

# **Parent/Guardian Manual 2024-2025**



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*\*Information is the same in Section III. Subsection A. and Section V. Subsection A.*

## **I. Nashoba Learning Group Description**

### **A. Mission Statement**

Nashoba Learning Group's (NLG) mission is to enable individuals with autism to function with the greatest possible productivity and independence in the community, home, workplace, and program setting throughout their lives. NLG was founded in 2002 to offer a different life trajectory for more impaired individuals with autism and their families. NLG's Day School program, located at 10 Oak Park Drive in Bedford, Massachusetts and 170 Lexington Road (first floor) in Billerica, Massachusetts provides outstanding, individualized education, training and intervention services to students aged 3 to 22 with autism Spectrum and related disorders. NLG's Adult Day program located at 170 Lexington Road (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) in Billerica, Massachusetts provides outstanding daily living, volunteer, community recreational, and, as appropriate, job skills training and day habilitation services to adults aged 22 and older with autism spectrum and related disorders so that they can continue to achieve their potential and be productive members of society throughout their lives. NLG's programs welcome individuals with autism and related disorders of any race, creed, color, sex, sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin, language, socioeconomic status or homelessness.

NLG's Day School will achieve its mission by living its core values:

- Every person with autism deserves the opportunity to develop to their fullest developmental potential and be a valued contributor in each community and program setting in which they participate
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a proven method for enabling people with autism to maximize their learning and developmental potential
- Successful education of children with autism is not a part-time task that happens at school – it is a full-time commitment requiring both the school and the family
- Outstanding education must be comprehensive and customized
- The quality of the education that a student receives is determined by the quality and training of the people who deliver the services
- Nashoba Learning Group will focus on what is proven to enhance the lives of individuals with autism, and we will do only what we do best

### **B. How to Contact Nashoba Learning Group**

| Contact Information Category | Bedford Site   | Billerica Site                            |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Address                      | 10 Oak Park Drive<br>Bedford, MA 01730   | 170 Lexington Road<br>Billerica, MA 01821 |
| Telephone                    | (781) 275-2500   | (978) 528-5210                            |
| Facsimile                    | (781) 275-2510   | (978) 215-0730                            |
| Email                        | info@nashobalearninggroup.org  | info@nashobalearninggroup.org             |
| Staff Hours                  | 8:30am-3:30pm  | 8:15am-3:15pm                             |
| Phone Coverage               | 8:00am-4:00pm  | 8:00am-4:00pm                             |
| Phone Coverage               | Exception is Memorial Day to Labor Day phones are covered until the last student's bus leaves. |   |

Phone rolls into voicemail if it is not answered after 4 rings. If you urgently need to reach us and get voicemail during school hours, please try calling again.

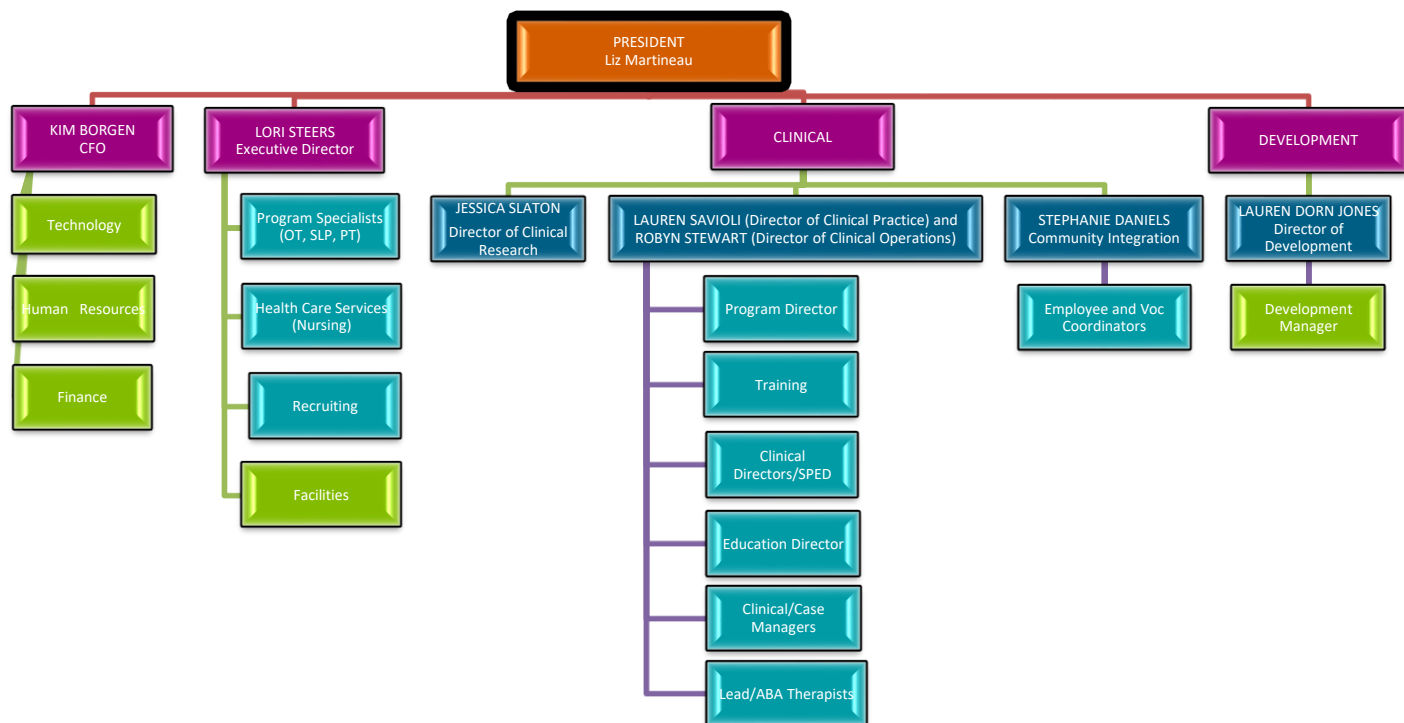
If you are calling a teacher or instructor, unless it is an emergency, in order to avoid disrupting any of the student’s educational programming, you will be asked to leave a message with the receptionist, that will be forwarded to the teacher or instructor as soon as possible. The communication book is to provide timely, daily communication between student families and teaching staff. These issues should not be communicated during student drop off or pick up as this will delay this process for everyone else in line. Please leave a message with your child’s clinical staff via voicemail, email or in the communication book if you would like to arrange a time to meet.

If you need to get information to us and it is not urgent, we generally prefer a note in the communication book, via email, or in the backpack to a phone call.

If you are updating your child’s pickup information, guardianship or custody status, medication administration, or emergency information, we require a signed form.

### C. Organizational Chart

#### NLG DAY SCHOOL



## **D. Day School Program Description**

NLG's Day School Program provides outstanding, comprehensive, individualized education, training and intervention. Our Program is based on the scientifically validated principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), delivered by highly trained and supervised teaching staff, and customized for each student in partnership with the family. The Day School runs year round, 224 days per year and serves students ages 3 to 22. Progress is measured daily and summarized for monthly clinic meetings with the family. Home consultations offer an additional opportunity to coordinate between home and school and ensure that skills are generalized. Students also spend time in the community as part of NLG's program to work on life skills and skills generalization.

NLG's Day School Program is approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as a Chapter 766 private special needs school. We serve students in our center-based program with a diagnosis of autism and related disorders. Students are referred for admission to NLG by their local public school districts. Each student works on individualized goals and objectives established annually through their Individual Education Planning (IEP) process by NLG, the family and the sending school district. Goals encompass appropriate behavior, communication, speech and language, social skills, academics, daily living skills, and motor skills. In addition, students age 14 and over are served by NLG's Vocational and Life Skills Program.

## **II. The Parent- Nashoba Learning Group Partnership**

### **A. Transition Planning**

To ensure each student's success at Nashoba Learning Group, we work with the IEP team to plan their transition to our school carefully. Our overriding goal for each student is that they are successful in our program from the very first day. We generally spend the student's first days providing a rich array of reinforcing activities on a very frequent schedule, contingent only on the successful performance of activities that are relatively easy for the student. In some cases, we may jointly decide to begin with a shorter school day and set criteria for increasing your child's time with us to a full day. Over time, as your child becomes comfortable in our environment and recognizes the availability of reinforcing activities here, we gradually reduce the frequency of reinforcement to a steady-state level and increase the difficulty of tasks, while providing appropriate teaching support.

In order to plan your child's educational programming, we ask that you provide us with information about their current program and recent data and evaluations. Before your child begins, we will meet with you and / or your child's current teacher to review these programs and the data, and to understand the materials needed. Where indicated, we are willing to run existing learning programs "as is" at first but shift to our data collection system. We will usually use the IEP that exists at the time of placement for the first 6-8 weeks as we are gathering our initial data.

We also begin immediately to collect data on behavior. In many cases, where there are specific issues with inappropriate behavior in the child's prior placement, or at home, we may ask for informed consent to immediately implement a behavior plan based on a preliminary or prior functional assessment.

As is noted in our application materials, when a student who presents a danger to self and/or others is to be admitted, NLG will extend a provisional admission. During the provisional admission, and prior to the commencement of services at NLG, a functional assessment (or a safety assessment, as indicated) of the

student's behavior will be conducted by NLG at the student's current placement or home. From this assessment, a behavior plan will be developed and reviewed with the student's Team. Admission becomes complete when a mutually agreeable behavior (or safety) plan is in place.

As we get to know your child, we will propose modifications and enhancements to programming and work with you to develop appropriate goals. We generally suggest scheduling an IEP meeting for 6-8 weeks into your child's tenure with us. By that time, we will know your child well enough to propose an individualized curriculum and a set of challenging yet attainable goals and objectives for your child.

## **B. Education Programming**

Students are referred for admission to NLG by their local public school district. Each student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed by a Team that includes the local school district, the family, and NLG. The Team develops annual goals and objectives for the child's education that are based on evaluations of the child's; developmental level and skill level, history of progress, the nature of the child's specific symptoms of disability, and the school district's learning standards, as adapted for the child. The family is an important member of the Team.

NLG participates in the setting of goals and objectives by the Team for all of our students. Family input through the IEP process and in clinic meetings is instrumental in determining the goals and objectives for the child. NLG then develops an individualized curriculum, which may include a behavior plan for each student that is designed to allow the child to achieve the IEP objectives set by the Team. This curriculum maps the IEP objectives to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and to specific NLG Learning Programs, or lesson plans.

All NLG Learning Programs include the gathering of data on the student's progress and specific standards for assessing whether the student has mastered the program. This data is summarized periodically and presented to the Team, so that the child's educational progress can be assessed. NLG Learning Programs utilize the rich array of teaching techniques developed through Applied Behavior Analysis and validated by scientific research as effective for the education and treatment of individuals with autism.

In creating each child's individualized curriculum, NLG strives to give each child access to as many strands of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as is appropriate for the student and consistent with the student's IEP. For academic subjects, NLG defers, where appropriate, to the local school district's curriculum in the selection of learning standards and where appropriate, in the texts and materials to be used.

NLG Learning Programs are grouped under the following categories:

- appropriate behavior and participation
- language and communication
- social skills
- pre-academic skills
- academic subject areas
- motor skills
- community skills
- daily living skills
- pre-vocational skills (for students under 14)
- vocational skills (for students 14 and over)
- leisure and play skills

When a student gains sufficient access skills to participate in grade level academics, they might be included in regular education programs at their local public school, with the level of inclusion and supports provided determined by the IEP Team. NLG provides support for NLG students whose IEPs call for appropriate amounts of supported inclusion in regular education programming. When the student is included, NLG follows the curriculum of the regular education classroom, modifying and/or pre-teaching lesson plans as needed by the child. If the student is able to participate in regular education without NLG support, the student graduates from NLG and returns to their local school district.

Each child's individualized curriculum is documented in their NLG Hi Rasmus account. This electronic platform includes for each learning program: a description of the skill to be acquired, the specific steps, materials, and teaching strategies, mastery criteria; a description of child's current status in the program: which steps are mastered and the current step; a list, where appropriate, of the specific items or materials mastered within each step; and the child's daily performance data.

NLG works with the local school district to determine how the child will participate in the MCAS assessment process. If the student does not sit for MCAS examinations, NLG prepares an Alternate Assessment Portfolio for submission, when required.

### **C. Regular Observation of Your Child at School**

Your regular observation of your child at school is very important for ensuring the success of our partnership to educate your child. We ask you to observe your child at school at least 6 times per year. We expect an observation to last an hour or less. You also have the opportunity to observe your child during monthly clinic meetings (discussed later in this manual).

Observations are essential to allow you to provide informed input into your child's educational programming and to participate fully in clinic meetings. In addition, such observations provide a valuable tool for promoting generalization of skills taught in school to home and community environments. For example, during observations, an instructor may ask you to take the role of instructor in order to begin the generalization process. Or, your observation of skills your child exhibits at school may help you set priorities for skills to be taught at home.

