performance. No images are used for any purpose other than education without the written permission of the parent or guardian.

**Should staff need to use still and video photography of students for personal, professional learning purposes, please refer to the section Research/Quality Assurance for additional requirements.**

### **AGE OF MAJORITY/TRANSFER OF RIGHTS**

It is the responsibility of each sending school district to notify parents and students at least one year before a student reaches eighteen (18) years of age, that all decision-making rights previously accorded to the parent/guardian are transferred to the student when the student reaches the age of majority, unless a court of competent jurisdiction awards guardianship prior to the student's eighteenth (18<sup>th</sup>) birthday. When a student reaches the age of majority, their parent/guardian continues to have the right to receive copies of all written notices that are sent to the student.

In Massachusetts, students are considered adults and competent to make their own educational decisions at eighteen (18) years of age. Unless there is a court appointed guardian, or the adult student has chosen to delegate decision-making to their parent(s), SCEC and the sending school district seek the written consent of the student to continue their special education program.

The student, upon reaching eighteen (18) years of age and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to share decision-making with their parent/guardian, or other adult, including allowing the parent/guardian to co-sign the IEP. Such choice is made in the presence of the IEP Team and is documented in writing. The student's choice prevails at any time that a disagreement may occur between the adult student and the parent or other adult with whom the student has shared decision-making.

In addition, upon reaching eighteen (18) years of age and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, the student may choose to delegate continued decision-making to their parent/ guardian or other adult. Such a choice will be made in the presence of at least one representative of the sending school district and one other witness and shall be documented in writing and placed in the student record.

## **CHANGES IN STUDENT'S LEGAL STATUS**

Students, who are eighteen (18) years old or older, are legal adults and have corresponding rights and responsibilities. If a student has had a legal guardian appointed, appropriate documentation must be provided to the sending school district and SCEC. Unless otherwise directed, all correspondence from the sending school and SCEC will be sent to the student's parent/guardian (progress reports, notices, etc.) The Collaborative reserves the right to deny a student's request for dismissal from school or an activity provided for in the student's IEP, regardless of age. Parents/guardians are required to notify the appropriate SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee of any changes in their child's legal status.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

South Coast Educational Collaborative maintains current and complete files for each enrolled student and manages these files consistent with 603 CMR 23.00 and MGL c. 7134 H. SCEC adheres to all laws and regulations pertaining to student records, including confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records. Records will be filed according to a student's legal name. Preferred names or nicknames may be found in the text of the documents therein, however, the legal identifier for the purposes of the record shall be the legally recognized name of the student.

At the beginning of each school year, SCEC works with each sending school district's special education department to ensure that the sending district will publish and distribute to students and their parents/guardians, in their primary language, a routine information letter informing them of the following:

- The standardized testing programs and research studies to be conducted during the year and other routine information to be collected or solicited from the student during the year.
- The general provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding parent/guardian and student rights and that copies of 603 CMR 23.00 are available to them from the special education office.
- All forms, regulations, or other documents regarding 603 CMR 23.00 that a parent receives or is required to receive shall be in the language spoken in the home of the student.

Regulations 603 CMR 23.00 defines a student record as the "transcript and the temporary record, including all information, recordings, and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified..." The location where the information is stored is not considered when determining what is included in the

student record. “The temporary record shall consist of all the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript...” such as, “standardized test results, class rank (when applicable), extracurricular activities, and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff.”

The district is responsible for maintaining the permanent record. The records maintained by SCEC reflect the temporary record of the time spent within its programs. SCEC works in collaboration with the sending school districts regarding student transcripts, however, transcripts for high school students or graduates are created and maintained by the sending school districts.

The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader at each SCEC site is responsible for ensuring that student records under their supervision are kept physically secure; that authorized school personnel are informed of the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 and M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H and are educated as to the importance of information privacy and confidentiality; and that any computerized systems employed are electronically secure. Those records should be limited to the information needed to program for the current school year. After assuring that necessary information has been received by the SCEC main office, those copies should be purged annually. Student files at the SCEC main office are kept secure and all central office personnel given access to student files are informed of the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 and M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H and are educated as to the importance of information privacy and confidentiality, and all computerized systems employed are electronically secure.

Except where the regulations specifically authorize access by third parties, no individuals\ or organizations other than the parent/guardian, eligible student, SCEC or school district personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, written, informed consent of the parent or eligible student. SCEC will make individual records of enrolled Massachusetts students available to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request. This also pertains to enrolled students from Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Each student’s main office file contains a contents checklist as the first document in the record. Each student’s file contains a *Student Record Access Log* as the second document in the file. The log indicates all persons who have obtained access to the student record, stating the following: the name, position and signature of the person releasing the information; the name, position and, if a third party, the affiliation if any, of the person who is to receive the information; the date of access; the parts of the record to which access was obtained; and the purpose of such access. Unless student record information is to be deleted or released, this log requirement does not apply to authorized school personnel who inspect the student record, administrative office staff and clerical personnel who add information to or obtain access to the student record, and school nurses who inspect the student health record.

A parent/guardian or an eligible student (age fourteen [14] years or older) has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record will be made available within two (2) days after the request unless the parent/guardian or student consents to a delay. The parent/guardian and eligible student have the right to receive a copy of any part of the record, although SCEC may charge a reasonable fee for the cost of duplicating materials. The parent/guardian and eligible student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified SCEC professional or may invite anyone else of their choice to inspect or interpret the record with them.

The parent/guardian and eligible student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent/guardian and eligible student have a right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. They are entitled to meet with the Educational Administrator, or their designee, to discuss their objection to information that is in the record and to receive a written decision. A parent/guardian or eligible student who is not satisfied with the decision may appeal to higher SCEC authorities.

SCEC is allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled at SCEC. Testing protocols resulting from re-evaluations completed by teachers, clinicians, medical personnel, or related services providers can be destroyed after a year from the last contact date. SCEC may destroy a student's temporary record within seven years (FERPA) after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from SCEC, after first consulting with the student's local education agency. In each case, SCEC must first notify the parent/guardian and eligible student and give them the opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before it is destroyed. (**LEGAL REF:** MGL 603 CMR 23.00; 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)

## **SCEC AQUATICS POLICY**

All SCEC programs are invited to participate in SCEC-sponsored aquatics programming. Current aquatics program locations are at the Newman YMCA in Seekonk and the Boys and Girls Club in Taunton. These are subject to change. Contact Tracy Lancellotta, SCEC Aquatics Liaison at [tlancellotta@scecoll.org](mailto:tlancellotta@scecoll.org) for additional information and/or to schedule a swim session for students.

Programs are welcome to take students to community experiences involving swimming outside of SCEC-sponsored programming but must adhere to the following procedures:

- All student swim experiences must include an SCEC lifeguard, whether the venue provides a lifeguard for pool users. Please contact Tracy Lancellotta, SCEC Aquatics Liaison at [tlancellotta@scecoll.org](mailto:tlancellotta@scecoll.org) to schedule a lifeguard for your community experience.
- All SCEC Lifeguards must be Certified by the Red Cross for Shallow and /or Deep-Water Lifeguard Training
- Student swim experiences are limited to public pools only:
  - The attending SCEC lifeguard must have prior knowledge of the pool as needed to ensure the clarity of the water and the location of safety equipment.
  - Students are not allowed to swim in pools owned by private individuals.
  - 1:1 student-to-staff ratio must be provided in the following cases;
    - Student has a 1:1 written into IEP
    - Student cannot stand in the water independently and safely as determined by the SCEC lifeguard.
    - Student has a known seizure disorder
    - Student has not been assessed by SCEC lifeguards for swim readiness.
  - 2:1 student-to-staff ratio must be provided in all other cases except those listed in the above line item.
- Splash pad visits:
  - SCEC lifeguard is not required
  - 2:1 student-to-staff ratio must be provided
- Use of wading pools at SCEC program locations including inflatable water slides:
  - SCEC lifeguard is not required.

- 2:1 student-to-staff ratio must be provided.
- Maximum water depth is 14 inches.
- Filled pools must be always supervised; filled pools cannot be left unattended.
- Pool must be completely empty of water when not attended.
- Student swim trips to open bodies of water (lakes, ocean or rivers) are not encouraged but can be approved on a case-by-case basis by the senior leadership team with input from the Aquatics' liaison.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### ***General Rules for Conduct:***

Each school site/classroom establishes its own specific code of conduct for its students with disabilities and students with Section 504 Accommodation Plans. In addition, an individual student's IEP may state whether that student can be expected to follow the stated rules of the program and, if not, what modifications to the student's program must be made for compliance to take place. However, students are typically expected to adhere to the rules of the following basic Student Code of Conduct:

- **Treat Others with Respect:** Offer to help others. Cooperate. Maintain a polite and respectful manner to other students and staff.
- **Work Hard:** Complete work on time, including homework. Make sure work is done correctly and is of a high quality. Listen and pay attention to instruction. Follow directions. Work at a steady pace.
- **Maintain Self-Control:** Stop and think before you speak. Avoid using offensive language. Avoid verbal and physical attacks or threats to staff, other students, and personal property.
- **Comply with the requests of the school staff to the best of your ability.**

Please refer to *Student-Family Handbooks* for specific Codes of Conduct at individual school sites.

### ***General Intervention Guidelines:***

Behavioral and performance expectations of students vary according to a student's individual level of cognitive development. Each student is assessed on an individual basis. A team decision is made concerning appropriate expectations and responses for a student's social and work behaviors. In all cases, focus is placed on modeling, redirection and positive behavioral intervention and supports as the teaching tools used to assist students in meeting their goals.

Students are positively supported to exhibit socially acceptable behavior, follow staff directions and requests, and adhere to school rules at their individual levels of understanding. Positive behavioral supports are applied throughout the day to promote achievement of target skills. In general, when a student exhibits non-compliant or disruptive behavior:

- A verbal prompt is used to redirect the student back to task. The student is then positively reinforced for returning to task.
- If the behavior continues, a second prompt is given, paired with a reminder about earning the designated reinforcer. The student is positively reinforced for returning to task.

If the student continues to have difficulty, the teacher will schedule a staff meeting to review the behavior and possible strategies for its remediation. A behavior plan is developed, or changes in the existing plan are made. If the student continues to have difficulty after the implementation of a new

behavior program, a parent/guardian-teacher meeting is scheduled. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Determine if changes have taken place at home, or in the student's medication regimen, which may be affecting behavior at school.
- Elicit suggestions from the parent/guardian which may improve the student's progress. Provide parents/guardians with suggestions to enhance consistency at home.

Representatives of the student's sending school district may be contacted to schedule a Team meeting to review the student's behavior. Follow-up options include seeking parental/guardian consent to conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment and/or review the adequacy of the student's IEP and/or placement.

## SUSPENSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Suspension is rarely used at South Coast Educational Collaborative and is not considered to be an appropriate method of coping with or changing behavior. The use of suspension occurs only in extreme cases and only with the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the student in question, as well as other students and staff.

School personnel must make every attempt to assist students in making the right decisions about their behavior and to avoid the use of suspension. However, a student may be suspended from a program under G.L. c.71 § 37H, which is related to the possession of a dangerous weapon(s) and assaults on administrators and staff and G.L. c.71 §37 ½, which applies to students charged with felonies or felony delinquency.

Relative to other offenses, in 2022, the Massachusetts legislature amended G.L. c.71 §37H ¾, through section 29 of *An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health* requiring School Administrators to consider a variety of ways to re-engage the student in learning, and avoid suspension. Possible alternatives to long-term suspension include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

School administrators at SCEC must do the following under G.L. c.71 §37H ¾ (b):

- Consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process.  
Have alternative remedies been employed first? **Have their use and the results been documented in writing?**
- Not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents.
  - If alternative remedies have not been employed, have the specific reasons been documented in writing as to why such remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive?
    - Does the student's continued presence in the school pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school?

Upon admission of a student, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader provides a copy of the suspension policy to the parents/guardians and the sending district. Parents/Guardians are required to review and sign the appropriate form indicating their understanding of the policy. This policy conforms to the federal requirements on

discipline pursuant to 34 CFR 300 and Massachusetts General Laws 71, Section 37H, 37H½ and 37H¾ (Chapter 222).

Any student who commits a suspendable offense may be removed from school for a period of not more than ten (10) school days. If similar suspensions occur and are relatively close in time and demonstrate a pattern of behavior, a change of placement may be necessary. If a planned suspension will constitute a change in placement, the Collaborative program and the sending school district will convene the IEP Team prior to such suspension to consider the following:

- Conduct a manifestation determination to ascertain if the student’s behavior is due to their identified disability.
- Develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of the student’s behavior;
- Modify a student’s behavior plan;
- Identify appropriate alternative educational setting(s).

Special Requirements for Students with Disabilities (All Students Enrolled at SCEC):

- *Manifestation Determination Review* must be conducted before suspension beyond ten (10) cumulative days in a school year.
- Students are given the opportunity to participate in general curriculum and progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives.

#### *Manifestation Determination*

If the Team determines that the behavior is *not* a manifestation of the disability, the school may suspend or terminate the student. The sending school district is responsible for providing an appropriate education program to the student during the entirety of the suspension period (see below). If the Team decides that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the Team will take steps to modify the IEP, the behavior plan, and/or the placement.

#### *Definitions*

- *In-School Suspension*
  - Removal of a student from the regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises.
  - For no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) total school days.
- *Short-Term Suspension*
  - Removal of the student from regular classroom activities AND from the school premises.
  - For ten (10) consecutive school days or fewer.
  - The Principal/Program Administrator may allow the student to serve a short-term suspension in school.
- *Long-Term Suspension*
  - Removal of a student from the regular classroom activities AND from the school premises.
  - For more than ten (10) consecutive school days OR for more than ten (10) total school days for multiple offenses during a school year.
  - The Principal/Program Administrator may allow a student to serve a long-term suspension in school.
  - May not last more than ninety (90) days.

- May not extend beyond the end of the school year.
- *Expulsion*
  - Removal for more than ninety (90) days.

#### *Notice Requirements Prior to Suspension*

- No long-term or short-term suspensions without first providing students and parents/guardians with oral AND written notice AND a hearing.
- Exceptions: emergency suspensions and in-school suspensions (notice must be given, but not in advance of the suspension).
- School-related disciplinary incidents can and should be investigated by the Principal/Program Administrator.

#### *Notice Requirements for Short-Term and Long-Term Suspensions*

1. Oral notice in English AND language spoken at home. ORAL notice can include leaving a voice message. Document all attempts to give oral notice. WRITTEN notice may be by hand delivery, email to an address provided by the parent/guardian, or other method agreed upon. Notice must be in plain language and must include:
  - a. The disciplinary offense;
  - b. The basis for the charge;
  - c. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
  - d. The opportunity for the student to have a hearing, dispute the charges, present their side of the story, and to have parent(s)/guardian(s) present;
  - e. The scheduled date, time and location of the hearing;
  - f. The right to have an interpreter at the hearing if needed;
  - g. For possible long-term suspension: information on the rights available at the hearing and the right to appeal to the Executive Director;
  - h. Information on the opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress during any suspension.
2. *Hearings*
  - a. Must hold a hearing prior to imposing short-term and long-term suspensions.
  - b. Principal/Program Administrator may hold the hearing without parents ONLY if they provide written notice and at least two (2) attempts to contact the parents/guardians are made and documented.
  - c. If you plan for a short-term suspension but learn during the hearing that a long-term suspension is required, you will need to provide the process due for a long-term suspension.
3. *Short-Term Suspension Hearing*
  - a. Only if ten (10) or fewer days (consecutive or cumulative)
  - b. Hearing must occur prior to imposing the suspension.
  - c. Purpose: to hear and consider information, provide student with an opportunity to dispute or explain, determine if the student committed the

- offense, and if so, describe the consequences to be imposed.
- d. Principal/Program Administrator and all participants must sign in.
  - e. The student must be allowed to present information.
  - f. Parents/Guardians must be given the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information.
  - g. The Principal/Program Administrator shall determine whether the student committed the offense and if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
    - i. Use discretion;
    - ii. Consider all alternatives;
    - iii. Suspension must be fewer than ten (10) days unless a decision is made for a long-term suspension instead.
    - iv. Provide written notice of decision to suspend or not suspend.
    - v. Notify parents/guardians and the student of determinations and reasons for them, in writing. If the student receives a short-term suspension, state the duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up schoolwork.
    - vi. No appeal to the Executive Director.

#### 4. *Long-Term Suspension Hearing*

- a. Purpose is the same as short-term suspension hearing.
- b. All rights afforded at short-term hearing apply.
- c. All participants must sign in.
- d. Additional Rights for Long-Term Suspension Hearing:
  - i. In advance of the hearing, the student and parent/guardian must be given the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal/Program Administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend or not.
  - ii. Student and parent/guardian notified of their right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of their choice (at student's or parent's /guardian's expense)
  - iii. Student may produce witnesses on their behalf. Students asked to be witnesses may not be forced to do so, and approval from their parent/guardian must be received in writing.
  - iv. Student and parents/guardian may request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal/Program Administrator. They may request to receive a copy of the audio recording. If the hearing is to be recorded, the Principal/Program Administrator must inform all participants in advance that an audio recording is being made.

v. The student and parents/guardians are informed that they have a right to appeal to the Executive Director.

vi. In making the decision is made for a long-term suspension:

- Consider all evidence, including mitigating factors and the student’s explanation, use discretion, consider alternatives.
- Provide written notice after the hearing of the decision to suspend or not to suspend.
- Identify the offense, the date on which the hearing was held, and the participants at the meeting.
- Describe the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal.
- Identify the length and effectiveness of the suspension and date of return to school.
- Describe student’s opportunity to receive education and make academic progress during the suspension, how this will be carried out, and the name of the contact information of the district liaison.
- Inform student/parent/guardian of the right to appeal the decision to the Executive Director. The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless the Executive Director reverses it.

5. *Suspension of a Student in Grades Kindergarten through Third (3rd) Grade*

a. For either short-term or long-term suspension, Principal/Program Administrator must send a copy of the written determination to the Executive Director and explain reasons for the decision.

b. The notice and hearing requirements are otherwise the same as those above.

6. *Appeal to the Executive Director*

a. Must be offered for long-term suspensions.

b. The right of appeal must be included in the Principal/Program Administrator’s written notification.

c. Executive Director may reverse the decision or may impose the same or lesser consequence (but not a greater consequence).

d. Executive Director’s decision is final.

e. Protocol for Appeal to Executive Director:

i. Student/parent/guardian must appeal within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension but may request a seven (7) day extension.

ii. Executive Director must hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the request, unless the seven (7) day extension has been requested (which must be granted).

iii. Must make a good faith effort to include parent/guardian (date,

time of day).

- iv. Student has same rights as those afforded in the long-term suspension hearing (see above).
- v. Executive Director must issue written notice of the decision that meets the requirements for long-term suspension notices, except for the reference to the right to appeal (see above).

#### 7. *Emergency Removal*

- a. Temporary removal: no more than two (2) school days.
- b. Available when a “student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and in the Principal/Program Administrator ’s judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.” 603 CMR 53.07
- c. Principal/Program Administrator must immediately notify the Executive Director in writing of the removal and the reasons for it, including a description of the danger presented.
- d. Student may not be removed unless and until adequate provisions for the student’s safety and transportation are made.
- e. During the two (2) day removal, the Principal/Program Administrator must:
  - i. Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student’s parent/guardian of the emergency removal, the reason for need for emergency removal, and all other required information listed above for notices.
  - ii. Provide written notice to student and parent/guardian (see long-term suspension written notice requirements above).
  - iii. Provide the student with the opportunity for a hearing and the parent/guardian the opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time is agreed to by the Principal/Program Administrator, student, and parent/guardian.
  - iv. Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing.
  - v. Provide a decision in writing no later than the following school day.

#### 8. *In-School Suspension*

- a. Not more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days.
- b. May be used as an alternative to short-term suspension.
- c. Less notice required than for out-of-school suspensions.
- d. Student must be given the opportunity to make academic progress during suspension.
- e. Notice requirements for in-school suspension:
  - i. Principal/Program Administrator informs student of the disciplinary charge and the basis for the charge and

- provides the student with an opportunity to respond.
- ii. Principal/Program Administrator informs student of the length of the in-school suspension less than ten (10) days.
  - iii. On the same day as the suspension decision, Principal/Program Administrator must make reasonable efforts (two [2] documented phone calls) to notify parent/guardian orally of the offense, reasons for the decision, and length of the in-school suspension.
  - iv. Principal/Program Administrator must invite parents to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, preferably coinciding with the date of the in-school suspension or as soon as possible after.
  - v. Principal/Program Administrator provides written notice to parent/guardian with reason and length of in-school suspension and inviting parent/guardian to the meeting if it has not already occurred.
  - vi. Principal/Program Administrator gives written notice about rights to continued academic progress.
  - vii. Written notice must be delivered on the day of the suspension.
9. *Educational Services and Academic Progress (Section 21)*
- a. Applicable to all disciplinary removals.
  - b. Any student suspended for any length of time, whether in-school or out-of-school, must be given the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other schoolwork as needed to continue to make academic progress during the suspension.
  - c. Students expelled or suspended for more than ten (10) consecutive days (in school or out) must be given the opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through a school-wide education service plan.
  - d. Principal/Program Administrator informs students and parent/guardian of these rights in writing at the time the suspension or expulsion is imposed.
10. *Education Service Plan*
- a. The school-wide plan is for any student suspended or expelled, in school or out, for more than ten (10) consecutive days.
  - b. This plan is developed between the Principal/Program Administrator and the student's sending school district.
  - c. The plan describes the services available to students and the process for notifying the students and parents of the services and how to arrange them.
  - d. The plan is aligned with academic standards and curriculum frameworks.
  - e. Possible alternatives include tutoring, alternative placement, and online or distance learning.