Generally, it is most productive for the parent(s)/guardian(s) who will attend clinic meetings to conduct the observations. However, we recognize the importance of bringing others who are important in the child's life in to observe from time to time. We ask that the parent(s) coordinate observations with us. In addition, NLG or your local school district will get your permission for any non-Parent/Guardian observer in order to ensure that we are protecting your family's confidentiality.

In order to ensure that observations do not interfere with the educational programming being provided to your child and the other children in the school, you and any others which observe your child must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Inform NLG in advance when you are coming. We will let you know if there are special circumstances or events that would preclude that date or time
- Always sign in and out on the visitor's log at the front desk
- Jot down your observations, questions and concerns rather than raising them immediately with the teacher/therapist (instructor)
- Participate as agreed with your child's instructor, but otherwise remain inconspicuous to your child.



- Be conscious of the educational needs of the other children and ensure that you are not distracting to the other children or instructors
- Respect at all times the need to maintain confidentiality of the other children in the program
- Before you leave, give a copy of your observations to your child's Clinical staff. If time permits, they would be happy to discuss your observations with you at that time
- Schedule a time after school to meet with the Lead Teacher/Therapist if you would like to discuss anything with them. However, we ask that you raise any concerns with your child's Clinical staff and not the Lead Teacher/Therapist
- Otherwise, your observations can be discussed at the next clinic meeting for your child
- At NLG's discretion, the Clinical or Executive Director may accompany you while you complete your observation

## **D. Daily Communication Between Parents and Teachers**

A communication log will be sent home every day with your child. In this communication log, one of the instructors assigned to your child's team will write a short note reporting on your child's day at school.

In order to ensure that your child does not lose instructional time, these notes will be limited to reminders and very quick highlights. It is important for you to let your child's teacher know what is important to you. For example, you may want a quick summary of behavior data, a list of big events that will help you ask your child questions about their day or you may want an update on a specific program.

When you write to an instructor assigned to your child, also try to keep the information brief. The instructor may request specific data or information that will help them ask your child questions about their day or family. You are welcome to raise any issues or concerns in the note. However, if the issue is more complex than can be addressed in a brief note, a meeting should be scheduled to discuss it.

## **E. Monthly Clinic Meetings**

NLG's Teacher/Therapists (instructors) work daily with your child. NLG's Clinical staff members have frequent opportunities to observe children and their instructors, provide input to your child's programming, and generate ideas for optimizing the programming for your child. However, obviously you as Parent(s)/Guardian(s) have the most knowledge of your priorities for your child and your child's skills as exhibited at home and in the community. In addition, through your regular observations at NLG and your daily communication with your child's teacher/therapist, you are familiar with your child's performance at school.

Regular clinic meetings are the primary forum for the Child's Parent(s)/Guardian(s), primary instructors and the Clinical staff to: work together to assess your child's progress; reassess priorities; develop next steps; address learning and behavior issues that arise; and, optimize your child's educational program. In addition, priorities for Home Consultation can be set and progress in meeting these priorities can be reviewed.

Clinic meetings will most often be scheduled monthly (more specifically after 4 weeks of in session instruction). These meetings may be more or less frequent based on the needs of your child. Ideally, all meetings will be held when you are able to attend. However, if we are unable to find a mutually convenient time during any month, NLG staff will conduct the clinic meeting and send you a copy of the notes afterwards.

Clinic meetings are generally scheduled to last 1½ to 2 hours and are held at NLG. A Clinic Note, containing a summary of progress on each program is generally prepared for review at the meeting. The majority of the meeting generally consists of observation of your child engaged in learning programs that have been identified from the Clinic Note and generation of ideas for optimizing the program for your child. Your child will be asked to participate in the meeting as is appropriate. The decisions made will be incorporated into the child's programming as quickly as possible. If the decisions made at the clinic meeting results in substantive changes to the goals and objectives in your child's IEP, we would request a Team meeting before implementing these changes. The clinic meeting held just prior to a child's regular Team meeting will be used to develop a draft set of goals and objectives for discussion with the Team.

## **F. Home Consultation**

Home consultation is a regular part of NLG's program. Each family will be assigned a Lead Therapist who will act as their home consultant under the discretion of the Clinical Management of the team. These assignments may be changed over time based on the needs of your family or NLG constraints.

Home consultation visits will be scheduled as needed based on the objectives for consultation, as set during NLG clinic meetings. The first home consultation may not occur for a few months after your child begins at NLG. That is because we need an opportunity to get to know each child and establish some new skills or behaviors that can then be transferred to home. Once visits begin, they are generally monthly, on average. It is anticipated that a home visit will last approximately 1 hour. Visits may be more frequent for short periods, if required. We believe that the minimum number of visits during a year should be four. Home consultation may sometimes take place at a non-home setting based on the needs of the child. We expect all home consults will occur during the school day with the child present. If after school care staff should attend but cannot, they are always welcome to schedule an observation of your child at NLG and collaborate with your child's Clinical Staff.

The purpose of home consultation is twofold. First, home consultation provides a mechanism to transfer skills mastered at school to the home environment. For most of our students, generalization is accomplished by modifying one variable at a time. To move a skill home, we must modify the setting, the instructor (from NLG personnel to parents and other caregivers), and often the materials. Depending on the skill, we might vary the order in which we modify these variables. In some cases, the instructor and materials are modified at school during a family observation and then the family completes the generalization process. In others, the transfer from NLG instructor to family members is done at home.

The second purpose of home consultation is for NLG to observe and develop a plan with the family to address issues and skill areas that are priorities at home. For example, the family may request assistance in teaching the child to get ready for school in the morning, or to interact appropriately with a sibling. There may be behavior management issues that are unique to the home environment. The NLG home consultant would work with the family to develop a plan that the family can implement at home. The NLG consultant can then train the family in the implementation of the plan. In many cases, some of the required skills would be first taught at school.

A family member or regular caregiver must be present and actively participate in the home consultation. In some cases, the family member or caregiver will be asked to gather selective data on the child's performance of specific tasks at home or on the incidence of or events surrounding specific behaviors. The home consultant's role is to assist the family in generalizing skills and in developing programs for the

family to implement at home. The home consultant does not provide direct service to the child in the home and is not responsible for caring for or supervising the child in the home.

## **G. Parent/Guardian Consent and Signature on All Behavior Change Procedures**

Behavior management plans are developed when a child exhibits behaviors that interfere with the child's ability to participate in family and community activities or reduce the child's ability to learn. Behaviors are identified by family members or instructors. Once identified, the behavior is defined and baseline data is collected. In most cases, a functional assessment is conducted to develop hypotheses on why the child is exhibiting the behavior and guide development of a comprehensive behavior plan. From this information, programs designed to reduce the behavior and increase appropriate alternative behaviors are developed by NLG's personnel under the supervision of a Clinical Director. These programs are reviewed with the family.

NLG will not implement any behavior management plans, except on a test basis, without written consent from a Parent/Guardian. Before asking for your consent, we will review the proposed program with you thoroughly. We will jointly set criteria for determining if the program is successful. Data are collected as part of every behavior management program.

Behavior plans at NLG always include the following components: hypotheses regarding the function of the behavior; activities and environmental modifications designed to prevent the behavior; functional communication and functional alternative training; reinforcement for appropriate behavior; and procedures to follow if the inappropriate behavior occurs. The focus of an NLG behavior plan is to teach and reward appropriate alternative behaviors. Alternative behaviors are only valuable to the child if they provide access to the same type of reinforcement that the child received for the inappropriate behavior. This is why functional assessment is such an important component of developing appropriate behavior plans.

Teaching functional communication skills and self-management skills are critical for promoting appropriate behavior. Some procedures reward the child for going periods of time without exhibiting the inappropriate behavior. These intervals are very short at first in order to ensure that the child is frequently rewarded and sees the value of avoiding the inappropriate behavior. When the behavior occurs, the reinforcer is withheld and the timer reset. In some cases, the child would incur a response cost or be asked to engage in a less desired activity. In still others, the behavior is simply ignored or redirected.

All of these programs, and any others that might be indicated by a functional assessment, are subject to Clinical Director review and will be implemented only with your informed consent.

You are free to withhold your consent from a program or to withdraw your consent at any time. In that case, the program will not be implemented and we will work with you, and as necessary the IEP team, to develop an acceptable alternative. If the behavior presents a threat to the safety of the child or other students or staff in the school, we may require that the child remain at home while an acceptable alternative is developed. If we cannot agree on an acceptable alternative, we will require that another placement be found for the child.

## **H. Behavior Management Review Process**

Nashoba Learning Group has a multi-part review process for all behavior change procedures. This process includes:

- Development of a behavior plan by each student's Clinical Director, BCBA and Lead Therapist
- Review of all behavior management plans by a Behavior Council as appointed by the President

- Peer review for complex cases involving life threatening behaviors
- Parent/guardian informed consent on all behavior reduction plans
- Inform school district (and incorporate into student's IEP) all behavior reduction plans
- Open Door Policy for Parents and School Districts

## **I. Regular Progress Reports**

As is specified in your child's IEP, Nashoba Learning Group prepares progress reports at the same frequency as children in the public schools in your district receive report cards. In addition, NLG will provide a progress report that covers the summer months. In these progress reports, NLG will summarize for each IEP objective, your child's current performance. We will report whether the objective has been achieved, not yet introduced, discontinued or whether it is progressing.

These progress reports provide a basis for assessing your child's rate of progress and determining whether or not IEP objectives are being met. When annual objectives are met early in the year, the team may decide to add additional objectives. If a significant number of objectives are not on track to be achieved, a Team meeting may be called to assess whether the IEP needs to be modified.

Progress reports are sent both to the Parent/Guardian and to the Team liaison at the child's home school district. We invite you to discuss the progress report with us at the clinic meeting immediately following receipt of the report.

In addition to formal progress notes, NLG staff generally prepares a monthly program summary for discussion at the clinic meeting.

## **J. All Parent/Guardian Meetings**

Nashoba Learning Group will schedule meetings that are open to all Parents/Guardians on topics of common interest. We plan to schedule 2 to 4 meetings per year. Meetings will be hosted either by NLG staff or guest speakers. All parents and significant caregivers of students are welcome to attend. The students do not attend these meetings.

In addition to providing information on important topics, these meetings are a mechanism for the Parents/Guardians of our students to meet and get to know one another. We welcome input from Parents/Guardians in choosing topics to cover and the format for the meetings.

You will be reminded of upcoming Parent/Guardian meetings via email or in a notice in your child's backpack. We are always soliciting topics of interest for these meetings. If you have a topic of interest, please email Lori Steers at [Lori.Steers@NashobaLearningGroup.org](mailto:Lori.Steers@NashobaLearningGroup.org). We will gauge the interest of other Parents/Guardians and, if enough Parents/Guardians are interested, try to find the appropriate speaker for the topic.

## **K. Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee**

In keeping with Massachusetts Special Education regulation, NLG has a Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee (PAC). The purpose of this committee is to provide an additional mechanism for Parent/Guardian / school communication. In addition, the PAC provides an opportunity for Parents/Guardians to interact with each other.

The PAC holds regular meetings open to all parents. In addition, PAC officers meet at least quarterly with NLG staff to provide feedback about how the school is meeting the needs of Parents/Guardians and to work with NLG staff to enhance communication and school performance. The PAC can also request additional meetings whenever they are needed. Lori Steers serves as the staff liaison to the Parent’s Advisory Group.

The PAC Officers communicate upcoming meetings via email.

PAC President

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Nicole Cruickshank | ne.cruick@gmail.com |
|                    |                     |

**L. Open Door Policy**

You are always welcome to come observe your child. Although we prefer that you schedule your visits, you are free to come unannounced. In addition, representatives from your child’s school district also have the right to drop in unannounced to view your child in the program.

This right to drop in unannounced, our open door policy, gives you another tool you can use to assess the educational services we are providing to your child. You should feel free to exercise this right whenever you wish. You must sign in when you arrive and an Administrator will take you to your student. At NLG’s discretion, the Clinical or Executive Director may accompany you while you complete your observation.

With that said, we do prefer that you schedule the majority of your observations. Scheduling allows us to plan the comings and goings in our classrooms to minimize disruption to all the children in the program. Also, if there are other events taking place in the classroom where you would be observing (clinic meeting, observation, assessment, etc.) we will need to ask you to come at another time in order to protect the confidentiality of other students in the room. In addition, with scheduled visits, administrative staff can be available to answer questions and provide information if desired.

With all visits, scheduled and unscheduled, you must adhere to our guidelines for observing your child at school.

**M. Code of Conduct**

**Purpose:**

Nashoba Learning Group’s (NLG) mission of enabling individuals with autism to function with the greatest possible productivity and independence in all environments requires a continuous, productive collaboration between NLG’s staff and each child’s Parent/Guardian. A Code of Conduct helps to maintain an environment of respect throughout NLG’s School and Adult Programs and in the community. All members of the NLG community have a right to an environment free from harassment, intimidation and hostility, and to be communicated with in a respectful, constructive and co-operative manner.

As a Parent/Guardian of a NLG Student you can expect:

- To be treated with respect, professionalism and courtesy by all NLG employees and contractors at all times, whether inside or outside of NLG
- That your child will be treated with respect and courtesy while in NLG's care
- NLG will only share your child's pictures and approved information publicly for research purposes and/or on social media forums with the parent/guardian's permission
- NLG to work collaboratively with you and the IEP Team in the development and implementation of goals and objectives appropriate for your child's level of development/independence
- NLG to work collaboratively with you and the IEP Team in the event your child transitions out of NLG
- NLG to provide an environment where you can feel comfortable asking questions, raising concerns and discussing those concerns openly and honestly
- NLG to provide you with a timely response for any grievances raised

As a Parent/Guardian of a NLG Student NLG expects you to:

- Treat all NLG employees, contractors, board members, students and adult members with respect, dignity and courtesy at all times whether inside or outside of NLG
- To work productively, respectfully, and collaboratively with NLG's clinical and teaching staff and in all communications both inside and outside of NLG
- To raise grievances productively and to the appropriate NLG staff members, school district personnel, and/or Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) only
- To be respectful of NLG's mission, business practices, employees, contractors, board members, students and adult members at all times inside or outside of NLG, including in public, in the media and on social media forums
- To immediately inform the appropriate NLG staff member(s) of any new information/issues that could potentially have an impact on your child's/ward's wellbeing or programming
- To adhere to NLG's policies & procedures as outlined in the Parent/Guardian manual

### **III. Your Child at Nashoba Learning Group**

#### **A. Medical and Emergency Forms\***

You and your doctor prepared medical forms and submitted them to NLG 10 days before your child began school. In order to keep the medical information up to date, your child will need to have a physical within the past 12 months before starting NLG and subsequently every year following admission. In addition, we need you to update all information within your SNAP portal annually. All medical forms, as well as proof of immunizations, must be communicated to nursing as soon as possible and if applicable, signed by your child's physician each time your child's medical history changes significantly. These include medication changes, ER visits, hospital admission, and absence from school that have required treatment or clearance by a physician. Anything needing clearance to return to school by a physician is included in your Parent Welcome Letter from nursing each year. For example, if your child is newly diagnosed with a chronic medical condition, we would ask that you provide nursing directly with that information. In this way, we can be properly prepared to react to any symptoms your child may exhibit during the school day. In addition, a signed physician note is required to resume activities at school following a prolonged illness or injury. It is NLG's policy that parents/guardians provide at least two (2) emergency contacts within your SNAP parent portal, in addition to the primary parents/guardians.

In addition, if your phone number, address, Guardianship or custody status, or emergency contacts change, we ask that you notify us at once in writing. This way, we will be able to reach you or someone on your list quickly in the event of an emergency. Any change in this information will be immediately passed on to the student's teachers by the Executive Director or their designee. It is particularly critical that we be notified in the event there is any change in Guardianship status or in legal custody of the child. Please notify us in writing of any changes and enclose copies of the relevant legal agreements or forms.

Finally, any changes to the administration of medication to your child in school must be made in writing and signed by the physician. This includes adding a medication, changing the dosage, changing the administration schedule, or stopping a medication. We are not able to make any changes without a physician signature. Please contact the nursing office at your child's site if you need copies of any of these forms.

*\* Information in this section is the same as Section V. Subsection A, it has been duplicated in this manual for ease of access.*

## **B. What to Send to School with your Child**

- For health and safety reasons we ask that you provide the edible reinforcers for your child. A varied selection is preferred to allow your child opportunities to make choices. Please keep a several weeks supply at the school. Staff will write you a reminder note in the communication book when supplies are running low
- You should ensure that your child has at least one change of clothes at school
- Completed medical, emergency, and release forms must be received 10 days prior to the first day your child attends school
- If your child receives medicine at school, you must hand deliver no more than a 30-day supply to school nurses in the original pharmacy bottle with appropriate physician authorization and parent/guardian consent. Nursing will communicate how many were received and the future date a refill is due for.
- Whenever your child's medications or medical condition change, please update their medical or emergency information and medication administration paperwork and provide appropriate signatures
- You should complete and update from time to time the list of reinforcers that are motivating for your child
- You should provide a daily snack for your child
- Your child should bring a nutritious lunch every day, including a drink. If you forget to send a lunch, the School will provide lunch to your child and submit a receipt to the family for reimbursement. Your child will have an opportunity to brush their teeth after lunch
- Your child should have outdoor clothing appropriate to the weather for outside play. If desired, you can leave boots and snow pants at school instead of transporting them back and forth every day
- Your child should bring a backpack to school
- Please review your child's backpack every day. Forms for signature, notes and the communication book from your child's teacher will be placed in the backpack. Schedules for meetings and home visits will also be sent for your input. Please note that your signature is required for the addition or modification of any behavior program, so check daily
- Please send signed forms, notes, and the communication book to your child's teacher in the backpack. It is particularly important for us to know if your child has exhibited any preferences for new reinforcers, any new skills or behaviors, or if there are events at home that have affected your child
- In some cases, data collected at home will need to be sent to school in the backpack

## **C. Prohibition of Recording Devices**

At Nashoba Learning Group, we prioritize the safety and well-being of all our students/members while upholding their right to privacy and confidentiality. To maintain a secure and conducive learning environment, we would like to share our new policy regarding the use of recording devices on school/program premises.

While we understand the importance of GPS devices for tracking the whereabouts of your child/ward and ensuring their safety, we must emphasize that any device used for this purpose should not have the capability to record audio, video, or any other form of data. This is due to the sensitive nature of the information shared and discussed within the school/program environment, including but not limited to classroom discussions, student/member interactions, and teacher-student/member interactions.

Recording devices, including those integrated into GPS trackers, watches or standalone devices, pose a significant risk to the privacy and confidentiality of students, members, staff, and visitors within the school. Unauthorized recording may inadvertently capture confidential information or conversations, leading to breaches of privacy and potential legal implications.

Therefore, we kindly request all parents and guardians to adhere to the following guidelines:

GPS devices used for tracking the location of your child/ward are permitted on school premises.

However, these devices must not have the capability to record audio, video, or any other form of data; or if they do have that capability, it needs to be turned off during school/program hours. You must also notify your clinical team if your child/ward is wearing a device that has those capabilities.

Any device found to be in violation of this policy will be confiscated and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

## **D. Classroom Organization**

Each NLG classroom includes from 2 to 6 students depending on the size of the room and with other students of the same age range. Each classroom has one therapist for each student. Each student is assigned to a Clinical Team that consists of a Clinical Director, SPED Teacher, Lead Teacher and 4-5 ABA Therapists. Most of the Clinical Directors hold a dual license. They are the BCBA and the SPED Teacher. If the Clinical Director does not have their SPED license, a SPED teacher will be assigned to the student. Some students may also have a Clinical Manager or Case Manager who works with the Clinical Director and SPED teacher on each student's program oversight and development.

Each child has their own work area in the classroom where their materials are kept. Each child works with multiple therapists each day according to the staffing schedule. In addition to providing instruction to the children, the therapists also gather and analyze specific data on the child's progress. This is reviewed by the clinical staff on a regular basis. Clinical staff also ensure that the programming is being run consistently and appropriately.

In addition to their individual work, the students in a classroom take part in some group activities with one to one supervision.

*\*\*Sample Block Schedule on Below/Following Pages*



## E. Absenteeism/Delayed Arrivals/Early Dismissals

If your child will be absent from school, arriving late to school or getting dismissed early from school you must call the school to inform us. We recommend you call the main phone number for your child's program prior to 8:00am to assist with scheduling. Please refrain from texting information regarding your child's absence/delayed arrival/early dismissal to the teaching staff, as we need to ensure that the information gets communicated to all necessary personnel as promptly as possible. If your child will be arriving late or getting dismissed early, it is most helpful to plan for the pick-up/drop-off to be at the beginning of the block change (11:00am or 1:00pm) as opposed to during the block (for example 11:30am or 12:30pm) to assist with scheduling.

### Sample Block Schedules

| SAMPLE Elementary Schedule | Individualized Instruction                                 |
|----------------------------|--|
| Time                       | Activity   |
| 9:00 AM - 9:15 AM          | Morning Routine / Daily Living Skills                      |
| 9:15 AM - 10:00 AM         | Circle Time / Language and Communication / Reading         |
| 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM        | Snack Break / Social Skills                                |
| 10:30 AM - 11:15AM         | Math   |
| 11:15 AM - 12:00 AM        | Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Spelling)                 |
| 12:00PM - 12:30 PM         | Lunch / Daily Living Skills / Language and Social Skills   |
| 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM         | Independent / Small Group Leisure Skills                   |
| 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM          | Science / Social Studies                                   |
| 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM          | Afternoon Snack Break                                      |
| 200 PM - 2:45PM            | Physical Education (PE) / Outdoor Play / Community Outings |
| 2:45 PM - 3:00 PM          | Wrap-Up / Review of the Day                                |

| SAMPLE Middle School Schedule | Individualized Instruction                                 |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Time                          | Activity   |
| 9:00 AM - 9:15 AM             | Arrival / Morning Routine / Daily Living Skills            |
| 9:15 AM - 10:00 AM            | Language and Communication / Reading                       |
| 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM           | Snack Break / Social Skills                                |
| 10:30 AM - 11:15AM            | Math   |
| 11:15 AM - 12:00 AM           | Language Arts  |
| 12:00PM - 12:30 PM            | Daily Living Skills / Lunch Prep / Lunch                   |
| 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM            | Independent/Small Group Leisure Skills                     |
| 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM             | Science  |
| 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM             | Social Studies   |
| 200 PM - 2:45PM               | Physical Education (PE) / Outdoor Play / Community Outings |
| 2:45 PM - 3:00 PM             | Wrap-Up / Review of the Day                                |

| SAMPLE High School Schedule | Individualized Instruction                                 |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Time                        | Activity   |
| 9:00 AM - 9:15 AM           | Arrival / Morning Routine                                  |
| 9:15 AM - 10:00 AM          | Daily Living Skills / Social Skills / Current Events       |
| 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM         | Vocational Training  |
| 10:30 AM - 11:15AM          | Math   |
| 11:15 AM - 12:00 AM         | Language Arts  |
| 12:00PM - 12:30 PM          | Daily Living Skills / Lunch Prep / Lunch                   |
| 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM          | Independent/Small Group Leisure Skills                     |
| 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM           | Science / Social Studies                                   |
| 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM           | Vocational Training  |
| 200 PM - 2:45PM             | Physical Education (PE) / Outdoor Play / Community Outings |
| 2:45 PM - 3:00 PM           | Wrap-Up / Review of the Day                                |

## **F. Staff Training**

Nashoba Learning Group provides initial training to all new teachers and therapists. Training is during the new teacher or therapist's orientation during their first two weeks on the job, before they work on their own with any student. Training for professional development for all staff is conducted monthly on ½ days of school. All direct care interns and direct care temporary employees are also required to take part in the same training as full time teachers and therapists as part of their orientation during the first two weeks on the job.

Training for new teachers and therapists includes instruction in:

- Characteristics of autism
- Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
- ABA methods of instruction
- Best practices in motivating children: how to be reinforcing
- Conducting discrete trial teaching
- Conducting task analyzed teaching
- Conducting incidental teaching
- Implementing behavior management procedures
- Recording and analyzing data
- Performing functional assessment of problem behaviors and developing behavior management plans
- Safety and Emergency Procedures
- Crisis Prevention Training- Strategies for Limiting Violent Episodes (SOLVE)
- Medication Administration Protocols
- Blood-borne Pathogen
- First Aid
- CPR
- Professional behavior and ethics
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

A critical component of training is hands on practice of skills with immediate coaching and feedback provided. In addition, training includes assigned reading; didactic instruction; and testing.

In addition to initial training, NLG schedules approximately 2 hours per month of staff training. This training is generally held immediately after students leave for the day.

All full-time direct care staff are expected to take part in a minimum of 30 hours of training per year.

## **G. Fund Raising**

Nashoba Learning Group conducts multiple fundraising events during the year. These events allow us to grow our programs and to provide additional resources and materials to individuals with autism in the program, above what is covered by each individual's tuition.

Your participation in these fundraisers is entirely voluntary. While we welcome your participation, you are under no obligation to take part. Decisions on how to spend the funds raised will be in no way affected by whether a family has participated in the event.

NLG is extremely grateful when members of our community take the initiative to create additional events that raise funds for NLG. The following policies are intended to ensure that the events are successful and additive to our fundraising efforts. To ensure that there are not multiple fundraising activities occurring at the same time and that the activities and venues for the activities are consistent with NLG's mission and values, written permission must be obtained prior to soliciting funds or conducting fundraising activities on behalf of NLG outside of the regular organization sponsored and/or coordinated events. A request is to be made to [Development@nashobalearninggroup.org](mailto:Development@nashobalearninggroup.org) in writing, and shall include the following information: (a) event idea (auction, golf tournament, etc.), (b) proposed event name, (c) proposed date of event (d) targeted constituents (primary population solicited for donations such as event coordinator's immediate family, business contacts, etc.), and (e) total anticipated funds raised on behalf of NLG including what will make up those revenues (basic example would be you estimate 100 attending at a fee of \$100 each). Please note that any costs incurred in the planning, administration and implementation of an independently run fundraising event are to be covered by the event coordinator(s) and will not be reimbursed by NLG. If the revenues provided in (e) above are to be net of any or all costs associated with administering the event, please indicate the net funds forecasted to be collected and paid to NLG. The organization's management will review each request and communicate with the event coordinator regarding the feasibility of such an event.