- f. Student chooses among options provided.
- g. Principal/Program Administrator must notify students and parents/guardian of the opportunity to continue education during suspension or expulsion.

#### *11. Data Collection*

- a. Must collect and report the following data to DESE:
  - i. All suspensions (short-term, long-term, in-house and emergency).
  - ii. Access to education services.
  - iii. Any other information requested by DESE.
- b. Principal/Program Administrator responsibility:
  - i. Review data on a monthly basis by selected student populations (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, EL status, all students with disabilities).
  - ii. Must assess the extent to which all types of suspensions and expulsions impact student populations.
  - iii. Must determine if it is necessary or appropriate to modify procedures because of over-reliance on suspensions

### **TERMINATION POLICY**

Students may be terminated from participation in a South Coast Educational Collaborative program for behaviors which endanger the health and/or safety of others or self, and for behaviors which significantly disrupt the integrity of the educational and therapeutic process.

At the time of a student's admission, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader shall make a commitment to the sending school district that SCEC employees will try every available means to maintain the student's placement until the sending school district's Administrator of Special Education or designee has had sufficient time to search for an alternative placement. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader will immediately contact the student's Special Education Administrator if termination or discharge of the student is being considered.

#### ***Planned Termination***

If termination or discharge is recommended, the student's Administrator of Special Education or designee will schedule a meeting and provide to all parties, including the parent/guardian and student (if appropriate) notice of this meeting ten (10) days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. The meeting shall be held for the purpose of planning and developing a written termination plan for the student. The plan shall describe the student's specific program needs, short and long-term educational goals of the program, and recommendations for follow-up and/or transitional services. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader shall thoroughly explain termination procedures to the student, the parent/guardian and the Administrator of Special Education or designee. The written termination plan shall be implemented in no less than thirty (30) days unless all parties agree to an earlier termination date.

#### ***Emergency Termination***

SCEC will not terminate the enrollment of any student, even in emergency circumstances, until the sending school district is informed and assumes responsibility for the student. At the request of the

sending school district, SCEC shall delay termination of the student for up to two (2) calendar weeks to allow the sending school district the opportunity to convene an emergency Team meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination [603 CMR 28.09(12)]. With the mutual agreement of SCEC and the sending school district, termination of enrollment may be delayed for longer than two (2) calendar weeks.

## **RESTITUTION**

Students who damage school property may be charged restitution for the damage, which may include the cost of replacement, labor costs, and cost of materials. Students will be able to develop a plan to pay off the restitution in increments.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION**

South Coast Educational Collaborative expects that all members of its school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. SCEC is committed to providing all students and employees with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, teasing, harassment, and retaliation. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying, harassment, teasing and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We recognize that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students with limited English-speaking ability, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or gender non-conforming and students who are homeless may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. SCEC takes specific steps to create a supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community and provides all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

SCEC does not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, in our classrooms, school buildings, on school grounds, during school-related activities, at school bus stops, on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by SCEC, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by SCEC. SCEC does not tolerate any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation perpetrated by any student or by any member of the staff including, but not limited to, an educator, an administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, paraprofessional, or related service provider. We promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation and take prompt action to end this behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent/guardian/caretaker involvement.

“Bullying” is defined as the repeated use by one or more students, or an adult, of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to their property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” is defined as bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, e-mail, instant messages, text messages, Internet postings, and the use of an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons.

### Prevention and Intervention Plan

*Prevention:* South Coast Educational Collaborative staff focus on the prevention of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation through the following initiatives:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and differences;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- consistently using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- implementing social skills education groups focusing on issues of building community; respect; sexual harassment; bullying; social thinking; activities of daily living; anger and stress management; assertiveness training; conflict resolution; coping; problem solving; study and time management skills;
- using social stories, scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to understand when they are the target of bullying;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaging in acts of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber-safety, including the safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- creating and maintaining a learning environment where the care, welfare and security of each student is assured.

**Reporting:** Students or employees who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying. Each SCEC school site has a means for anonymous reporting by students or staff of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Parents/guardians or members of the community are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible. Any SCEC employee shall immediately report any instance of bullying they have witnessed or become aware of to their SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee. Confidentiality shall be maintained to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of

bullying. (*Please see Appendix E for Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form*).

**Investigation:**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. The Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation a student or employee who has reported bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, a student or employee who has witnessed bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, a student or employee who provides information during an investigation, or a student or employee who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation. Upon determining that bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation has occurred, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will promptly notify the parent/guardian/caretaker of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it.

In addition, SCEC will notify the parent/guardian of the target of bullying of the availability of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System and assist the parent/guardian in understanding and accessing this process. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System provides for the investigation of complaints and the enforcement of compliance with 603 CMR 28.00, as well as with other statutes and regulations pertaining to education. Any party wishing to file a complaint may do so through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System (PRS):

**135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149**  
**Telephone: 781-338-3700 TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370**  
**FAX: 781-338-3710**  
**Email: [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) Web: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>**

The student's SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Administrator of Special Education or designees of the aggressor's and the target's local education agencies (school districts).

At any point after receiving a report of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the developmental levels and ages of the students involved. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation by using the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form*. (*Please see Appendix G*).

The investigation shall be completed as quickly as possible from the date of the report. The parent/guardian and the local education agencies shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or

designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. Upon the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee determining that bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school will use a range of strategies to initiate an appropriate response which balances the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior according to the ages and developmental levels of the students.

If the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the form of that action will be determined based on facts found by the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, the developmental level of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the school's Code of Conduct, which conforms to all federal and state regulations governing discipline procedures for students with disabilities.

**Target Assistance:** SCEC will provide counseling or referral to appropriate services and protection to students and employees, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as needed.

**Training and Assessment:** Annual training is provided for SCEC employees who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to and reporting incidents of bullying. Age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention will be incorporated into the curriculum for all students.

**Publication and Notice:** Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* is provided to students and their parent/guardian. Annual written notice of the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* is provided to all SCEC staff. All SCEC employees are trained annually on the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan*. The *SCEC Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* is posted on its website.

### **Anti-Hazing**

The term "hazing" means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. This includes whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any student or other person, or which subjects a student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Additionally, Massachusetts law provides that whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of the crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report the crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable.

M.G.L. c. 269 s. 17 & 18, the Massachusetts anti-hazing law, provides that anyone who is an organizer or participant in the crime of hazing shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000) or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both.

On or before October 1 of each year, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader of each of South Coast Educational Collaborative's high schools programs files a report with the Bureau of Student Services which includes the following certifications:

- that the Collaborative has issued a copy of M.G.L. c. 269, §§ 17 through 19 to every group or organization under its authority and to every member, plebe, pledgee or applicant for membership in such group or organization;
- that the Collaborative has issued a copy of M.G.L. c. 269, §§ 17 through 19, to every non-school affiliated organization;
- that the Collaborative has obtained an acknowledgement of receipt from an officer of every group or organization under its authority, and every individual which has received a copy of M.G.L. c. 269, §§ 17 through 19;
- that the Collaborative has obtained an acknowledgement from a contact person for each non-school affiliated organization that such organization has distributed a copy of M.G.L.269, §§ 17 through 19, to every member, plebe, pledgee or applicant for membership in such group or organization;
- that the Collaborative has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers of and participants in hazing which has been approved by the Board of Directors, is available to anyone upon request and has been filed with the Bureau of Student Services as required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### ***School District Buses/Vehicles***

All students are transported to and from SCEC school sites on buses, vans or station wagons owned by or contracted for by their sending school district. Designated staff must greet all vehicles, accompany students into the building, and ensure that students safely board vehicles at the end of the school day. SCEC employees are asked to monitor the safety status of school district/contracted vehicles by observing and reporting anything that appears unsafe or illegal. If any of the following situations are observed, report it immediately to your supervisor:

- Non-use or inappropriate use of safety lights and signals.
- Illegal, unsafe or dangerous driving.
- Unusual, unsafe, or abusive behavior of a driver or of a student on a vehicle.
- Suspected use of alcohol or other illegal substances by a driver or by a student on the vehicle.
- Smoking on the vehicle by any person.
- Unsafe physical condition of a vehicle.

**If you fear for the safety of a student, do not allow the student to board the vehicle.**

### ***South Coast Educational Collaborative Owned or Leased Vehicles***

SCEC owns and leases school vehicles for the purpose of transporting students during the school day, typically for community experiences, internships, and job placements. Students may not be transported in private vehicles unless it is a valid emergency. Any SCEC vehicle transporting SCEC

students must have a driver that holds a valid Chauffeur's Driver's License (7D) and must adhere to the following policies and procedures:

- The driver is the key to an effective daily inspection program. It is the driver's responsibility to make a planned and systematic inspection of the vehicle before each trip.
- In the winter, make sure that all windows and mirrors are free of ice and snow before departing.
- Students and employees must always wear seat belts. Failure to comply with seatbelt use will result in the loss of the privilege of traveling in a SCEC vehicle.
- Safety lock systems should be enabled.
- Students and employees are responsible for the cleanliness of the vehicle.
- Drivers must abide by posted speed limits and all other rules of the road.
- The driver may leave the driver's position to assist students. Shut off the engine and remove the key from the ignition whenever leaving the driver's position. Set parking brakes and place wheel chocks.
- Students and employees may not smoke in any SCEC vehicle. Failure to comply with no smoking policy use will result in the loss of the privilege of traveling in a SCEC vehicle.
- Never leave students alone in a vehicle.
- Always provide a safe loading and disembarking area for students.
- Confidentiality: **Employees are prohibited from discussing student issues in the presence of students. Personal and school issues should not be discussed in the presence of students.**
- Each vehicle has its own cell phone for emergency use.
- **In the event of an emergency:**
  - If an emergency illness occurs, call the SCEC main office via cell phone and advise them of the situation.
  - If you believe there is a medical emergency, proceed to the nearest hospital or fire/police department. If in doubt, dial 911.
- **In the event of an accident:**
  - Dial \*77 for State Police or 911 for local assistance.
  - Call the South Coast Educational Collaborative Main Office.
  - Take care of students as needed.
  - Give straightforward, honest answers to police officers in charge at the scene.
  - Share basic information: driver's license, registration, insurance. Do not make any statements about who was at fault.

A competent mechanic services each vehicle at intervals of 3,500 miles, to include oil change, oil filter change and lubrication. Each vehicle has a thorough inspection at every second interval.

All maintenance issues should be reported.

**Please note the following:**

- Talking on a cellphone while driving is PROHIBITED
- Texting while driving is AGAINST THE LAW and PROHIBITED

## STUDENT ELOPEMENT FROM SCHOOL

A student is a *runaway* from school when their absence has been noted and they have not been located after approximately a cursory fifteen (15) minute check of the school facility and immediate grounds or of the general area if in the community.

### **Procedure:**

1. The person who suspects that a student is missing will notify the student's SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee.
2. The student's last known location, and what the student was wearing will be determined.
3. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will assign staff to begin a search of the building and grounds, or of the general area if in the community.
4. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will obtain the student's emergency file, including the following information: student's name, address, emergency phone numbers, and photo of the student.
  - a. ***If the student is a legal adult:*** The student's SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will immediately contact the following persons/agencies, in the order prescribed, to inform them that the student has left the building or area without permission:
    - i. The student's parent/guardian.
    - ii. The Executive Director of South Coast Educational Collaborative.
    - iii. The student's Administrator of Special Education or designee
    - iv. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
  - b. ***If the student is a minor:*** The student's SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will immediately contact\* the following persons/agencies, in the order prescribed, to initiate a concentrated effort to locate the student:
    - 911 - local Police Department
    - The student's parent/guardian/caretaker.
    - The student's (LEA's) Administrator of Special Education
    - The Department of Children and Families (if student is involved with DCF)
    - The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

***\* Please note that the Executive Director of South Coast Educational Collaborative should be notified concurrently with the local Police Department.***

***5. After the Student Who Eloped Has Been Found:*** After the runaway has been located, the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will notify all persons involved in the search. SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will then complete a *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Incident Report (Form 2)* form and forward copies of the form to the Executive Director, the student's Special Education Administrator, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Children and Families (if involved). The original report form will be placed in the student's record.

***6. If the Student Who Eloped Cannot Be Found:*** The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee will keep the Executive Director apprised of the

situation. If the student cannot be located, the Executive Director or their designee will work with the police to make decisions regarding next-step efforts, including communication with the public.

***Additional Policies:***

- If any student who eloped is considered to be dangerous, or a threat to themselves or others, immediately contact 911 regardless of the legal status of the student.
- Employees are not authorized to discuss the situation with the public or release any information to the media. The Executive Director or their designee is responsible for all communication with the public and media.

**FEDERAL GUN-FREE SCHOOLS ACT**

South Coast Educational Collaborative adheres to the *Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994* (Section 14601 of the *Improving America's Schools Act*) which requires school districts and other local education agencies to expel from school, for a period of not less than one year, any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school. An exception is made to permit the Executive Director to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis. The law does not preclude an expelled student from receiving educational services in an alternative setting. Any items which could be used as weapons are not allowed on school grounds and will be confiscated and turned over either to a parent or the police, and the student may be suspended or expelled.

**USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS**

A service animal is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition.

South Coast Educational Collaborative permits the use of a service animal by a student or employee with a disability. However, the individual with a disability may be asked to remove the service animal from the premises if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it, or the animal is not housebroken. SCEC permits the use of a miniature horse as a service animal by a student or employee with a disability only under the following guidelines:

- The facility can accommodate type, size and weight of the miniature horse;
- The handler has demonstrated sufficient control of the miniature horse;

- The miniature horse is housebroken;
- The presence of the miniature horse in the facility does not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for the safe operation of a school. (*SOURCE: MASC*)

## USE OF THERAPY DOGS IN SCEC PROGRAMS

SCEC recognizes the value of therapy dogs in promoting well-being, engagement, and social connectedness within our programs. SCEC supports the use of therapy dogs for the benefit of its students, subject to the conditions of this policy. Handlers will be required to provide documentation that the dog is insured and certified as a therapy dog by an AKC-recognized therapy dog organization.

**Therapy Dog.** A “therapy dog” is a dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its Handler to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to school district students. Therapy dogs are not “service animals” as that term is used in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The dog must be well behaved and have a temperament that is suitable for interaction with students and others in a school setting. Therapy dogs are personal property of the Handler and are not owned by SCEC.

Although “therapy animals” are not legally defined or protected, SCEC recognizes the many benefits of animal assisted therapy in helping children with disabilities build self-esteem, reduce anxiety, and develop self-regulation.

**Standards and Procedures.** The following requirements must be satisfied *before* a therapy dog will be allowed in school buildings or on school grounds:

- **Request.** A Handler who wants to bring a therapy dog to school must obtain the permission of the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader in addition to the host district’s building Principal, if applicable.
- **Training and Certification.** The animal must be certified by a recognized organization such as Therapy Dog International. The Handler must submit appropriate certification as determined by the SCEC Executive Director or their designee. The certification must be current at all times.
- **Health and Vaccination.** The therapy dog must be clean, well groomed, in good health, house broken, and immunized against diseases common to dogs. Therapy dogs must be treated for, and kept free of, fleas and ticks. The Handler must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the therapy dog’s current vaccinations and immunizations from a licensed veterinarian.
- **Control.** A therapy dog must be under the control of the Handler through the use of a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would interfere with the therapy dog’s safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. However, the therapy dog must be under the Handler’s control at all times.
- **Identification.** The therapy dog must have appropriate identification identifying it as a therapy dog.
- **No Disruption.** The therapy dog must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or any other behavior.
- **Health and Safety.** The therapy dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school.
- **Supervision and Care of Therapy Dogs.** The Handler is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a school building or on SCEC property. SCEC is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a therapy dog.

- **Authorized Areas.** The Handler shall only allow the therapy dog to be in areas in school buildings or on school property that are authorized by school district administrators.
- **Insurance.** The Handler must submit a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the therapy dog while on school property, including proof that SCEC is named as an additional insured on the policy.

**Exclusion or Removal from School.** A therapy dog may be excluded from school property and buildings if a SCEC administrator (or host building principal, if applicable) determines that:

- (1) The Handler does not have control of the therapy dog;
- (2) The therapy dog is not housebroken;
- (3) The therapy dog presents a direct or immediate health or safety threat to others in the school;
- (4) The therapy dog's presence otherwise interferes with the educational process; or
- (5) For any other discretionary reason consistent with this policy and SCEC's responsibility to provide for the safety and education of its students, employees, and visitors. This includes the discomfort of students and employees for whom SCEC is responsible.

The Handler shall be required to remove the therapy dog from the school premises immediately upon such a determination.

**Allergies.** If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom in which a therapy dog is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy dog, the Handler of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by an administrator.

**Damages to School Property and Injuries.** The Handler of a therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the therapy dog.

## **IV. POLICIES & PROCEDURES RELATING TO INSTRUCTION**

### **STRUCTURED TIME ON LEARNING**

Structured learning time shall mean time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or learning assessments within the curriculum for study of the "core subjects" and "other subjects." In addition to classroom time where both teachers and students are present, structured learning time may include directed study, independent study, technology-assisted learning, presentations by persons other than teachers, school-to-work programs, and statewide student performance assessments." South Coast Educational Collaborative ensures that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time. SCEC ensures that every middle and secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time.

Time that a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs do not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student, unless stipulated as a required educational service in the student's approved IEP. (**LEGAL REF: 603 CMR 27.00**)

Texting, emailing, video chatting, and photographing, as well as other types of social media exchanges by staff or students is disruptive to the educational process and not allowed during the school day. (Please see policy relative to photographing students.) Because SCEC provides technology for the completion of assignments, the need to use a personal, handheld device for instructional purposes should be rare and should only occur with the approval of the program administrator.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL GROUPINGS**

The ages of the youngest and oldest students in any instructional grouping does not differ by more than forty-eight (48) months unless a written request for a wider age range has been approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

For students aged five (5) years and older, instructional groupings do not exceed eight (8) students to one (1) licensed special educator or twelve (12) students to one (1) licensed special educator and an instructional paraprofessional. Early childhood programs for children three (3) and four (4) years of age limit class sizes to nine (9) students with one (1) teacher and one (1) instructional paraprofessional. [**LEGAL REF: 603 CMR 28.06(6) & (7)**]

### **EARLY RELEASE FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS**

Typically, any student graduating with a diploma follows the early release schedule of their sending district's high school. South Coast Educational Collaborative recognizes that a district's high school graduation may be held up to twelve (12) school days before the regular scheduled closing date of that high school.

### **GRADUATION, DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION**

#### **Award of the High School Diploma to Students in Out-of-District Placements**

Per the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) *Special Education Policy Memo*

**SY2025-2026~2 (July 17, 2025)**, the following outlines the new Competency Determination (CD) process for Massachusetts students who receive a publicly funded education in an out-of-district day or residential school—placed there by a Massachusetts school district under special education law—for awarding a high school diploma:

The CD requirements do not impact the entitlements that **students with disabilities** have under IDEA or M.G.L. c. 71B. Consistent with federal law, a public school district must provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to a student with disabilities *and* must also determine that the student has met CD and local graduation requirements prior to graduating that student. Students with disabilities placed in out-of-district placements must meet the requirements of the CD policy of the placing school district.

### **1. Annual IEP Team Meeting and Planning:**

- The school district responsible for a student's placement must hold an annual IEP (Individualized Education Program) Team meeting.
- The purpose of this meeting is to review the IEP, including, starting at age 14 of the student, the Transition Planning section.
- The Team must discuss and determine the student's projected graduation date, diploma type, and planned course of study.
- A representative from the out-of-district program must be present at these meetings to ensure a shared understanding of the student's progress towards a diploma, in accordance with the placing district's policy.

### **2. Curriculum and State Frameworks:**

- Private and public (collaboratives) special education schools must align their curriculum with the state curriculum frameworks as approved by the Massachusetts DESE. This ensures that students receive instruction that meets state standards.

### **3. MCAS Testing:**

- Students in out-of-district schools (both public and private) must be given the opportunity to participate in the MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) testing program or an alternative assessment. This is a federal and state requirement.
- *Role of MCAS in Limited Circumstances*
  - In the limited circumstance where a district is unable to document a student's prior coursework, the regulations allow for a student to earn the CD by attaining a qualifying score of at least "Meeting Expectations" or "Exceeding Expectations" achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment; **or**
  - Meeting the standard for a substituted equivalent that the district certifies satisfies the same academic standards.