Funds raised on behalf of NLG must be sent directly to NLG unless the event coordinator is set up as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization with their own tax exempt federal tax identification number. Funds solicited on behalf of NLG that are sent directly to NLG can only be for the benefit of NLG. If you wish to facilitate a fundraising event that will benefit another organization or organizations in addition to NLG, NLG can only receive the portion of the funds raised on NLG's behalf and cannot act as a clearing house to redirect funds to other organizations.

To ensure NLG sponsored events are not competing for the same primary donor populations, independently organized and administered fundraising activities are not to be structured to primarily solicit from NLG staff and/or parent/guardians of NLG students or members. It is the responsibility of the independent event coordinator to determine the need for, recruit and train volunteers required for their event.

Nashoba Learning Group is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and contributions made to the organization are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Written tax receipts shall be issued for all donations.

## **H. Student Records**

NLG maintains data for each student in which information on; skills introduced and mastered, teaching steps and procedures, and daily performance data are maintained. NLG maintains copies of clinic notes and periodic progress reports prepared for your child. NLG maintains the current IEP and copies of assessments performed. NLG also maintains all other information required by DESE, including incident reports, medication logs, attendance records and other information.

Parents/Guardians have the right to inspect and review any and all records relating to their child which are collected, maintained, or used by NLG. If your child's record contains information relating to another child, the Parent/Guardian(s) have the right to inspect and review only the information relating to their own child. NLG will only limit Parent/Guardian access to their child's record if NLG or the school district has received a legal document that limits the individual's authority in this regard.

Students who are 14 years of age or in the ninth grade have all the rights that Parents/Guardians have under the Student Records Regulations. Once a student turns 18, the rights accorded to Parents/Guardians under the Student Records Regulations become those of the student. However, the Parent/Guardian may continue to exercise these rights unless the student makes a written request to the Executive Director to prevent the Parent/Guardian from doing so.

If you ask to review your child's records, you will be allowed access to those records within two school days of your request. In most cases, you will be asked to review the records on site and leave them intact at the school. However, we will make copies of information for you on request. A small copying fee may be imposed.

The school is required to keep a record of parties who have obtained access to your child's student record, in whole or in part. You have the right to review this record log.

## **I. Statement of Student Rights**

At Nashoba Learning Group, our mission is to assist students with autism in gaining the skills they need to participate in the life of their family and community. Our ABA teaching methods rely on motivating students to learn through individualized programming and positive reinforcement. In all of our interactions with students, we strive to protect their rights. These rights include:

- The right to effective behavioral treatment
- The right to have their dignity protected
- The right to physical safety and protection of their health
- The right to caring and compassionate treatment
- The right to self-determination
- The right to freedom of choice
- The right to be free from discomfort
- The right to receive services in the least restrictive effective setting
- The right to be treated in a fashion appropriate to their age level and in accordance with the practices of the local community
- The right to engage in activities and social interactions appropriate to their chronological age to the extent that is safe and practical
- The right to physical exercise and enjoyable leisure activities
- The right to have their personal belongings respected by others
- The right to privacy
- The right to access their own records (at the age of 14 and above)
- The right to informed consent by them, or on their behalf, for all treatment
- The right to refuse to participate in any research efforts

It is understood that the effectiveness of certain behavioral procedures requires controlling access to specific activities. When this is the case, special attention will be provided to ensure that opportunities to access those activities are provided.

## **IV. Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Admissions Policy and Procedures**

#### **Admissions Policy**

Nashoba Learning Group (NLG or “the school”) shall maintain on permanent file this written description of admission procedures. A copy of these procedures will be provided to placing agencies and the parent(s) or guardian of any student referred for placement.

NLG operates a center based private special education program for students from 3 to 22 years of age. NLG accepts students with diagnoses of autism and related disorders. Students with signs and characteristics of these disabilities may also be accepted even though a formal diagnosis has not yet been made. NLG does not discriminate in admission or administration of its policies on the basis of gender, gender identity and/or expression, race, creed, color, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identity, national or ethnic origin. There are no educational pre-placement requirements. NLG does require evidence of secured funding prior to admitting any student. For students placed at NLG by school districts or other agencies, this evidence is a contract signed by the appropriate authorities of the school district or agency and by NLG’s Chief Financial Officer, Kim Borgen.

NLG shall not accept any student for placement whose needs cannot be adequately met by the program.

For students with complex medical needs, NLG will work with the student’s Team to determine whether and how NLG can serve the student.

NLG accepts and provides support for students whose IEPs call for appropriate amounts of supported inclusion in regular education programming. NLG, in conjunction with the student’s Team, will periodically assess for each child the appropriate balance between supported inclusion or integration and individualized programming at NLG’s site.

NLG shall ensure that the student, their parent(s) or guardian, the placing agency and others, as appropriate, are provided reasonable opportunity to participate in the admission process and decisions. Where such involvement of the student’s parent(s) or guardian is not possible, the reasons for their nonparticipation shall be recorded. Just as we desire active family participation in the admission process, we also strongly encourage family participation in the child’s educational programming throughout their tenure at NLG.

An admissions study shall be completed before a student is accepted into the program. This admissions study shall contain information regarding a student’s referral, all relevant intake data considered and reason for accepting or declining the student. Where indicated, intake shall include observation of the student in their current placement by a Behavior Manager in order to determine the student’s behavior management needs. Relevant information to be provided to NLG includes, as applicable: a diagnostic evaluation (preferably performed by a neuropsychologist); prior Individual Education Plans or Service plans and progress reports; graphical summaries from prior Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs; existing or past functional assessments and behavior plans and summarized behavior data; and, any relevant reports from treating clinicians, including: behavior analysts; psychologists; and, physicians, including pediatricians, neurologists, psycho pharmacologists, and psychiatrists.

NLG also requires a complete placement history and permission to contact any prior placement.

In a manner appropriate to the student's maturity and ability to understand, NLG will make clear its expectations and requirements for behavior, and provide the student referred for placement with an explanation of the program's criteria for successful participation and completion of the program. NLG will incorporate and identify in each student's program objectives to address bullying prevention and self-advocacy as are appropriate for each student's age and cognitive abilities. NLG will initiate a functional assessment and behavior planning process for any student during their tenure at NLG if the student exhibits behaviors that present a clear and present danger to self and others.

NLG will utilize the student's existing IEP upon the student's admission into the program. NLG will work with this IEP for the first 6 to 8 weeks of admission. After this period, NLG reserves the right, to review and, if necessary, revise the student's IEP with the Team so that NLG can satisfactorily deliver the educational services that will enable the student to achieve their goals.

Upon request, NLG will provide a written statement of the reason for the refusal of admission to the parent(s) and/or the referring agency.

### Admissions Procedures

NLG does **not** have a list of students waiting for admission whereby the next student on the list is the next student to be accepted. Rather, NLG follows the procedural steps listed below:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or school districts interested in pursuing admission for students are invited to visit our program prior to making a referral, if they wish. Group tours are offered each month. If they remain interested in seeking admission, parents and/or school personnel are asked to send a referral packet, including, as available, a diagnostic evaluation and a current IEP and progress reports.
2. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or school personnel are also asked to submit a current videotape of the applicant.
3. When an opening becomes available, NLG will review current applications and videotapes to determine which applicants appear to be appropriate for the particular opening.
4. For applicants who may be appropriate for admission, NLG will observe the child in their current placement, if possible. If an observation in the student's current setting is not possible or if sufficient information was not gathered during the observation, NLG may invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to visit NLG with the potential student, in order for NLG staff to observe/assess the child. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and school districts may also be asked to provide additional information regarding the student. This information will include, as is relevant: graphical summaries from prior Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs; existing or past functional assessments, behavior plans and summarized behavior data; school or EI reports; and, any relevant reports from treating clinicians, including: behavior analysts; psychologists; and, physicians, including pediatricians, neurologists, psycho pharmacologists, and psychiatrists. NLG also requires a complete placement history and permission to contact any prior placement.
5. Following the observation, if the student continues to appear appropriate for admission, parent(s)/guardian(s) are invited to visit NLG with or without the student, if they have not already done so, in order for NLG personnel to interview the parent(s)/guardian(s), assess the child, and receive evidence of ability to fund the program.
6. Admission to the program is offered to the student who seems best suited to the particular opening.

7. Once a student is accepted into the program, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and local school district are granted access to all policies and procedures of Nashoba Learning Group. These policies and procedures can be reviewed while at the school or can be requested in writing to the Executive Director.

## **B. Communication with Outside Parties**

By law, your child's sending school district has the right to request and receive certain information about your child. NLG's contract with the school district gives the district the following rights to information:

- Nashoba Learning Group shall provide, in writing to the Administrator of Special Education, detailed documentation of compliance with the student's IEP through the completion of required student progress reports
- Nashoba Learning Group agrees to allow the local school district to monitor and evaluate the educational placement and Nashoba Learning Group shall make available, upon request from the School District any records, including but not limited to, clinical information, pertaining to the student to authorized school personnel from the School District and from the Department of Education, in accordance with the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations
- Nashoba Learning Group shall allow the school district and/or the Department of Education to conduct announced and unannounced site visits, and Nashoba Learning Group shall further allow for the review of all documents relating to the provision of special education services to Massachusetts students at public expense. The school district's access to records shall be limited to those records pertaining to students under the jurisdiction of the school district, and shall relate only to the need to verify and evaluate educational services provided at public expense
- Nashoba Learning Group agrees to notify the school district at least thirty (30) days prior to termination of the Student's enrollment in, or student's discharge from Nashoba Learning Group, or if the student is absent for more than five (5) consecutive days

Except as required by law, Nashoba Learning Group will not provide any information about your child to any parties other than the school district without your prior written consent. In providing information to outside service providers, NLG will generally require that the service provider come to NLG for any meetings or observations.

## **C. Confidentiality**

It is Nashoba Learning Group's policy to keep confidential all identifying information about your child with the exception of information available by law to the sending school district and, by your prior written consent, to outside parties. Nashoba Learning Group adheres to the code of ethics established by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

We ask that you support the right of each child in our school to confidentiality through adherence to the following guidelines:

- Do not discuss any other child in our program with anyone in a way that could allow the identity of the child to be surmised. This guideline is particularly applicable to information about other children that you may glean during your regular observations at our school
- Do not ask questions of NLG staff that would require them to breach our confidentiality guidelines to answer. Staff will be trained to refrain from responding to such questions



- Recognize that different families have different views on what information they want known about their child. Do not assume any information that you have about a child can be shared unless you have explicit permission from the child's family

## **D. Visitor Guidelines**

Nashoba Learning Group extends a warm welcome to parents/guardians and others to visit our school and classrooms. At the same time, we must assure that our students and staff are safe and learning is not disrupted. NLG must be aware of who is in the building and why they are there. NLG has a buzz-in system with cameras so no one can enter the building without the knowledge of the receptionist. In addition, we had developed the following guidelines for school visitors.

- 1) All visitors must report to the receptionist and sign in before going elsewhere in the building, and they must sign out before leaving.
- 2) Visitors will receive a Visitor's Pass sticker when they sign in. The visible sticker must be worn as to be visible at all times.
- 3) Visitors will not be allowed unmonitored access beyond the front lobby. Individuals that are serving as unmonitored volunteers will need to undergo various background checks as well as a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check as required by DESE.
- 4) Visitors who want to meet with a teacher or administrator must make an appointment.
- 5) If a meeting is scheduled, the parent/guardian or visitor must first report to the office and will be escorted to the meeting place.

## **E. No Smoking Policy**

Nashoba Learning Group is a no-smoking environment. There is no smoking in our building or on our grounds. We do not permit cigarettes, electronic cigarettes or other smoking paraphernalia in our building. Staff members, visitors and other associates are not permitted to smoke on our grounds at any time. Staff members are not permitted to smoke during school hours during an NLG school day even if they are out in the community and not on NLG grounds.

## **F. Cancellation, Emergency Closings, Early Dismissal and Delayed Openings**

In the event that NLG cancels or delays school, in addition to posting the information on the official NLG website ([www.NashobaLearningGroup.org](http://www.NashobaLearningGroup.org)) and the official NLG Facebook page, there will be notification via the following media outlets:

- WCVB Channel 5 and on their website at [www.thebostonchannel.com](http://www.thebostonchannel.com)
- WBZ Storm Center Channel 4, news radio 1030 AM and website [www.cbsboston.com](http://www.cbsboston.com)
- FOX25 Storm Watch and website [www.myfoxboston.com](http://www.myfoxboston.com)
- WHDH Channel 7 (NBC) and Channel 56 (CW) and on their website at [www.whdh.com](http://www.whdh.com)

In addition to the media, in the event that NLG cancels or delays school, a text message will be sent to all parents/guardians that have signed up through the Rave Alerts system (<https://www.getrave.com/login/nashobalearninggroup>). It will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to update their Rave Alerts settings if their email address or phone number changes. Information about how to

sign-up/register for Rave Alerts will be sent out with all new student information as well as annually for all existing students.