### **4. Awarding Certificates:**

- Out-of-district schools (both public and private) may issue a certificate to a student indicating their achievement, attendance, course completion, or participation. This is distinct from a high school diploma.

### **5. Continued Services:**

- A student who receives a certificate of completion (not a high school diploma or its equivalent) from an out-of-district placement is entitled to continue receiving publicly funded special education services.
- These services end when the student turns 22 years old or when they receive a high school diploma or its equivalent, whichever comes first.

## 6. Diploma vs. Certificate:

- A document can only be called a "diploma" or indicate "high school graduation" if the student has met all the requirements of the placing school district, including its local graduation requirements and the state's Competency Determination (CD) requirements.

## 7. Appeals Process

The amended regulations state that each school district's CD policy must describe a process through which a student may appeal the district's decision regarding awarding a CD. The appeals process is determined by the district and may include a transcript review or other component(s). Any appeals must be completed by the district.

## Updated Competency Determination Requirements

### Requirements for Students

As described in the new regulations, the CD represents two accomplishments: showing a **mastery** of skills in English language arts, mathematics, science, and beginning in 2027, US History; and the **satisfactory completion of relevant coursework** aligned to the standards measured by the high school English language arts, mathematics, and science MCAS assessments administered in 2023.

To **show mastery**, a student must successfully complete in accordance with the district's grading policy: (1) the final assessment for a course; or (2) a capstone or portfolio project; or (3) an equivalent measure identified in the district's CD policy.

To **satisfactorily complete coursework**, a student must earn full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy in the courses listed in the table below.

Table 1: Coursework Requirements

Content Area	Coursework Requirements	Notes
English Language Arts	The equivalent of two years of high school English language arts courses.	To satisfy this course requirement, the English Language Arts courses must be taken in grades 9-12.
Mathematics	The equivalent of one year of both Algebra I and Geometry courses, or the equivalent of one year of both Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. Whether to follow an Algebra/Geometry or Integrated Math I/II course sequence is determined by the district, but the equivalent length of the courses must still be met.	Middle school math courses may be certified by the district as meeting the coursework requirement for the mathematics component of the CD. Districts must confirm that the course aligns to the <b>high school</b> Algebra I/Geometry/Integrated Math I/Integrated Math II standards as listed in the 2017 Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework.
Science	The equivalent of one year of any one of the following disciplines: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering.	To satisfy this course requirement, the science course must be taken in grades 9-12.
U.S. History (beginning with the graduating class of 2027)	The equivalent of a one-year United States history course.	To satisfy this course requirement, the U.S. History course must be taken in grades 9-12.

The “equivalent of” requirement allows for different high school schedules across Massachusetts. Some schools have year-long courses, while others cover the same material in one semester through block scheduling.

Students who met the Competency Determination (CD) standard in English language arts (ELA), math, and/or science before January 3, 2025—whether through the regular MCAS, a retest, or a DESE appeal—will keep that status.

For **English Learners**, coursework planning should offer equal opportunities for students at all English proficiency levels to meet CD requirements. Public school districts will decide which courses count toward these requirements, including whether ESL classes can count toward the ELA requirement.

DESE recommends that ESL courses count toward the ELA requirement only for students at the foundational English proficiency levels (Levels 1 and 2 on ACCESS) and only if they combine grade-level ELA standards with English Language Development standards, using appropriate supports.

## **MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS**

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* are documents developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that outline the guiding principles for instruction, along with core concepts, skills, and subject matter that all students are expected to know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school. Each *Curriculum Framework* organizes learning into *strands* that constitute the major themes of the discipline. Each strand consists of one or more *learning standards* that describe in specific terms what a student should be able to accomplish. Performance benchmarks for student achievement at specific grade levels are also defined that allow educators to plan sequential and comprehensive instruction in the discipline. All South Coast Educational Collaborative students follow a curriculum aligned with the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

The *Resource Guide for Students with Significant Disabilities*, which is the companion document to the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*, is widely used by educators at SCEC. Teachers of pre-school age children utilize the *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* developed by the Early Childhood Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Education. Employees, parents/guardians/caretakers and others have access to the complete *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* located at each school site.

## **MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS) & OTHER STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENTS**

The *Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System* (MCAS) has been the state’s student testing program implemented in response to the *Education Reform Law of 1993*. This statewide assessment program, along with other components of education reform, was designed to strengthen public education in Massachusetts and ensure that all students receive a challenging curriculum based on the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. MCAS was also designed to improve teaching and learning, promote school and district accountability.

Through the IEP process, the TEAM determines each student’s level of participation in MCAS, whether it be on-demand testing, testing with accommodations or alternate assessment. To determine a student’s level of participation in MCAS, the IEP Team reviews and answers the following questions:

- Can the student take the standard MCAS test under routine conditions?
- Can the student take the standard MCAS test with accommodations? If so, which accommodations are necessary in order for the student to participate?
- Does the student require an alternate assessment? (Alternate assessments are intended for a very small number of students with significant disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations.)

The student's IEP Team must make a separate decision for each subject scheduled for testing. That is, a student may take the standard test in one subject and the alternate assessment in another. These assessment decisions should be reviewed, and may be revised, each time the IEP Team meets.

### **Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS**

All students in grades three (3) to ten (10) at South Coast Educational Collaborative will participate in MCAS testing in English language arts and literacy, and mathematics. Students in grades five (5), eight (8) and ten (10) also participate in science and technology/engineering MCAS. Each student level and type of assessment, including any accommodations that a student will use, is documented in the student's IEP.

### **MCAS Test Accommodations**

Assessment accommodations are intended to provide access to MCAS tests. The right of a student with a disability to receive allowable accommodations on MCAS tests is protected by both federal and state laws. The student's IEP must specify precisely which MCAS accommodation(s) they will receive. The IEP must be signed by the parent/guardian before any accommodation may be given.

### **MCAS Training for Educators**

Designated South Coast Educational Collaborative educators and related service providers must participate in annual MCAS and/or MCAS-Alt trainings. These trainings consist of current and comprehensive MCAS test security and protocol policies and procedures, as well as requirements for accommodations. At the beginning of each school year, all educators are provided with the updated document *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities* published annually by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which includes a list and definitions of accommodations.

### **Assessing English Learner (EL) Students with Disabilities**

EL students with disabilities must participate in all MCAS assessments for students in their grade, regardless of the number of years they have been enrolled in U.S. schools, with one exception: EL students with disabilities are entitled to receive test accommodations or to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), as determined by their IEP team.

### **ACCESS for EL Students**

ACCESS for ELs test is the Massachusetts English proficiency assessment. This assessment is administered to measure the English language development skills of students who have been reported to the Department of Education as English language learners in grades Kindergarten through grade twelve (12). Massachusetts has been a member of the WIDA consortium since 2012 and has adopted the consortium's WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards. The

WIDA consortium introduced the ACCESS tests during the 2015-2016 school year based on the WIDA ELD standards. Federal and state laws require English learner (EL) students to be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English, as well as progress they are making in learning English. In fulfillment of these laws, EL students are required to participate in the ACCESS for ELs test. The ACCESS tests for ELs are administered annually in January-February. No student identified as an EL may be exempted from these tests, including students with disabilities. An EL who is identified with a significant cognitive disability, who is unable to take ACCESS for ELs 2.0, even with accommodations, should be considered for Alternate ACCESS for ELs. Alternate ACCESS for ELs is intended for ELs with significant cognitive disabilities who participate, or who would be likely to participate, in their state's alternate content assessment(s). Alternate ACCESS for ELs is available for the following grade level clusters: grades one (1) and two (2); grades three (3) through five (5); grades six (6) through eight (8) and grades nine (9) through twelve (12).

## **RHODE ISLAND STATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

### ***Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)***

The RICAS assessments are conducted in grades 3-8 in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The RICAS assessments are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). It is expected that all students educated in Rhode Island or any school system that services Rhode Island students will participate in the state assessment program for their current grade level in both subject areas. Through the IEP process, the TEAM determines each student's level of participation in RICAS, whether it be on-demand testing, testing with accommodations or alternate assessment.

### ***Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSA)***

Rhode Island administers the Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (RI NGSA) in grades 5, 8, and 11 in order to assess the student's knowledge and skills on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These assessments are computer-based tests and will be administered using the American Institutes for Research (AIR) Test Delivery System (TDS). All students in grades 5, 8, and 11 are expected to participate in the RI NGSA. Students qualifying for the alternate assessment will take the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) science assessment instead of RI NGSA.

### ***Participation of Students with Disabilities in RICAS and NGSA***

All students in grades 3-8 at South Coast Educational Collaborative that reside in the State of Rhode Island will participate in RICAS testing in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 will also participate in the Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment. Each student's level and type of assessment, including any accommodations that a student will use, is documented in the student's IEP. Guidelines for making participation decisions for individual students can be found in the Rhode Island Test Coordinators Handbook and is posted on the RIDE website at [www.ride.ir.gove/riaa](http://www.ride.ir.gove/riaa). Criteria for students to participate in the Alternative Assessment can be located in the Guidance for Determining Eligibility for the Alternate Assessment Manual and is also located on the RIDE website.

### ***RICAS and NGSA Test Accommodations***

Assessment accommodations are intended to provide access to all statewide testing provided by Rhode Island. The right of a student with a disability to receive allowable accommodations on RICAS and NGSA tests is protected by federal and state laws. The student's IEP must specify precisely which accommodation(s) he or she will receive for each subject area. The accessibility features and accommodations can be located in the Comprehensive Accessibility and

### ***Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment***

Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) assessments are designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom general state assessments are not appropriate, even with accommodations. DLM assessments offer these students a way to show what they know and can do in Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Science. DLM assessments also help parents and educators establish high academic expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Results from DLM assessments support interpretations about what students know and can do. Results can inform teachers' instructional decisions while also meeting statutory requirements for reporting student achievement as required by state accountability programs.

Students in the state of Rhode Island will participate in the DLM testing in English Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 3 - 8 and 11. They will participate in the DLM Science Assessment in grades 5, 8, and 11.

### ***PSAT 10***

The PSAT10 is part of the Rhode Island State Assessment Program and is required for all grade ten (10) students. The PSAT10 will be used for accountability purposes, specifically for student growth calculations. Accommodations must be entered into the College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office and need to be approved by the College Board. Students eligible for the alternate assessments will not take the PSAT10 in grade ten (10); they will take the DLM alternate assessments in grade eleven (11). There are no alternate assessments offered in grade ten (10).

### ***SAT School Day***

The SAT® School Day is part of the Rhode Island State Assessment Program and is required for all grade eleven (11) students. The SAT® will be used for accountability purposes. Accommodations must be entered into the College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) and needs to be approved by the College Board. Students eligible for the alternate assessments will take the DLM Alternate Assessments in grade eleven (11) instead of the SAT School Day.