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, NLG management will make a decision to close the school due to inclement weather and if a number of the school districts that students are coming from (approximately 1/3 or greater) are closed or a large number of the surrounding school districts are closed (such as Billerica, Burlington, Lexington, Chelmsford, or Concord) due to unsafe road conditions.

In the event that school must be closed or our opening delayed for reasons other than inclement weather, the above media outlets will be notified, a message put on the NLG website and an email will be sent to each parent/guardian. For example, if we lost power or water in our building or if there was some other building related emergency, it might be necessary for us to close until the situation is rectified. However, please keep in mind that in the case of an extended power outage at NLG, the web server and email may be down so you will still need to confirm via the media outlets.

In the event that school must be dismissed early for any reason the above media outlets will be notified, a message will be put on our website and each parent/guardian of students who are in attendance on that day will be called as soon as the decision is made to dismiss. If a child must be picked up at school, we will request that the parent/guardian pick up the child as quickly as possible (or the transportation company if that arrangement is made). If they cannot and/or we are unable to reach the parent/guardian, we will contact the other names provided on the emergency information card.

If we must close NLG on an emergency basis for more than one day, and, if the reasons for closing do not preclude our staff working in another location, we will either find a temporary location or, if possible, provide families with the option of having an NLG staff member provide instruction to the student in the family home during regular school hours while the closing is in effect.

## **G. Fire Drill Procedures**

Per Massachusetts law, Nashoba Learning Group and the Bedford and Billerica Fire Department will work together to conduct at least 2 fire drills each school year. These drills will generally be concentrated in the warm weather months. Staff and students will exit the building through the nearest available exit during these drills. The daily attendance log will be taken by a staff member and checked to ensure that all staff, students, and visitors have exited the building.

In addition, each child will be required to receive fire drill instruction as soon as it is educationally appropriate. This program teaches the child to respond appropriately to a fire drill or smoke alarm by communicating with others if they are nearby and quickly exiting the building to a safe place. We will recommend that this program be generalized to the home environment.

The Bedford and Billerica Fire and Rescue workers are very eager to work with us to make our students safe. They have already spent time with us to get to know our children and their needs. We will continue to spend time acclimating the children to the firefighters in order to increase their safety in the event of a fire or emergency.

## **H. Hiring of NLG Employees**

NLG recognizes that families may seek to hire NLG staff members to provide additional services outside of school hours. NLG neither encourages nor discourages this practice. However, the following policies apply:

- NLG is not responsible for any compensation, liability or worker's compensation insurance for time contracted by a family outside of the staff member's NLG commitment
- No NLG employee will ever be required by NLG to provide additional private pay hours for any NLG student
- NLG is not responsible for, does not supervise, or in any way endorse the quality of therapy provided by NLG employees during hours they are paid privately
- Staff members who are hired privately may not provide any preferential treatment to the families or students that hire them during school hours

If it is determined that the NLG employee's private pay commitments are interfering with their employment commitment to NLG, that employee will be required to terminate their private employment with that family(ies) or resign from their position with NLG.

## **I. Designated Reporting Responsibilities**

Nashoba Learning Group staff, along with staff at all other educational facilities, are considered by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services to be mandated reporters.

Massachusetts law requires an individual who is a mandated reporter to immediately report any allegation of serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services by oral communication. A written report, called a 51-A report, must then be completed within 48 hours of making the oral report and sent to the appropriate Department office. NLG maintains a written protocol for the mandated reporting process.

All teaching staff members will be trained on 51-A mandated reporter issues and NLG's protocols as part of their in-service training.

Any reports made are kept confidential and separate from the student's school file.

## **J. Transportation Policy and Community Outings**

When it is appropriate to your child's education program, NLG will ask you to authorize your child to go on community outings with NLG staff members. Students will be transported in NLG staff member's cars. NLG keeps on file current driver's licenses and confirmation of insurance coverage for all staff members who provide transportation.

The student to staff ratio will always be no less than two staff to one or two students when transporting students with the exception of being transported to a job site or inclusion activity. If your child is transported to a jobsite or inclusion activity your child will be transported with a one student to one staff ratio. We may be required to adjust times and locations of outings to ensure proper coverage for each trip. If appropriate to the

student's programming a Program Assistant may accompany a student on community outings under the direction of a Therapist.

NLG staff members will practice good safety habits at all times with the children. All occupants of the car are required to wear seat belts. When going to and from the car, the staff member will maintain close proximity to the child and focus on ensuring the child's safety. In most cases, the staff member will hold the child's hand or arm during this transition.

Each NLG staff member who is responsible for transporting students is given a portable first aid kit to keep in their car. In addition, NLG staff members are required to carry a cell phone, the student's emergency folder and if needed any medications or walkie talkie if within walking distance, when on a community outing.

Please bring any potential issues regarding your child's safety in the car to the attention of NLG staff, in writing. These may include unsafe behaviors that you have observed your child to exhibit in the car, such as removing seat belts, opening windows or doors etc. In addition, NLG staff will notify you if any of these behaviors are observed during community outings.

You may limit whether and where your child is transported during school hours at any time by revising your permission for community outings to specify a list of potential destinations, in writing. NLG may also restrict whether and where your child is transported based on observation of unsafe behaviors. Community outings are an important part of the NLG curriculum and your child's education. However, safety considerations take precedence at all times.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of any student at NLG to provide and properly fit a car seat or booster seat in accordance to Massachusetts State Law; Part I, Title XIV, Chapter 90, Section 7AA "Child Passenger Restraints", that there are no active recalls, and the car seat or booster seat is not expired.

## **K. Guidelines on Arrival, Dismissal and Student Transportation to and from NLG**

When your child begins at Nashoba Learning Group you are asked to complete a student release authorization. NLG will only release your child to you or to the people designated on this list. Adding or removing a person from this list must be done in writing.

Students may be transported to or from Nashoba Learning Group via vans or busses contracted by the student's local school district, via a Parent/Guardian, caregiver, or other individual authorized by the Parent/Guardian. We ask that everyone who transports students adheres to the following:

### **Drop-off and Pick-up Procedure**

If your child does not take a bus to school and you will be dropping off and/or picking up in the bus line, we ask that you always use the NLG bus name card. The name card needs to be visible in the driver side window or on the dash board when driving through the bus line. Please let us know if you need a bus line name card or need more bus name cards for multiple drivers who will be picking up and/or dropping off your child. For someone who is not on your child's approved drop off and/or pick up list, we ask that you send in written consent in their home log.

If you are not using the bus line to drop off or pick up your child, you must park your car in one of the marked reserved parking spaces for student drop off and/or pick up at 10 Oak Park Dr. or in the visitor parking

spaces on the side of the building (near the front entrance) at 170 Lexington Rd. If those spots are full you can park in any of the parking spaces around the buildings. You must walk into the building to pick up/drop off your child. When entering the parking lot or bus line please drive slow and be aware of parents, students and staff crossing the parking lot to walk into NLG.

### Bus line procedures

Follow the lead of the NLG staff person who will be directing traffic. When pulling up to the curb, please pull all the way forward in tight to the left. Leave room between vehicles for the staff and students to walk behind the vehicle they are getting out of or going to. Please be sure that the student(s) and staff exiting the vehicle in front of you are completely out of harm's way before pulling forward. If removing a student from a vehicle or getting a student into a vehicle is holding up the line, the NLG staff member who is directing traffic will direct other vehicles around the stationary vehicle. Please DO NOT go around any vehicle without being directed by the NLG staff member to do so. This is dangerous and could result in injury. The NLG staff member directing traffic will ensure the safety of the student(s) and staff in the stationary vehicle while waving other vehicles around it.

## **L. Use of Physical Restraint Policy**

NLG, in accordance with relevant statutes and regulations, uses various therapeutic methods and techniques for behavioral intervention with its students. Physical restraint is not utilized by NLG as a behavioral intervention. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm and with extreme caution in order to minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint and complies with DESE restraint requirements under 603 CMR 46.00 during school hours. Physical restraint is utilized only when other relevant forms of intervention have been thoroughly exhausted and the form of restraint used will be the least intrusive necessary to protect the student, other NLG students, and NLG staff. Medication restraint, mechanical restraint, and prone restraint are prohibited unless permitted under 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of restraint inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00.

NLG provides initial training to all new teachers and therapists. Training is during the new teacher or therapist's orientation during their first two weeks on the job, before they work on their own with any student. Training for all staff is conducted during Professional Development days throughout the year based on skill level and position. All direct care interns and direct care temporary employees are also required to take part in the same training as full time teachers and therapists as part of their orientation during the first two weeks on the job. In addition to covering multiple topics related to specific ABA teaching techniques and NLG protocols, restraint prevention and behavior support policy and requirements when restraint is used is also provided during these sessions.

NLG provides competency based training and refresher training annually to its employees in appropriate restraint techniques utilizing the Strategies for Limiting Violent Episodes (SOLVE) techniques. No employee can engage in the physical restraint of a student without completing this training. This training is overseen by specific NLG staff who have been certified as instructors by SOLVE and are required to undergo recertification training and testing annually.

Physical restraint can only be implemented when there is the immediate need to:

- protect a student from self-abuse
- protect other students from assault

- protect employees, parents and/or visitors from assault
- protect property when failure to do so may cause harm or risk of injury to self or others.

The NLG staff member who administered the physical restraint shall verbally inform the Principal of the restraint by the end of the school day, and by written report no later than the next school working day. The restraint report is then entered in real time to the data based maintained by DESE. The Principal or designee will maintain a principal's log of on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which will be available for review by the parent/guardian or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, upon request.

The Principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to orally notify the student's parent/guardian of the use of restraint within 24 hours of the event. They shall notify the parent/guardian in their native language by written report sent within three school working days of the restraint via email or in the student's home communication log no later than three school working days of the restraint. The student and parent/guardian will have an opportunity to comment orally or in writing on the use of restraint and on information in the written report. If parents/guardians have concerns, we ask that they bring them to our attention immediately so that we can work with them to address them. In many cases, their concerns may be addressed through a phone call to their Clinical Director.

If a parent/guardian concern is not addressed through that channel, or they feel it is best raised with an officer of Nashoba Learning Group, we ask that the parent/guardian use the following process. Write a note outlining their concern and address it to either Liz Martineau, President or Lori Steers, Executive Director Nashoba Learning Group, 10 Oak Park Drive, Bedford, MA 01730.

Liz or Lori will call the parent/guardian within 3 days of receiving the note and will discuss their concerns over the telephone and arrange a mutually convenient meeting time (within a week), if needed, to address the concern or complaint. Lori and/or Liz will involve others at Nashoba Learning Group in the process if they feel that is needed. They will document the resolution of the concern or complaint in a note to the parent/guardian within 1 week after the telephone call or meeting.

If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, staff must obtain approval from the Principal or designee. If a restraint results in an injury to the student or staff member, NLG will send a copy of the written report required by 603 CMR 46.06(7) to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education postmarked no later than three school working days of the administration of the restraint.

A weekly review of restraint data will identify students who were restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the Clinical Director and review team will assess each student's progress and needs. The senior Clinical Director/Behavior Council will conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. At this meeting, trends will be assessed and students will be identified for further functional assessment and potential revisions to the behavior plan to reduce the need for restraint. Revisions may include further skill building activities, increased or changed prevention, increased or changed reinforcement and/or modifications to the environment or activities. The Behavior Council will develop and review these recommendations with the student's Clinical Director and set an appropriate schedule for follow-up. NLG will collect and annually report all physical restraint data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in a manner and form directed by the Department.

NLG provides parents/guardians with notification of restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures and requires that they sign the parent/guardian manual annually. The notification is sent to the

parent/guardian with the initial forms required for a student prior to his/her placement with NLG and at the beginning of each school year.

## **M. Suspension and Termination Policy**

Nashoba Learning Group provides to Parents/Guardians and the school district that placed the student this written policy on suspensions and terminations.

Nashoba Learning Group's program is designed to meet the needs of students with significant learning challenges. These challenges often go hand in hand with significant behavioral challenges. We have carefully designed our program to address these behavioral challenges effectively. Given this design, it would be highly unusual for a student to be suspended or terminated from the program.

Suspension is not used as a disciplinary procedure at NLG. Reasons for suspension or termination are the exhibition by the student of behaviors that endanger the health or safety of the student or others in the school and are beyond the capacity of NLG's available resources to address. Examples might include: the student bringing weapons or dangerous objects to school; the student abusing drugs; the student engaging in severely aggressive or self-injurious behaviors that could not be contained through available/approved methods; the student making credible threats to hurt others at the school; the student engaging in suicidal ideation; or, the student exhibiting signs of psychosis or emotional disturbance that required more intensive medical, psychiatric, and counseling intervention than NLG can provide.