## **THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) PROCESS**

The main purpose of the Individualized Education Program process is to ensure that all students are challenged to excel, progress within the general curriculum, and are prepared for independence in adult life, including post-secondary education and/or employment. The IEP requirements emphasize the importance of working cooperatively as a team. School districts are mandated to bring together parents, students, general educators, and special educators to make important educational decisions for students with disabilities.

All educators and related service providers at South Coast Educational Collaborative are provided with the manual, *Process for Developing IEP's and Progress Reports*, and must follow the protocols outlined in this manual when developing an IEP. Each educator and related service provider must also become familiar with the online SchoolBrains system which is used to develop and to track most IEPs at SCEC.

## MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS/REPORTS OF PROGRESS

Each student's progress toward the annual goals and objectives in their IEP is measured by rigorous data collection. Each program utilizes a computerized system to collect and analyze behavioral data. Parents/guardians are regularly informed of their child's progress and whether that progress is enough for the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year. At South Coast Educational Collaborative, Progress Reports are issued five times per year.

Progress Reports are mailed to parents/guardians/educational surrogate parents and the Administrators of Special Education of the sending school districts. These reports include progress achieved for each IEP objective and whether that progress is enough for the student to achieve the goals by the end of the IEP year. Educators and related service providers are responsible for completing progress reports professionally, accurately and in a timely manner. All educators/related service providers must become familiar with the web based SchoolBrains system which is utilized to complete Progress Reports.

### *South Coast Educational Collaborative's Progress Report Protocol*

- Written reports are submitted to parents at least as often as report cards or progress reports for students without disabilities (five times per year).
- Educational data is recorded, then interpreted on a regular basis, for each IEP objective so that a determination can be made regarding the student's progress toward accessing the general curriculum at grade level or through entry points or access skills.
- If a student's IEP is signed as accepted **before the halfway point of a term**, that IEP is addressed for Progress Reports. If an IEP is signed **after the halfway point**, the previously active IEP is the one addressed.
- What you write and how you write it is a reflection of your expertise, your profession, and all of SCEC. Reports are required to be accurate, complete and professional and based on measurable, observable data.
- If the school issues grades for its students, it is required to complete a Grade Report for each student to be included with their Progress Report.
- At the beginning of each school year, the Progress Report Schedule for the year is developed and sent to all administrators, facilitators, teachers and related service providers. The schedule includes the dates for each term; the date of the halfway point of each term ("midterm"); the date that Facilitators must develop the Progress Report templates in SchoolBrains; the date that completed Progress Reports are due to Facilitators; and the date that reports must be submitted to the central office.
- Mailing lists and labels are prepared before each term so that each student's report is sent to the proper parent(s)/guardian/educational surrogate parent and school district(s).
- Copies of reports are also disseminated to the student's school site for filing.
- For each school site, a checklist is prepared and maintained as a record of where each student's report was sent, and the date mailed. The checklists are filed at the front of each school site's student file drawer at the main office.

*(LEGAL REF: Individuals with Disabilities Act Section 300.43)*

## TRANSITION SERVICES

IDEA defines "transition services" as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be part of a results-oriented process and is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability in order to facilitate their movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated

employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and/or community participation.

Transition services are based on the individual student's needs, considering the student's strengths, preferences and interests. These services may include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employability skills/competencies and other post- school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational education.

In addition, the *Transition Planning Form* is completed by the IEP Team as part of the IEP process for a student who is age fourteen (14) or older, or who will be turning age fourteen (14) in the new IEP year and thereafter updated annually.

Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns fourteen (14), or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually thereafter, the IEP includes:

- Appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals and objectives based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills;
- The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals;
- Beginning not later than one year before the student reaches the age of majority under state law, a statement that the student has been informed of their rights under §300.520, if any, will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority.

The transition process is most useful when linked with the IEP process and the student has the opportunity to actively participate in all aspects of transition planning. SCEC students ages fourteen (14) and older are encouraged to attend and actively participate in their IEP development and meetings. (**LEGAL REF:** *Individuals with Disabilities Act Section 300.43*)

## **SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE**

The Summary of Performance is required under the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. For a student whose eligibility under special education terminates due to graduation with a regular diploma or certificate of achievement, or due to exceeding the age of eligibility. The local education agency “shall provide the child with a summary of the child’s academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child’s postsecondary goals” (§300.305(e)(3)).

The Summary of Performance is typically developed by a SCEC School Adjustment Counselor with input from appropriate educators, related service providers, and the student and their family. The Summary of Performance is provided to the student and/or parent/guardian/caretaker and to the sending school district.

The Summary of Performance and accompanying documentation is important to assist the student in the transition from high school to higher education, training and/or employment. This information is necessary under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act to help establish a student’s eligibility for reasonable accommodations and supports in postsecondary

settings.

The Summary of Performance is most useful when linked with the IEP process and the student has the opportunity to actively participate in the development of this document.

The format for the Summary of Performance is as follows:

- Background information (identifying information; formal and informal assessments; etc.);
- Student's postsecondary goals;
- Summary of Performance (academic, cognitive and functional levels of performance as well as recommended accommodations, modifications, and assistive technology);
- Recommendations to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals

## REMOTE ACCESS

In keeping with the guidance from the Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and notwithstanding any prohibitions within *603 CMR 28.00*, alternative means of participation in meetings can be made available. Parents/Guardians who would otherwise be unable to attend a meeting should be offered the possibility of a telephone or video conferencing format that meet the standards of securing privacy (HIPAA & FERPA compliant). With agreement from the parent/guardian and the sending district, related service providers, who might otherwise be unavailable to attend a meeting, might employ telephone or video conferencing technologies to participate more fully as part of the educational team process. The option of video or telephone conferencing may remain for other members of the educational team as well.

The availability of remote access for purposes other than meeting attendance will be considered by the educational team and the program administrator on a case-by-case basis. There may be times and conditions that prevent a student's in-person attendance at a program. Prolonged treatment or illness or other unforeseen events may result in a student being unable to access instruction through in-person means. Specialized instruction and/or related services may be delivered with integrity and fidelity using remote means and should be considered. Related services providers might routinely use video or telephone conferencing to communicate with parents/guardians and community-based providers as part of routine service delivery without requiring a specific plan. Service delivery may need the support of a paraprofessional to monitor a student during the remote delivery of services. Any such use of remote service delivery would be with permission of the program administrator.

At no time should any remote video or telephone conferencing be recorded by any party without expressed, written permission of the parent/guardian and/or other parties participating remotely. This includes a prohibition on AI tools to generate meeting notes or summaries.

*(LEGAL REF: 603 CMR 28.00; <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr-meetings/?section=keypoints-team> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4934495/>)*

## REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

In the event of a Collaborative specific emergency requiring the use of remote learning, the Executive Director of the Collaborative may declare such an emergency and shall, as soon as possible, obtain the approval of the Collaborative's Board of Directors, for remote learning. The

remote learning plan below will be applicable in cases of disease, weather emergencies, destruction or damage to schools rendering them inaccessible, or other extraordinary circumstances, including emergencies declared by government officials, the school committee/board of directors, or the Superintendent/Executive Director.

When it becomes necessary for the Collaborative to provide support to students who are unable to attend classes or access appropriate services due to an extended closure, the Executive Director shall establish a plan and procedures to ensure that such services are provided. The provision of educational services may include the use of technology and devices, and strategies designed to support student learning away from school.

The remote learning plan will, to the extent possible:

- Ensure the safety of all students and faculty in coordination with appropriate local and state departments and agencies;
- Provide support for student social and emotional wellbeing and address the implications of trauma experienced by students or faculty as a result of the emergency;
- Identify goals and strategies for maintaining standards of student achievement and school improvement plans;
- Ensure instruction and services are delivered by district educators and personnel as much as practicable;
- Utilize the most effective tools and resources available for students and faculty, including the skills and talents of district personnel, in the delivery of instruction and services and share resources as needed;
- Provide resources and services equitably to meet the needs and circumstances of all students;
- Provide students with all educational supports and services as specified in their IEP;
- Identify remedial strategies necessary after the emergency to advance student achievement (i.e. after-school, extended day, summer school, and contingency scheduling to cancel vacations.);
- Gather information both during and after the period of emergency regarding the most effective means of remote learning to implement as appropriate.

In developing a remote learning plan, the Executive Director will:

- Identify and prepare effective means for communicating with faculty, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- Collaborate with municipal agencies that support the schools and community Consult with the Board of Directors to identify any extraordinary actions necessary or authority required to administer emergency and remote learning plans. This includes any changes to district policies on the school calendar, grading, promotions and retentions, local graduation requirements, testing, and standards and accountability.
- Consult with administrators and principals to ensure the continuing education of students at all levels, including:
  - use of the most appropriate resources, tools and strategies to deliver the curricula given local circumstances and conditions;
  - equitable access to appropriate content for all students;
  - specific accommodations for students at high risk, including clients of special

education, students with disabilities, English learners, students at economic disadvantage, homeless students, students in foster care and students of military families.

- Utilize available technological resources suitable for serving students at all levels. This inventory will be prepared in advance in anticipation of an emergency.
- Ensure the privacy rights of students, faculty and families are protected, including assessing the security of Collaborative technology.
- Consult with bargaining units to determine if modifications to collective bargaining agreements need to be established for the period of the emergency.
- Identify the financial implications of the emergency plan and recommend transfer of funds as may be necessary.

*(SOURCE: MASC - May 2020; LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 15 U.S.C. §§ 6501-6506 Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)).*

## **REMOTE LEARNING GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION**

To assist South Coast Educational Collaborative's (SCEC) staff in communicating with families and students during any type of remote learning, the following procedures need to be adhered to. A wide variety of tools may be utilized to engage students and/or their families during remote learning opportunities, including direct contact via telephone or video chat.

### ***Telephone Contact***

SCEC employees must take steps to ensure that their personal telephone number is not identifiable to students and/or their families. Telephone contact may be made by any of the following means:

- SCEC phone
- Google Voice
- Personal cell phone using \*67 to block caller ID
- All telephone contact will occur during usual school hours (unless an alternate time was previously scheduled and agreed upon with the family)

### ***Video Conferencing***

- Video conferencing sessions will only occur using a FERPA-compliant platform, i.e. Zoom for Education, Microsoft Teams, etc.
- Video conferencing will only occur during usual school hours (unless an alternate time was previously scheduled and agreed upon with the family and other members of the student's educational team.)
- AI tools are not to be used for recording, note-taking, or summarizing the video conference.
- Employees should take steps to ensure that their setting does not display personal items in the background, i.e., family pictures. Setting up a virtual background is an option, however, when doing this you must remain close to the camera to be viewed clearly.
- Professional attire will be worn by all employees during video conferencing sessions. Attire will be commensurate with the attire worn during a usual workday at SCEC.
- Strict confidentiality protocols will be followed as needed to comply with FERPA guidelines.
- Employees will ensure they are alone at the time of the video conferencing session to maintain confidentiality.