The purpose of suspension is to allow time for NLG to determine whether and how it can address the student's behavior effectively while ensuring the safety of the other students at the school. During the suspension, a functional assessment and other evaluations will be performed and a determination made by NLG of whether and under what conditions the student can return to school. If indicated, immediate referral will be made to medical and psychiatric resources to evaluate and protect the safety of the student.

Whenever a student is suspended, the school shall immediately notify the Parents/Guardians and the public school or human service agency responsible for the placement. NLG will send a written statement, within 24 hours, explaining the reasons for suspension to the Parent/Guardian, public school or human service agency, and the Department of Education. Under IDEA 97, Parents/Guardians have a right to appeal this decision to the Board of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

No student will be suspended or sent home unless a responsible adult is available to receive the student.

A student may be suspended for no more than three consecutive school days or five non-consecutive school days per year. The School, the Parent/Guardian, public school or human service agency, to the extent feasible, shall explore together all possible program modifications within the school in an attempt to prevent total suspension of the student from the program. The meeting shall be held for the purpose of planning and developing appropriate interventions and/or a written termination plan for the student.

Once a student has been suspended for three consecutive school days or five non-consecutive school days in a school year, the student's case manager from the school shall meet with the public school liaison person, human service agency, and the Parents/Guardians within five school days of the final suspension. At this meeting, the parties should consider alternative measures (including modifying programs), possible resolutions to those issues or charges concerning the student, and the possibility of alternative placement. The

student, if 14 years of age or over, shall be notified by the private school of their right to be present and participate in such meeting.

A condition under which a student would be suspended for greater than three consecutive school days are if a functional assessment or other required evaluations are not able to be completed within the three days and an approved plan cannot be put in place within that time to ensure the safety of the student on suspension, other students in the program or NLG staff. In this case NLG will notify the Parents/Guardians and the Local Education Agency (LEA) of the extension of suspension.

In the event the suspension lasts for greater than ten days, the Parents/Guardians and LEA will be notified, in writing, of the further extension, the reasons for the further extension and the expected timeline for return to school. At this time NLG, the Parents/Guardians and/or the LEA may choose to convene a Team meeting to discuss the extended suspension.

In the event of a student developing a pattern of suspensions that are anticipated to exceed ten non-consecutive days in a year, NLG will convene a Team meeting to discuss the issues and potential solutions.

Again, given the design of our program a suspension of any kind is highly unlikely. However, the procedures outlined above are to address this issue should it arise.

### Termination

Upon admission of the student pursuant to 603 CMR 28.00, NLG shall ascertain the name of the liaison between the private school and the public school and, where applicable, the human service agency. The school shall keep the liaison informed of the progress of the student and shall notify that person immediately if termination or discharge of the student is being discussed.

Nashoba Learning Group shall, at the time of admission, make a commitment to the public school system or human service agency that it will try every available means to maintain the student's placement until the local Administrator of Special Education or officials of the appropriate human service agency has had sufficient time to search for an alternative placement.

### Planned Terminations

Except in emergency cases, the school shall notify the LEA of the need for an IEP review meeting. Notice of this meeting shall be given ten days in advance of the intended date of the meeting and shall be sent to the parent, the student (if over 14 years of age), the Administrator of Special Education, and the appropriate human service agency. The meeting shall be held for the purpose of planning and developing a written termination plan for the student as follows:

- The plan shall describe the student's specific program needs, the short and long term goals of the program, and recommendations for follow up and/or transitional services.
- The private school shall thoroughly explain termination procedures to the student, the Parents/Guardians, the administrator of Special Education and officials of the appropriate human service agency.
- The written termination plan shall be implemented in no less than thirty days unless all parties agree to an earlier termination date.
- If the LEA requests that the termination date be later than 30 days, the private school shall try to accommodate this request if it is feasible to do so.



## Emergency Termination

In case of an emergency termination, which shall be defined as circumstances in which the student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of themselves or others, NLG shall:

- Immediately notify the Parents/Guardians, the Local Administrator of Special Education, officials of all appropriate human service agencies responsible for the placement, and the Department of Education.
- Provide the public school with an opportunity to hold an emergency Team meeting, in accordance with procedures required under 603 CMR 28.09 (12).
- Send a written termination summary explaining the circumstances which necessitated the emergency termination to Parents/Guardians, the student (if over 14 years of age), the Local Administrator of Special Education, officials of the appropriate human service agency responsible for the student's placement, and the Department of Education within seven days of the termination. If such termination is questioned by the Parents/Guardians or the placement authority, the Department of Education shall conduct an investigation and advise the parties of its findings.

## **N. Policy for Registering Complaints**

At Nashoba Learning Group, our mission is to provide our students, in partnership with their families, with the highest quality education that we can. We strive to involve families deeply in that process and provide multiple means for families to communicate with us. Nashoba Learning Group also strives to provide an environment for its families and students that is free from discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin, language, socioeconomic status, homelessness, handicap, disability, age or veteran status. If Parents/Guardians have concerns or complaints about the care and education of their child, or that their child has been subject to discrimination, we ask that you bring them to our attention immediately so that we can work with you to address them. In many cases, your concerns may be raised and addressed through a phone call to the Clinical Director or Executive Director/PAC Liaison, Lori Steers, who acts as the Parent/Guardian liaison or at a clinic meeting.

If your concern is not addressed through these channels, or you feel it is best raised with an officer of Nashoba Learning Group, we ask that you use the following process. Write a note outlining your concern or complaint and address it to either Lori Steers, Executive Director/PAC Liaison, who acts as the Parent/Guardian liaison, Lauren Savioli, Director of Clinical Practices, and/or Liz Martineau, President, Nashoba Learning Group 10 Oak Park Drive, Bedford, MA 01730.

Lori, Lauren or Liz will call you within 3 days of receiving the note. We will discuss your concerns over the telephone and arrange a mutually convenient meeting time (within a week), if needed, to address the concern or complaint. Lori, Lauren and/or Liz will involve others at Nashoba Learning Group in the process if they feel that is needed. We will document the resolution of the concern or complaint in a note to you within 1 week after our telephone call or meeting.

## O. Bullying Policies and Procedures

NLG is committed to providing an environment which is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination based on an individual's gender, gender identity and/or expression, race, creed, color, religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status or age. NLG expects all students and members of school staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, and paraprofessionals to treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. Bullying undermines the integrity of the organization as a place where each individual can learn and grow and can destroy the morale and emotional well-being of the individuals involved.

Bullying covers a range of behaviors, including subtle and not-so-subtle, verbal and non-verbal behavior. Bullying has been defined as follows in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370:

The repeated use by one or more students 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 or harm to themselves or of damage to their property
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the target
- Infringes on the rights of the target at school
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is 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, email, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

As is stated in NLG's policy for Student Conduct, each student is expected to exhibit appropriate behavior towards self and others. Appropriate behavior is defined individually but includes: refraining from verbally or physically disrupting the work environment of others; refraining from any aggressive or inappropriate physical contact with others; refraining from behaviors that are injurious to self; refraining from behaviors that are stigmatizing in the eyes of the community; refraining from unexcused exiting from or avoidance of an activity or location; participating in learning activities; engaging in behaviors that promote physical and emotional well-being.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, creed, color, sex, sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin, language, socioeconomic status or homelessness, academic status, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. NLG will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

When students are observed to fall short of our code of conduct and exhibit behaviors that limit their ability to participate in learning activities and participate in home, school, community life, or with others inappropriate behaviors are addressed through an explicit and comprehensive behavior management plan based on functional assessment. Each student's programming is customized to their individual needs and they are with an ABA Therapist throughout the day minimizing the opportunity for bullying or retaliation to occur. Appropriate behavior is proactively taught through programming that includes social skills programs, video modeling, social stories, incidental social opportunities, play skills, internet and online skills, and recreational skills.

Any student who believes that they have been subjected to bullying or retaliation or Parent/Guardian, direct staff, or administrator who believes they have been witness to or made aware of bullying or retaliation of a student by another student or staff member, should report the incident to the Executive Director, President, or the student's Clinical Director orally or in writing. Reports of bullying or retaliation made by students, Parents/Guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. Once the Executive Director has been informed, a thorough investigation of the bullying or retaliation complaint will be conducted following procedures designed to discover the facts, to preserve the confidentiality of all involved in the investigation, to prevent further retaliation against the student for bringing the complaint and against anyone who assists in the investigation, and to ensure fair treatment of the person accused of the bullying or retaliation. The attached Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form can be used to file a complaint. Within three (3) school days, the complainant will be informed of the investigation process by the Executive Director of the investigation of the complaint.

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Executive Director 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. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The Executive Director will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Throughout the investigative process, to the extent possible, NLG will share information about the matter only on a need-to-know basis. All employees, Parents/Guardians, and students, including the complainant, who suspect or have knowledge of a bullying or retaliation complaint or of the conduct of an investigation must refrain from discussing the matter with other employees, except as directed by the Executive Director, President, or the student's Clinical Director.

The person conducting the investigation will report their findings to the Executive Director. The results shall also be reported in confidence to the complainant if appropriate or their Parent/Guardian.

Any discrimination or adverse action, such as intimidation, threats or coercion, taken against any student or employee because they make a complaint of bullying or assists in an investigation of any allegation of bullying is unlawful and will also result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Executive Director will promptly notify the Parents/Guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it, and of any action taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. There may be circumstances in which the Executive Director will contact Parents/Guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Executive Director has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Executive Director will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency

A student who knowingly makes a false allegation of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Executive Director.

A key aspect of promoting a positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, each student's clinical staff (both the target and the aggressor) will develop programming to address the behavior. If necessary, the IEP Team will work with each student's family to update the IEP to incorporate the development of skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying and retaliation. Should bullying or retaliation prevention programming be added to a student's IEP, Parents/Guardians will be informed on how to reinforce the curricula at home. At such time and as is deemed necessary by the IEP Team, Parents/Guardians will be informed regarding the dynamics of bullying and online safety and cyberbullying.

NLG's annual Behavior Management and Student Rights Training addresses Bullying Prevention as it emphasizes each student's right to an environment and treatments that promote both their physical and emotional wellbeing. This training incorporates the following components:

- Prevention of inappropriate behaviors including bullying
- Reinforcement of appropriate behaviors
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place among an aggressor, a target, and a witness to bullying
- Information on students who are at risk for bullying
- Information on cyberbullying
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying

An investigation into any incident(s) reported will be conducted. Throughout the investigative process, to the extent possible, NLG will share information about the matter only on a need-to-know basis. All employees, Parents/Guardians, and students, including the complainant, who suspect or have knowledge of a bullying complaint or of the conduct of an investigation must refrain from discussing the matter with other employees, except as directed by the Executive Director, President, or the student's Clinical Director.



**BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**  
**INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**

Name of Person Filing the Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Check whether you are the: Target of the behavior \_\_\_\_\_ Reporter (not the target) \_\_\_\_\_

Check whether you are a: Student \_\_\_\_\_ Staff member \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Target (if not person filing the report): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Alleged Aggressor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Time(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Place(s) of Incident(s):

\_\_\_\_ School building \_\_\_\_ School grounds \_\_\_\_ To or from school \_\_\_\_ Home

\_\_\_\_ Elsewhere If elsewhere, location \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident(s):

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List names of other students, staff or others (specify) in attendance when the incident(s) occurred:

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Parent/Guardian Notified: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if not report filer) Date Time Method

Signature of Person Filing the Report: \_\_\_\_\_

**THIS REPORT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date Received

Name

Title

## **P. Anti-Hazing Policy and Notification**

It is NLG's policy to prohibit the act of hazing in any school groups or activities. As such, in compliance with the state anti-hazing reporting regulations, 603 CMR 33.00, and as notification required by the State of Massachusetts, below you will find sections 17, 18 and 19 of M.G.L. c. 269, An Act Prohibiting the Practice of Hazing:

### **Section 17: Hazing; Organizing or Participating; Hazing Defined**

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean 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. Such conduct shall include 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 such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

### **Section 18: Failure to Report Hazing**

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to themselves or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

### **Section 19: Issuance to Students and Student Groups; Teams and Organizations; Report**

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a

copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

## **V. Medical Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Medical and Emergency Forms\***

You and your doctor prepared medical forms and submitted them to NLG 10 days before your child began school. In order to keep the medical information up to date, your child will need to have a physical within the past 12 months before starting NLG and subsequently every year following admission. In addition, we need you to update all information within your SNAP portal annually. All medical forms, as well as proof of immunizations, must be communicated to nursing as soon as possible and if applicable, signed by your child's physician each time your child's medical history changes significantly. These include medication changes, ER visits, hospital admission, and absence from school that have required treatment or clearance by a physician. Anything needing clearance to return to school by a physician is included in your Parent Welcome Letter from nursing each year. For example, if your child is newly diagnosed with a chronic medical condition, we would ask that you provide nursing directly with that information. In this way, we can be properly prepared to react to any symptoms your child may exhibit during the school day. In addition, a signed physician note is required to resume activities at school following a prolonged illness or injury. It is NLG's policy that parents/guardians provide at least two (2) emergency contacts within you SNAP parent portal, in addition to the primary parents/guardians.

In addition, if your phone number, address, Guardianship or custody status, or emergency contacts change, we ask that you notify us at once in writing. This way, we will be able to reach you or someone on your list quickly in the event of an emergency. Any change in this information will be immediately passed on to the student's teachers by the Executive Director or their designee. It is particularly critical that we be notified in the event there is any change in Guardianship status or in legal custody of the child. Please notify us in writing of any changes and enclose copies of the relevant legal agreements or forms.

Finally, any changes to the administration of medication to your child in school must be made in writing and signed by the physician. This includes adding a medication, changing the dosage, changing the administration schedule, or stopping a medication. We are not able to make any changes without a physician signature. Please contact the nursing office at your child's site if you need copies of any of these forms.

*\* Information in this section is the same as Section III. Subsection A, it has been duplicated in this manual for ease of access.*

## **B. When to Keep Your Child Home from School**

All guidelines are designed to protect the health of your child and the other students and staff at our school and are per Massachusetts School Health Manual requirements. It is important to note that due to the current COVID-19 pandemic keeping your child home from school is of utmost importance to ensure safety for all students and staff members. Please reference the NLG COVID-19 Pandemic Plan on returning to school for current guidelines on attendance, as thresholds for illness have changed.

- Children with a fever of 100.4 degrees or above must be kept home from school until their fever has been gone for 24 hours and/or for one full school day.
- Children placed on antibiotics must remain home for at least 24 hours after medication begins.
- Children with greenish nasal discharge should be kept home from school until the discharge has been clear for 24 hours and/or for one full school day.
- Children with symptoms of conjunctivitis should remain home until symptoms are gone.
- Children with open wet/bleeding or oozing rashes or sores should remain home until symptoms are gone. Open creases must be covered and remain covered for the student to remain at school.
- Children who have been vomiting or had diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period must be kept at home for one full school day.
- Children with head lice must be kept home until inspection by school nurse shows no remaining nits.
- Children in obvious physical discomfort that would interfere with their ability to participate in learning should remain home until their symptoms are lessened.
- If a child exhibits any of these symptoms at school, Parent/Guardian will be called for immediate pickup. If Parent/Guardian cannot be reached within 30 minutes or cannot come, the child's emergency contacts will be called.

## **C. Health and Safety Procedures**

Nashoba Learning Group has a school Medical Director: Dr. Kerry Ann Williams of Concord, MA and six School Nurses. Dr. Williams is available to us on a consultative basis to answer questions and provide us with health procedures and protocols. We would also call Dr. Williams in an emergency if we could not reach your child's regular physician. The school nurses work full time and are available during school hours.

NLG follows Health and Safety procedures as outlined in the: School Health Manual; First Aid procedures provided to us by our Medical Director, Dr. Williams; and, medication administration protocols and data recording formats developed by our School Nurses.

Following are reasons for dismissal during school hours and the method for notification of Parents/Guardians:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or over (oral/ear/temporal temperature)
- Disruptive cough or cough with fever
- Suspected infection of eye, ears, nose, throat, skin, scalp
- Severe abdominal pain or headache
- Suspected communicable disease
- Suspected Pediculosis (head lice)



- Suspected fractures or any severe or disabling injury
- Questionable need for sutures
- Vomiting or diarrhea (more than 2 occasions loose stools during the day)
- Head injury

If a student exhibits any of the above symptoms, the nurses or their designee will call the student's Parents/Guardians to have the student immediately picked up. Parents/Guardians will be notified using the Emergency Information Card, which is filled out on the first day of school. If the Parents/Guardians cannot be reached within 30 minutes, then the emergency contacts will be notified. The child will only be dismissed to the Parents/Guardian or the emergency contacts listed in your SNAP parent portal and/or on the Emergency Information Forms. If the emergency contact picks up the child, they will be required to show a photo ID if they are unknown to school personnel. The nurses will contact Parents/Guardians via email or telephone of any medical care administered to their child other than basic first aid. Students picked up from school due to any of the above factors must remain out of school for one full school day.

NLG employees are provided with the training required to receive and maintain their certifications in Adult and Child First Aid, CPR and AED within the first month of becoming employed at NLG. All employees are re-certified by nursing every two years on a routine basis.

As specified in that training, NLG always calls in Emergency Medical Personnel to transport the child to a hospital, if such transport is needed. NLG staff will never drive a child to a hospital because of the risk that the child will need emergency treatment while en route. NLG staff members call Emergency Medical Personnel in any situation where the child exhibits any signs of respiratory or cardiac distress, severe bleeding or any other significant trauma.

Finally, NLG follows procedures outlined in student Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) where these are applicable. A student with an IHCP will only be accepted at NLG if we determine that we are able to implement the conditions required in the IHCP within the scope of our program and without disruptions to existing student's educational and behavioral program.

## **D. Allergy and Anaphylaxis in the School Setting**

All staff members at NLG are certified in Adult and Child First Aid, CPR and AED at hire and then again every two years. Additionally, all staff that are trained to work with students diagnosed with life threatening allergies are trained bi-annually to recognize an anaphylactic reaction, as well as, when to administer an Epi-pen auto-injector in the case of anaphylaxis. In the event that a student has a medical emergency while on site at NLG, nursing is notified immediately over the walkie with student initials, the term "code red", and the exact location of where the reaction is occurring. Nursing is then able to respond with student specific medication, doctors' orders and emergency care plans. If the student does not have an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) to address the emergency the nurse will assess and monitor medically while 9-11 is called. Student specific ordered Epi-pens are stored in the nursing office. Nursing also has available two stock Epi-pens which can be used in an emergency for an undiagnosed anaphylactic reaction.

To best manage allergens within the school setting, NLG has signage posted outside of each classroom where a student that has an allergy is located. Allergy signs are also posted at the student areas as an additional precaution to remind staff working with those students of their diagnosed allergens. Allergens are not allowed at specific common tables within classrooms and signage is also posted at these tables as an additional visual reminder so that all students are able to socialize and enjoy a meal safely together. NLG has also designated

specific common rooms such as the library, exercise room, research library, PT room and gym as peanut/tree nut free areas in order to provide an area safe for all students and staff to enjoy without the worry of cross contamination or airborne anaphylaxis. All NLG staff are routinely reminded on safety around cross contamination which includes surface cleaning/disinfecting, hand washing, leaving food items out of reach of students and the avoidance of sharing foods with students.

## **E. First Aid and Emergencies in the Community**

All staff members are First Aid and CPR certified. Each staff member is trained on how to respond to seizures, allergies and anaphylaxis, in addition to being trained on their individual member's emergency protocol, annually. In the event an allergic reaction or asthmatic episode occurs in the community, staff are to follow the emergency care plan and administer rescue medication. Rescue medication for seizures cannot be delegated, therefore, they cannot be given in the community. If a seizure occurs in the community, NLG protocol is to follow doctor's orders which are established within the individual emergency care plan and to call 9-11, if indicated.

## **F. Suspected Opioid Overdose Response Plan**

Treatment of overdose should be initiated if the person is not able to be alerted into consciousness and the respiratory rate is visibly slowed (i.e. less than 10 breaths per minute). In managing opioid overdose, nursing will focus on treatment pertaining to maintaining adequate respiration and oxygenation, including assisted ventilation with rescue breathing or bag and mask, if needed. Program staff or nursing will respond whether the person overdosing is a staff or a person served in the event of a suspected opiate overdose by calling 9-11. Following assessment by nursing, if needed, a Registered Nurse will administer Narcan/Naloxone as soon as possible. NLG has an Overdose Prevention Plan that is reviewed annually and signed by the Program Physician. On hand in the nursing office, is Narcan for the nursing staff to utilize in the event of an overdose while at NLG.

## **G. MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)**

Staph is a type of bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. About 25-30% of the U.S. population carries staph on their bodies at any time. Sometimes, though, staph can cause a skin infection that look like pimples or boils. Skin infections caused by staph may be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. Some staph (known as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus or MRSA) is resistant to certain antibiotics, making it harder to treat. Only a doctor can determine if you have a staph infection by doing lab testing.

Anyone can get a staph infection. People are more likely to get a staph infection if they have: skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a staph infection, contact with items and surfaces that have staph on them, openings in their skin such as cuts or scrapes, crowded living conditions or poor hygiene.

Staph infection can be prevented. Regular hand washing is the best way to prevent getting and spreading staph, including MRSA. Keep hands clean by washing them frequently with soap and warm water or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after direct contact with another person's skin. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until they have healed. Avoid contact with other people's wounds and do not touch other people's cuts or bandages. Do not share personal items such as towels, washcloths, toothbrushes and razors. Sharing these items may transfer staph from one person to another. Keep your skin healthy, and avoid getting dry, cracked skin, especially during the winter. Healthy skin helps to keep the staph on the surface

of your skin from causing an infection underneath your skin. Most importantly, contact your doctor if you have any kind of skin infection that does not improve.

For more information on MRSA, go to the Center for Disease Control web site.

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa.html)

Any staff or student presenting with signs of a skin infection are referred to their PCP for medical evaluation and treatment as soon as possible. A note from the attending physician is required before employee or student is able to return to work or school.

All staff members at NLG attend an annual OSHA mandated training sessions given by the school nurse. All the above mentioned methods to prevent spread of infection are covered in this session. It is the school nurse's responsibility to monitor staff for compliance in preventing spread of infections throughout the school year.

## **H. Influenza**

Influenza (the "flu") is an illness with fever, headache, sore throat, cough and muscle ache, caused by the influenza virus (germ). "Seasonal" flu occurs every year, usually during the late fall and winter. Getting a flu vaccine can prevent seasonal flu, but because the virus changes each year, and the effect of the vaccine does not last long, a new shot and often a new vaccine, is needed each year. The flu is spread person-to-person. People with the flu can spread their infection before they have symptoms as well as during the time they have the flu. The flu is spread through wet droplets that are produced when people cough, sneeze, or speak. If these infectious droplets get into the nose, mouth or eyes they may cause the flu. If these droplets get on hands or contaminate surfaces, they may be brought to the nose, mouth or eyes and cause the flu.

### H1N1 Flu

H1N1 flu is caused by a new virus that was first recognized in April of 2009, and was called "swine flu." H1N1 flu quickly spread to many parts of the world and is now a "pandemic," or global outbreak. H1N1 flu is not the same as swine flu, which is a virus that pigs can get. It is not the same as seasonal flu which occurs every year, during the winter and early spring. But H1N1 flu causes symptoms that are similar to seasonal flu, is spread like seasonal flu (from person to person), and can be prevented like seasonal flu. Most common are fever, cough, and sore throat. Symptoms can also include body aches, headache, chills, runny nose and feeling very tired. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting. Symptoms last from a few days to up to a week or more. Illness with H1N1 flu has ranged from mild to severe. While most people sick with the H1N1 flu get better without needing medical treatment; severe illness and deaths have occurred in some people. Like seasonal flu, some people are at higher risk of serious health problems when they get the H1N1 flu. This includes pregnant women, infants, and people with medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, muscle or nerve conditions that affect their breathing and weakened immune systems. The flu virus is in the wet spray (droplets of saliva and mucous) that comes out of the nose and mouth of someone who coughs or sneezes. If you are close enough to a person with the flu (3 - 6 feet) when they cough or sneeze, you can breathe in the virus and get sick. Flu symptoms start 1 - 4 days (usually 2 days) after a person breathes in the virus.

Flu is spread easily from person to person. The virus can also live for a short time on things you touch like doorknobs, phones and toys. After you touch these objects, you can catch the virus when you touch your mouth, nose, or eyes. However, when the wet droplets on these types of objects dry out, the virus can't cause infection. Adults with the H1N1 flu can spread it from about one day before symptoms appear to about one week after. Children can spread the flu even longer after they get sick.

## Pandemic Flu

Pandemic flu occurs approximately every 20-40 years; a new strain of the flu virus appears which is very different from the ordinary seasonal flu virus. Because most people do not have immunity to this new strain of flu virus, it can spread to many people, across the world, over a short period of time. Existing types of vaccines will not prevent people from getting this new type of flu, and a vaccine to prevent illness from the new strain typically takes 5-6 months to develop, long after a pandemic begins. The most recent flu pandemics occurred in 1889-90, 1918, 1957 and 1968. Another pandemic may occur at any time. Flu illness during pandemics is similar to the flu that occurs every year, but pandemics can start at any time during the year, not just the typical “winter flu” season. You can protect yourself and others from pandemic flu the same way as you can protect yourself from seasonal flu.

The staff at NLG are made aware of the many ways in which they can protect themselves and others from catching or spreading the flu germ. Washing hands often with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes and cover mouth when you cough or sneeze. Never cough in the direction of someone else. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Clean things that are touched often like door handles, telephones, etc. Avoid holding, hugging, kissing, or shaking hands with anyone who has a cold or the flu.

Any staff member or student diagnosed with the flu is directed by the school nurses and/or Executive Director to stay home from school only to return with physician’s note stating they may return.