- If other people are in the building/home, the employee will ensure that the video conferencing session takes place in a private room with the door closed.
- It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that no other person enters the video conferencing session.
- The employee will begin each session by assuring the student and parent/guardian that they are alone, and no one can hear what they are saying.
- Video conferencing sessions will be documented by SCEC staff.
- Employees will report to the SCEC program clinician assigned to the student if they feel a student and/or family is struggling emotionally.
- Equal access to video conferencing will be provided to each student regardless of access to technology, language of instruction or communication needs.
- Translation services will be offered to all students and families who have a primary language other than English.
- All contacts will meet standards as outlined in the SCEC Policies and Procedures Manual.

### ***Student Group Video Conferences***

- All group video conferencing with students will include at least two (2) SCEC employees as needed to ensure high-quality educational programming.
- The use of video is optional for students and parents/guardians during group video conferences.

### **RELATED SERVICES**

In keeping with federal law which defines related services, South Coast Educational Collaborative provides the following related services:

- Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling
- Interpreting services (arranged in cooperation with a student's sending school district)
- Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- Occupational therapy
- Orientation & mobility services
- Parent counseling & training
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services & assessment
- Recreation, including therapeutic recreation & adaptive physical education
- Speech-language pathology & audiology services
- School health services, including school nursing services
- Social work services, including case management
- Transportation

In addition, South Coast Educational Collaborative offers the following related services:

- Applied behavior analysis
- Assistive technology
- Reading
- Health education

- Transition
- Vision, Orientation, and Mobility

Staff providing these services are appropriately trained, licensed/certified in their respective fields, and follow the guidelines and principles of professional service delivery as outlined by their professional organizations. (*LEGAL REF: 34 CFR §300*).

## **ENGLISH LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES**

Administrators and educators at South Coast Educational Collaborative acknowledge their responsibility to serve English Learners and affirm their willingness to accept students with limited English proficiency into their programs. SCEC is committed to implementing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and strategies designed to improve the academic achievement of English Learners (ELs).

All core academic teachers (that is, elementary teachers, teachers of students with moderate disabilities, teachers of students with severe disabilities, and teachers of the following academic subjects: English, reading, mathematics, science, civics and government, economics, history, and geography) who provide sheltered English instruction to English learners in school are required to earn a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher Endorsement as set forth in 603 CMR 7.00 and 603 CMR 14.07. Educational Administrators who supervise or evaluate such teachers also must earn an SEI Teacher Endorsement or SEI Administrator Endorsement as set forth in 603 CMR 7.00 and 603 CMR 14.07.

Other provisions for English Learners with disabilities:

- Educators are afforded the opportunity to work with SEI experts in order to take advantage of coaching and professional learning communities to assist them with applying the knowledge and skills they acquire in SEI courses and training.
- The following program modifications and support services are provided for students with limited English proficiency:
  - All English Learners are afforded the same opportunity to access and participate in the program's services, activities and other benefits as all other students.
  - In accordance with 603 CMR 26.03 and Title VI, all components of the program are open and available to students with significant disabilities regardless of race, color, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English-speaking ability, or sexual orientation.
  - In accordance with 603 CMR 28.03 (3) (a), the SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader ensures that efforts are made to meet the needs of diverse learners, including appropriate services for ELs.
    - Unless the student's IEP specifies otherwise, the student receives sheltered content instruction from a trained and qualified teacher and additional instruction in English as a second language by a certified ESL teacher.
    - The program adheres to all statewide testing requirements for ELs in the event that the sending school district has identified a student as an EL, including statewide test materials in the student's primary language, as available; test accommodations for EL students (bilingual dictionary); forms and materials for students participating in MCAS-

Alt in their primary language; staff training for the statewide assessment for English language proficiency; ACCESS for ELs as needed.

South Coast Educational Collaborative provides ongoing professional development opportunities for educators who teach ELs.

## **THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMMING/POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS & COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING**

All South Coast Educational Collaborative school sites incorporate the philosophy of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to maximize student potential, growth, and achievement. PBIS provides a platform from which all other components of a program naturally grow. The fundamental elements of PBIS include understanding and recognizing the hierarchy of student needs, development of a respectful and positive classroom culture, providing communication which promotes classroom management, shaping students' identity through positive input, applying positive approaches to discipline, and providing motivation management for each student. PBIS allows for a rich collection of data which documents student achievements.

Additionally, SCEC has recently partnered with Massachusetts General Hospital's Department of Psychiatry and has started training in the Collaborative Problem Solving® approach. It is an evidence-based, trauma-informed practice that reduces challenging behavior, teaches kids the skills they lack, and builds relationships with adults. Collaborative Problem Solving is designed to meet the needs of all children, including those with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. It promotes the understanding that students who have trouble meeting expectations or managing their behavior lack the skill—not the will—to do so. These students struggle with skills related to problem-solving, flexibility, and frustration tolerance. These skills can be developed through the CPS approach. Collaborative Problem Solving avoids using power, control, and motivational procedures. Instead, it focuses on collaborating with students to solve the problems leading to unmet expectations and concerning behavior and build the skills they need to succeed. CPS is trauma-informed and aims to mitigate implicit bias's impact on school discipline.

## **V. COMMUNITY & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **VISITORS TO SCHOOLS**

Parents/guardians and others concerned with the welfare of students at South Coast Educational Collaborative are encouraged to visit the appropriate school site(s). To ensure a successful visit, employees should advise potential visitors to call ahead and make sure the student, staff, or activity will be at school when they arrive. Also, since security is increasingly an issue of concern in schools today, certain measures are in place to keep unauthorized persons from entering school buildings.

Visitors to schools must follow all security measures in place to gain access to the school facility. After admission to the building, all visitors must check in at the main office and obtain a visitor's pass.

During the time spent at the school, visitors are expected to adhere to the following policies:

- If they are provided a Visitor's Badge, it must be worn at all times.
- Visitors should not interact with teaching staff or students.
- Visitors who wish to speak at length to a teacher or other staff person should contact the person by phone or email to set up an appointment.

Should an employee feel that a visitor is interfering with the task of educating the students, they may politely ask the visitor to leave the room.

All employees are expected to enforce school security rules and regulations. The best protection for our children is watchful and careful staff. Never leave outside doors open or unlocked. If you see a stranger in the building, ask them who they are and why they are there, and/or report the situation to the school's central office. Never leave any student unsupervised. (SOURCE: MASC)

### **OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIFIC COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS**

South Coast Educational Collaborative will grant timely and sufficient access to parents/guardians and parent/guardian-designated independent evaluators, and educational consultants to their child's current or proposed special education program so that the parent/guardian and named designees can observe the child in the current program or any proposed program. SCEC staff are committed to collaborating with parents/guardians and their designees to achieve timely and sufficient access to programs for observations that will help parents/guardians, and their designees better understand the school programs that serve students with disabilities, while safeguarding the confidentiality interests of all students and minimizing disruption in the classroom and school.

*Per Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance  
(Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009)*

"School districts and parents/guardians have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent/guardian or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue."

The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:

- the safety of children in the program during the observation;
- the integrity of the program during the observation;
- and children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.

To facilitate successful observations by parents/guardians and their designees, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Any parent/guardian wishing to observe their child's current or proposed school program must verbally request a visit from the appropriate Educational Administrator.
2. The SCEC Program Administrator/Teacher Leader or designee shall contact the parent/guardian for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents'/guardians' request.
3. A date and time that suits the parent's/guardian's needs as well as the program's schedule will be arranged.
4. If the parent/guardian wishes to have a designee observe the program (e.g., independent evaluator or consultant) and/or review student records, school staff will ask the parent to sign the *Authorization to Release Confidential Information* form allowing that designee to conduct an observation and/or review the student's records, consistent with section 23.07(4) of the Student Records Regulations.
5. Parents/Guardians and designee are required to sign the *Agreement to Maintain Student Confidentiality During School Observation* upon their arrival at the program to conduct the observation.
6. Some observation requests may require more planning and observation time than others depending on the complexity of the student needs being evaluated, the program(s) to be observed, the program schedule, and the schedule of the parent or designee. Such issues will be resolved efficiently and effectively through discussions between the school staff and the parent and/or designee, beginning with timely communication from the school to the observer when the request is made. In most cases, the observation schedule can be agreed upon within a week of the request. In some cases, it may take longer for school staff, together with the parent

- and/or designee, to plan the logistical aspects of an observation.
7. Observations will not be scheduled during MCAS or RICAS testing in the student's classroom.
  8. The school staff will permit sufficient time for the parent/guardian or designee to observe for the parent/guardian or designee to accomplish the purpose of the visit. The parent/guardian or designee may observe both academic and non-academic components of the program as requested. The duration of a visit will be determined on an individual basis through discussion between school staff and the parent/guardian, or designee.
  9. The observer will be informed that they are there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. They are not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform their contractual job duties.
  10. School staff will not restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:
    - a. the safety of the students in the program during the observation;
    - b. the integrity of the program during the observation; and
    - c. students in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information they may obtain while observing the program.
    - d. To avoid the need to restrict access for these reasons, school staff will discuss these issues with the program observer when planning the visit. Any decision to restrict access will be made on an individual basis by the school administration and the child's teacher(s) and service providers based on their professional judgment concerning the needs of the child or children within the program or classroom.

Since security is increasingly an issue of concern in schools today, certain measures are in place to keep unauthorized persons from entering school buildings.

- Visitors to programs must follow all security measures in place to gain access to the school facility.
- After admission to the building, all visitors must check in at the main office and obtain a visitor's pass which must be worn at all times.
- During the observation, the parent/guardian or designee is asked to follow these guidelines:
  - Please do not interact with teaching staff or students while the class or activity is in session. Each staff person has a specific set of tasks to perform to ensure that each student receives the best educational experience possible.

An Administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period.  
*(LEGAL REF.: MGL 71B:3)*

## **COMMUNITY-BASED THERAPISTS**

Whereas we at South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) value and respect the work of our community partners, we employ highly trained and qualified mental health staff, including school adjustment counselors, licensed mental health counselors, and psychologists. In addition, we employ a complement of behavior analysts. Together, they offer a tightly woven therapeutic programming to address school-related problems.

We see the role of community-based providers as necessary to address the behaviors and mental health challenges occurring in settings outside of school. Consultation, collaboration, and collegial cooperation remains the hallmark of providing quality work. We ask that community-based providers focus their efforts on the work outside of the typical school day. School-based interventions remain the responsibility of SCEC staff. Community-based providers, therefore, shall not meet with individual students during the typical school day or direct their special education services.