For more information about seasonal, H1N1 or pandemic flu, please visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website on Influenza. <http://www.mass.gov/dph/flu>

## **I. Coronavirus**

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is extremely contagious and believed to be spread from person-to-person contact, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another. To prevent the spread, federal, state and local governments, as well as federal and state health agencies, recommend several health and safety protective measures. Included in these measures are washing hands, maintaining distance between oneself and others, covering mouth and nose with a mask or face covering when around others, covering coughing and sneezing, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces frequently, and monitoring one’s health daily. COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization.

Most common symptoms associated with COVID-19 are fever, cough, tiredness, loss of taste or smell. Less common symptoms can present as a sore throat, headache, aches and pains, diarrhea, a rash on skin, or discoloration of fingers or toes, red or irritated eyes. Serious symptoms can occur causing patients to present with difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, loss of speech or mobility, or confusion and/or chest pain. Most people with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should manage their symptoms at home. On average it takes 5-6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days.

Nashoba Learning Group, Inc. (NLG) will continue to have plans for preventative measures, new procedures, protocols, and policies, staff training and purchasing of necessary protective safety equipment to

reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the event of a resurgence. Due to the contagious nature of COVID-19, your child may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 while in contact with other individuals, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 still exists. We will continue to assess the state of infection and apply significant preventative measures, if needed, to combat the contagious nature of this virus in order to prevent the risk of exposure and spread of infection. We will continue to follow local, state and federal guidance to ensure safety and preventative measures are up to date and implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible.

## **J. Medication Administration Policies**

NLG's medication administration policies are overseen by our School Nurses. All medicine will be kept in a double locked secure cabinet and labeled with the student's name, the name of the drug, and the directions for its administration. The school will return any unused or expired medication directly to a parent/guardian. A separate refrigerator, which shall be locked, will be kept in the nurse's office for medications in need of refrigeration. These policies are in accordance with and follow all regulations set by the Massachusetts General Laws related to Medication Administration in School (MGL C71 S54B: Administration of medications in school settings; regulations Section 54B).

- 1. Prescription and Over the Counter Medications Administered on a Regular Schedule:** In order for NLG to administer a doctor prescribed medication or over the counter medication to a student, we require that the prescribing physician complete and submit a signed medication order form annually. We also require a signed parental consent annually in order to administer all medications. The physicians form specifies the dosage, timing of administration, a start and end date as well as any additional information that may be needed for safe medication administration. NLG will not start or stop any medication administration without this signed authorization. It is important to note that over the counter supplements are not able to be administered in the school setting due to the lack of dosage information and indications for children at this time. If your child takes a supplement, they must be administered at home, outside of school hours. If there are any changes made to the original orders, new orders from the physician are required. All medication orders will be renewed annually at the start of each school year.
- 2. As Needed Non-Prescription Medications:** We will administer only if there is a signed Authorization by the parent/guardian within the SNAP parent portal or on paper file. When non-prescription medication is administered, it will be recorded in the student's communication book that goes home with the student or by phone call/email depending on the situation requiring medication administration.
- 3. Antipsychotic Medications:** In order for NLG to administer anti-psychotic medication to a child, we require that the prescribing physician complete and submit a signed medication order form. This form specifies the dosage and timing of administration and a start and end date. NLG will not start anti-psychotic medication without this signed authorization. The prescribing physician will submit a written report to NLG detailing the necessity for the medication, staff monitoring requirements, potential side effects that may or may not require medical attention and the next scheduled clinical meeting or series of meetings with the student. No antipsychotic prescription shall be administered for a period longer than is medically necessary and students on antipsychotic medication must be carefully monitored by a physician. Staff members caring for a child on anti-psychotic medication will be educated on the nature of the medication as well as potential side effects so it is imperative that nursing is notified directly by a parent/guardian when medications are started, stopped or changed. If the student refuses to take the prescribed medication, the parents will be notified. In the event that the parents cannot be notified, the prescribing physician or the primary care physician will be notified.

The first dose of medication/first treatment (medication or treatment) that has not been initially administered in another setting cannot be administered in the school setting.

NLG shall inform a student twelve years of age and older, consistent with the student's capacity to understand, about the treatment, risks and potential side effects of such medication. The school shall specify and follow procedures if the student refuses to consent to administration of the medication.

Except in an emergency, as defined in 18.05(9) (g), the school shall neither administer nor arrange for the prescription and administration of antipsychotic medication unless informed written consent is obtained. If a student is in the custody of their parent(s), parental consent in writing is required. Parental consent may be revoked at any time unless subject to any court order. If the parent does not consent or is not available to give consent, the referral source shall be notified and judicial approval shall be sought. If a student is in the custody of a person other than the parent, a placement agency or out-of- state public or private agency, the referral source shall be notified and judicial approval shall be sought.

In addition, NLG keeps on site an Epi-Pen prescribed by our school physician. This Epi-Pen is used in an emergency when a student or staff member shows symptoms of impending anaphylaxis. If an Epi-Pen is used, Emergency Medical Personnel (911) are always called to come to the scene and transport the patient to the nearest medical facility.

NLG requires that the Parent/Guardian (or designated adult) bring in the medication, in the original container with the pharmacy label and dosage instructions. No medication will be sent in with student or the van/bus driver. NLG will not accept more than a thirty-day supply of prescription medication. Nursing will notify the Parent/Guardian when the supply is running low. However, it is the Parent/Guardian's responsibility to ensure that the medication is available at school. Direct staff working with students are to be informed of all medications the students are on and updated on any changes in medication. If a blind trial needs to be administered for data gathering purposes without the knowledge of direct staff the nursing staff and the CD for your child must still be notified in order to ensure appropriate decisions around behavior management are made and medical assessments can be safely monitored.

Medication will not be administered to a student without written authorization by a Parent/Guardian and will be renewed annually. The nurses maintain written records of the prescriptions of medications, administration of prescription and non-prescription medications, and significant side effects of medications. All medications are delivered in a container labeled by the physician or pharmacist to NLG by a responsible adult.

To ensure safe and proper administration of both prescription and non-prescription medication by unlicensed school staff, it is the school nurses responsibility to train school personnel in the authorization, administration and prepackaging of medication, under regulations set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (105 CMR 110.000: The Administration of Prescription Medication in Public and Private Schools and 105 CMR 210.000: Policies Related to the Delegation of Medication Administration).

## **K. Life Threatening Emergencies in the Community**

All staff members at NLG are certified in Adult and Child First Aid, CPR and AED. Additionally, all staff that are trained to work with students diagnosed with life threatening allergies are trained to recognize an anaphylactic reaction, as well as, when to administer an Epi-pen auto-injector in the case of anaphylaxis. In the event that a student has a medical emergency when they are in the community, and does not have an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) to address the emergency and the school nurse is not present the NLG staff member will follow the Action Plans outlined below. Nursing will always be called initially.

**Allergic Reaction:** (Examples of some of the symptoms include) Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, wheezing, difficulty swallowing, hives, itching, swelling, of any body part.

**Action Plan:** Call 911 and give Epi-Pen, if prescribed and available.

**Asthma:** Student has difficulty breathing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.

**Action Plan:** If student has their inhaler, allow them to use it or assist them to use it. If no relief of symptoms in 5 minutes, call 911. **If no inhaler available, call 911 immediately.**

**Diabetes:** Low blood sugar reaction-hunger, sweaty, pallor, headache, feels shaky.

**Action Plan:** Allow student to drink a juice box or regular soda, eat glucose tablets or eat a snack from their emergency snack pack. Have student test their blood glucose level if they are able, and record their number. If no change in symptoms in 15 minutes, call 911 and have student follow the directions of emergency personnel.

**Seizure:** Altered consciousness, involuntary muscle stiffness or jerking movements, drooling/foaming at the mouth, temporary halt in breathing, loss of bladder control.

**Action Plan:** Protect student from falling. Call 911. Never put anything in the student's mouth.

For any student that 911 is called for, the staff member will notify the NLG school nurse, who will notify the parent/guardian. A staff member will accompany the student to the Emergency Room.

## **L. Student Sunscreen/Hand Sanitizer/Bug Spray Use at NLG**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education considers sunscreen an over the counter medication. This means that in order for the staff at NLG to apply sunscreen to your child during the school day, a physician order and formal parental/guardian consent must be provided. NLG's school Medical Director (identified earlier in this section of the manual) has added sunscreen into our school program's standing physician orders. Per this order, NLG will be providing Babyganics 50 SPF sunscreen for students to use during school hours. If you choose to use the NLG provided sunscreen you will need to provide the signed permission form, allowing a member of the nursing department and your child's staff member to administer the Babyganics 50 SPF sunscreen, as needed. NLG is also required by state agencies to have standing orders from our school physician for hand sanitizer with Ethyl Alcohol 70%. Upon completion of your annual nursing forms, consent for hand sanitizer will need to be provided as all students must use hand sanitizer upon entry into the building and throughout the day as needed when hand washing is not available.

If you would like to use your own sunscreen (not the Babyganics 50 SPF provided by NLG), please send this in to school and notify your child's Clinical Director and Lead of your sunscreen preference to ensure they know which sunscreen to apply before going outdoors. If you are choosing not to utilize the sunscreen that is provided by NLG, you are responsible for regularly providing the sunscreen that your child should use while at NLG.

If you would like your child to utilize bug spray during the school day, you are responsible for providing this product, as well. In order for bug spray to be applied to your child during the school day NLG requires both a physician order and parental consent.

## M. Extreme Weather Policy

### Winter Weather Guidelines

During the winter months, we may experience cold temperatures that at times can be considered extreme. The following guidelines encompass expectations for the safety of NLG staff and students pertaining to temperature and wind chill factor. Every student should have the ability to go outside every day, as long as the wind chill factor is above 15° F. If the temperature or the wind chill is 15° F or below, students and staff should not be spending time outside and should play indoors. Please review the guidelines listed below for time spent outside per temperature range and the clothing required for students per the temperature range.

Trips outside should be kept brief due to the combination of wind and cold which can pose a significant health risk. Children that have cold related medical conditions should not be permitted outdoors unless NLG has received physician orders and specific parent/guardian consent specifying the specific temperatures and clothing needed for safe time outdoors.

#### A Wind-Chill Factor between 15°F and 40°F:

- Time spent outside may not exceed 15 minutes per day
- Clothing for students should include:
  - Winter coat
  - Closed shoes or boots with socks
  - Hats and gloves

#### A Wind-Chill Factor Between 41°F and 50°F:

- No limit to time spent outside; as long as proper clothing is worn
- Clothing for students should include:
  - Winter coat or heavy jacket over long sleeved clothing
  - Closed shoes or boots with socks
  - Hats and gloves are optional

### Heat Index Guidelines

Extreme heat can be just as hazardous to children as extreme cold. The Heat Index is an indication of how the temperature ‘feels’, and is a combination of actual heat and relative humidity. When playing outdoors in warm weather students should wear lightweight, cotton clothing. Staff should also help students to stay hydrated by drinking cool beverages, especially those with low sugar content, such as water. These efforts help the body to maintain a comfortable temperature. Staff should be applying sunscreen to the students before taking the student outdoors in the sun, *if* parent consent and physician orders have been received. This is to prevent any sun burn, dehydration and other heat related emergencies.

If there is a school-wide outdoor event/activity scheduled, the administrative team in conjunction with the nursing department will determine if the outdoors event/activity is safe depending on the heat index. Children that have heat related medical conditions should not be going outdoors in extreme heat unless NLG has received physician orders and specific parent/guardian consent specifying the specific temperatures and clothing needed for safe time outdoors.



#### A Heat Index Above 90° F:

- Young children (ages 3 years old to ten years old) should not play outdoors
- Children 10 years and older should only play outdoors for 15 minutes maximum, separated by a minimum of two hours

#### A Heat Index Between 80°F and 90°F:

- Children should be closely observed while outdoors
- Outdoor play time should be limited

#### A Heat Index of 80°F or Below:

- The identified heat index is considered comfortable; 80°F is a safe temperature for children to play outdoors

### **N. Immunization Policy**

Annually, parents/guardians are required to complete the nursing paperwork which includes a physical within the last year and up to date immunizations. If your child is not up to date with immunizations, additional documentation will be required annually. Philosophical exemptions are not allowed by law in Massachusetts, even if signed by a physician. Only medical and religious exemptions are acceptable. These exemptions must be kept in the students' files at school (105 CMR 220.000 and M.G.L. c.76, ss. 15, 15C and 15D). If your child has a medical or religious exemption for immunizations, the physician and/or parent/guardian must document this in writing at the beginning of each school year and sign stating it is understood that Nashoba Learning Group must exclude susceptible individuals (including those with medical or religious exemptions) who are not immunized when a case of vaccine-preventable disease emerges, for the appropriate time periods designated by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, outlined in Reportable Diseases, Surveillance, Isolation and Quarantine requirements (105 CMR 300.000). A medical exemption must be signed by your student's physician annually and sent to the NLG nursing department by the start of the new school year. A religious exemption must be documented and signed by the student's parent/guardian annually and sent to NLG's nursing department by the start of each new school year. If there were ever a diagnosed case at NLG, any student not immunized will need to remain out of school for an extended period of time as determined by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.