The drafting and implementation of direct services and behavior plans remains the sole responsibility of the SCEC employees though such services and plans may be informed by the collaboration with community-based providers when it does not negatively impact the integrity of the overall programming.

## **RESEARCH, EXPERIMENTATION & QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Notwithstanding the Quality Assurance/Research protocols, no employee or outside agency/consultant may engage in any of the following activities without prior written notification to, and the prior written specific consent of, the affected student's parent/guardian, and of the student if eighteen (18) years old or older (unless there is written documentation that the student is not capable of such a decision):

- Research or experimentation;
- Use of the student's or family's name, photographs, audio or videotapes, for fund-raising, publicity, or any other purposes.

SCEC does not allow, without the written specific consent of the affected student's parents/guardians, observation of any student by persons other than parents/guardians of current or prospective students, SCEC staff, volunteers and college/graduate student interns working at the program, authorized staff of the public schools responsible for the students in the school, authorized staff of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or authorized state or federal monitoring personnel.

## **REGISTERING (PUBLIC) COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the Executive Director, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Executive Director.

Complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. The professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the Executive Director. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. Program Administrator
3. Executive Director
4. Board of Directors

If a complaint, which was presented to the Executive Director and referred through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the Executive Director, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the Executive Director and then placed in the official files.

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his complaint in writing.

Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

Matters referred to the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

The Executive Director and Board of Directors expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

*(SOURCE: MASC LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:5; 603 CMR 26.00)*

## VI. EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

### Safe Schools Program Plan

South Coast Educational Collaborative has established complete policies and procedures for emergencies within its *Safe Schools Program Plan* ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UWrz\\_cOfd8VuZy90MDGwNdURC2Pbnz2R/view?usp=sharing\\_eil\\_se\\_dm&ts=64d64227](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UWrz_cOfd8VuZy90MDGwNdURC2Pbnz2R/view?usp=sharing_eil_se_dm&ts=64d64227)) which includes policies and procedures for at-risk management systems, alarm systems and signals, evacuation routes and procedures, protocol for evacuation drills, necessary emergency assistance to students, ongoing safety programs, situations involving students who have run away, bomb threats, potential suicide and homicide crises, threats of school violence, and risk assessment.

SCEC classrooms located in public school facilities follow the emergency and evacuation procedures outlined by the host school. Special accommodations may be developed for individual students and are posted in the classroom. SCEC classrooms located in substantially separate facilities follow the *Safe Schools Program Plan* general procedures as well as the specific emergency and evacuation procedures developed specifically for the building site.

All employees are fully trained in, and are expected to be completely familiar with, all emergency procedures. Each school's *Safe Schools Program Plan* is centrally located at the site and is available to all staff and families.

# *Appendices*

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

Discrimination Report (Title IX)

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

SCEC Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Communication Method: \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISORY INFORMATION

Immediate Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title & Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLAINT INFORMATION

1. Your complaint of Sexual Harassment is made against:

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
Title: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Relationship to you. (Please select one).

- Supervisor
Co-worker
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please describe the conduct or incident(s) that is the basis of this complaint and your reasons for concluding that the conduct is sexual harassment. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

4. Date(s) sexual harassment occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the sexual harassment continuing?  Yes  No

6. Please list the name and contact information of any witnesses or individuals that may have information related to your complaint:

\*\*\***The remaining items are optional** but may help facilitate the investigation.

1. Have you previously complained or provided information (verbal or written) about sexual harassment at SCEC? If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information?

Employees that file complaints with their employer might have the ability to get help or file claims with other entities including federal, state or local government agencies or in certain courts.

2. Have you filed a claim regarding this complaint with a federal, state or local government agency?

Yes  No

3. Have you instituted a legal suit or court action regarding this

complaint?  Yes  No

4. Have you hired an attorney with respect to this complaint?  Yes  No

I request that South Coast Educational Collaborative investigate this complaint of sexual harassment according to its stated policies and procedures and advise me of the results of the investigation.

---

Signature

Date

**SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE  
DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT REPORTING FORM**

**COMPLAINANT INFORMATION**

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

*(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged harasser solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)*

Check whether you are the:      Target of the harassment    Reporter (not the target)

Check whether you are a:      Student    Staff member (specify role) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent     Administrator     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If student, which program? \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

If staff member, which program?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE INCIDENT**

Name of Target (of harassment): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Aggressor (person who engaged in the harassment): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or may have information about it):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student    Staff    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Student    Staff    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Student    Staff    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used. Please use additional space on back or additional pages, if necessary.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Filing this Report:

***(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged harasser solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)***

Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**INVESTIGATION**

Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Interviews:

Interviewed alleged harasser

Name & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed target

Name & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed witnesses

Name & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Any prior documented incidents by the alleged harasser?

Yes  No

If yes, have incidents involved the same target or target group previously?

Yes  No

Any previous incidents with findings of discriminatory harassment?

Yes  No

***Summary of Investigation:***

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

**CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION**

Finding of discrimination:  Yes  No

Type of discrimination: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contacts:**

- |                                                     |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target's Parent/Guardian   | Date of Contact: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harasser's Parent/Guardian | Date of Contact: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement            | Date of Contact: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                     | Date of Contact: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office of Civil Rights     | Date of Contact: _____ |

**Action Taken:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe Safety Planning:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Report forwarded to Site Leader (if Site Leader was not the investigator): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Report forwarded to Executive Director: Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE  
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

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

*(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged harasser solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)*

Check whether you are the:       Target of the bullying       Reporter (not the target)

Check whether you are a:       Student     Staff member (specify role) \_\_\_\_\_  
                                                  Parent     Administrator     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If student, which program? \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

If staff member, which program? \_\_\_\_\_

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INCIDENT:

Name of Target (of behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

**Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Student       Staff       Other  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Student       Staff       Other  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Student       Staff       Other

Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used. Please use additional space on back if necessary.

---

Signature of Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged harasser solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)*

Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

### INVESTIGATION

Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed target: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed witnesses: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor?  Yes  No

If yes, have incidents involved same target or target group previously?  Yes  No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION?  Yes  No

#### Summary of Investigation

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

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### CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

Finding of bullying or retaliation:  Yes  No

Bullying  Retaliation Contacts:

Target's Parent/Guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Action Taken:

**Describe Safety Planning:**

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Report forwarded to Site Leader (if Site Leader was not the investigator):

- Date

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Report forwarded to Executive Director:

- Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

SCEC will reimburse an employee a lump sum totaling no more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) for credits/in-service credits/PDPs/CEUs/CECs/7D licenses, and related materials, books, fees for approved courses, seminars, workshops, and training sessions.

- The course/conference/in-service is part of a program leading to an advanced degree in a field which will serve SCEC's needs; or
- The course/conference/in-service is approved IN ADVANCE by the Executive Director;
- The employee attains a minimum grade of "C" or its equivalent; "Pass" if "Pass/Fail;" certificate of completion, or PDPs/CEUs/CECs awarded; and
- The employee is scheduled to be employed by SCEC for the semester following completion of the course.
- An employee will be eligible for reimbursement for not more than ten (10) credits per work year.
- All employees are required to take a minimum of three (3) college credits and/or in-service credits and/or training sessions equivalent to three (3) college credits every three (3) years, taught by qualified professionals. The three (3) college credits and/or in-service credits and/or training sessions must be approved IN ADVANCE by the Executive Director.
- Employees must submit receipts for any and all items for payment within sixty (60) days of incurring the expense.

### TRAVEL POLICY

It is the policy of SCEC to reimburse employees for actual and reasonable travel expenses incurred while conducting collaborative business. Employees are expected to use good judgment when incurring expenses and to promptly and accurately report such expenses. This includes expense claims and purchase orders. Authorized approvers are responsible for reviewing and approving business expense claims to ensure expenses are justified and in accordance with this policy. The direct approver must not be directly or indirectly a beneficiary of the expenditure.

Program Leaders must pre-approve only essential collaborative-related trips and ensure that the correct number of employees are traveling to support SCEC's needs.

### TRAVEL PROCEDURES

- **Travel Authorization:** All SCEC travel requires pre-approval by the Executive Director and immediate supervisor of the traveler prior to committing to reservations.
- **Expense Reports:** To ensure that all proper SCEC-related expenses incurred by employees are reimbursed, the following procedure has been established:
  - All expenditures are to be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor unless circumstances prevent advance approval.
  - All SCEC-related expenditures must be accompanied by a receipt or evidence of expenditure in order to receive reimbursement.
  - All items purchased or charged by the employee are to be itemized on the approved SCEC expense report. All portions of the report must be filled out or marked "N/A" (not applicable), and the necessity and purpose of the expenditure must be explained in sufficient detail.
  - Expense reports must be signed and dated by the employee's immediate supervisor showing approval. Reports are due in the accounting department within 30 days of the expenditure.

- **Receipts – Description of Expense**

- Original receipts are required for all authorized SCEC-related expenses. If special situations arise where receipts are not provided, an explanation should be written and attached to the expense report. The business office will determine if these are reimbursable items.
- Authorized receipts for air travel reimbursement are either the Airline Passenger Coupon or the travel agency invoice showing the same data elements.
- In the event that an airline ticket was not used, it must be returned to SCEC so that the appropriate credit may be obtained.
- Incidentals without receipts must be recorded in the miscellaneous area of the expense report (e.g., tolls, porter tips, public transportation) and should be itemized.
- The hotel bill detailing the charges must be attached to the expense report. The credit card slip reflecting the total will not be accepted. This bill must be itemized by category on the expense report.

- **Airlines – Commercial**

SCEC will reimburse the employee only for the cost of the actual ticket(s) used. In any case where an employee incurs a cost greater than that covered by the policy, the employee will reimburse SCEC for the difference.

- **Automobile Rentals**

- Automobile rentals may be used when public transportation or SCEC-provided vehicles are unavailable or inadequate.
- To further reduce car rental costs, employees are asked to double up with other employees on car rentals whenever possible. A larger vehicle is acceptable and more economical than renting three or more separate vehicles.
- Employees will refuel car rentals prior to drop-off to avoid high cost fuel surcharges.

- **Ground Transportation**

For transportation to and from the airport, if driving less than 25 miles, taxis or other ground transportation, such as airport shuttles, buses or limos may be the most cost-effective.

- **Mileage/Kilometer Allowance**

- It is SCEC's intention that employees will pay for their own mileage between their place of residence and their workplace. Any required business mileage incurred during the workday in excess of that normal commute will be compensated in accordance with SCEC's business mileage policy.

Where personal vehicles must be used, the amount of reimbursement is based on actual business miles.