



**TECCA
CONNECTIONS
ACADEMY**

Commonwealth Virtual School

TEC CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023

Greetings TECCA Families:

First and foremost, thank you for choosing TECCA! With our exceptional faculty, extensive academic options, and a schooling experience like no other, I am confident that you will enjoy being part of the TECCA community. It is my privilege to welcome you to the 2022-2023 school year. Whether you are a newly enrolled student, or returning for another year, welcome! We are pleased to have you as part of our virtual public school community. "The Mission of TECCA is to offer Massachusetts students a quality virtual public school experience," and I am confident we, together, will meet that expectation.

As an online virtual public school, students have the unique opportunity to learn outside of the traditional classrooms and have the flexibility to "do school" at a pace and time that fits each students' individual needs. Our unique school allows students to learn from a distance as we have students from all across the commonwealth including the Cape and the Islands. Just because we are learning from a distance does not mean we are apart and disconnected. All of the faculty and staff at TECCA genuinely care about each student's growth and development and believe, "When we work together, success is inevitable".

In addition to the extensive core academic and elective course options, I would like to note that TECCA also offers a wide range of other activities and experiences for our students such as clubs, activities, field trips, and other social events. I encourage everyone to fully take advantage of all that TECCA has to offer so you can make the most of this stage in your life's journey. Please make every effort to participate in your academics and as many of these extracurricular activities as possible, as they will provide you with different perspectives, challenges, and opportunities to learn, have fun, succeed, and meet other students and families.

Please thoroughly review our Student Handbook as it contains a wealth of information regarding the TECCA schooling experience. I wish you a successful, challenging, and rewarding academic year and career at TECCA!

All the best,

Patrick Lattuca, Ph.D. Superintendent

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School Overview

TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School

TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School (TECCA) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, homelessness, religion, ancestry, athletic performance, special needs, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

Getting Ready for the School Year

Learning Coaches and students should check their “To Do” list on their homepage in Connexus® every school day. Be sure to complete the assigned orientations and trainings you find there – this will help ensure that you and your student get off to a great start for the school year.

Set up your Student’s “Learning Area”

- Dedicate a space for keeping school materials and supplies organized
- Create a weekly schedule that you and your student will follow to ensure success.
Place your student’s “classroom” in a quiet area that is free of distractions
- Create a filing system for portfolio assessments, student work, and important papers
Create a showcase area to display your student’s work
- Review your planner and post the daily routine

If you’re waiting for a computer delivery from Connections Academy, review the set up requirements and make sure everything you need is in place, including Internet service, so when your computer arrives, you are ready to go. If there is an issue with access to a computer or internet make the school aware. **Please note that it is expected that you access assignments and complete work in Connexus while you are waiting for your computer to be received.**

If you are using your own computer, take time to review the system requirements in Connexus Help which can be accessed via the MORE tab on the Toolbar on your Connexus homepage to ensure you are set up properly. Enrollment begins as soon as you complete the final confirmation process. This means that your student should start working immediately, and you do not need to wait for materials to arrive as they are all available online via Connexus. If you have any questions about how to access your virtual textbooks contact your student’s teacher.

Caretaker (Parent or Legal Guardian)

TECCA applies the term “Caretaker” to the student’s parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) who enrolls the student and satisfies the student’s enrollment requirements. All Caretakers are automatically given “Learning Coach” access (see below) in Connexus so they are able to perform the Learning Coach duties. Caretakers must agree to and sign the Parent/ Learning Coach Acknowledgement as part of the enrollment process. While Caretakers automatically have the Learning Coach access, they may also designate another adult or adults as Learning Coaches either in addition to or in place of the Caretaker. Learning Coach access of an individual other than the caretaker may be revoked. Even if the Caretaker designates another adult or adults as Learning Coach, the Caretaker will continue to have the Learning Coach access in Connexus. The Caretaker always has full and final responsibility for the child’s education and educational decision-making with the school, and therefore must be available to the school staff as needed for discussions related to the student’s educational and other school-related needs. School staff are not able to speak with any adults that are not on the student’s account. Caretakers may add additional learning coaches to the student’s account to help support their needs, but we may not speak to any adults not on the account.

Learning Coach

It is absolutely essential that the learning coach is an active participant in the student’s learning experience. This is a daily commitment requiring effort, attention, and consistency in order to ensure student success. The Learning Coach is the adult who performs tasks such as recording attendance, reviewing lessons, providing supervision, and communicating with teachers on a regular basis. Each student will have at least one Learning Coach who is usually the student’s Caretaker. During the enrollment process all Parent/Legal Guardians (Caretaker) agreed (in part) to the following:

- I consent to my student(s) attending all mandatory meetings and standardized tests required by the school.
- I understand that I will be financially responsible for any school property that is provided to me, including property that becomes damaged, excluding normal wear and tear, is moved to another location, or is not returned when requested by the school.
- I have read and understand the Regulatory Program Description, including information about the need for adult supervision for students.
- I am responsible for ensuring that the student has a suitable place for schooling and will be physically available in the same location as the student during learning activities to the extent required by law.
- I will be responsible for ensuring that the student completes his or her work and makes adequate progress as defined by my student’s teacher(s). I will schedule enough time in my day to support the student and submit the required work.
- I will mark the student absent or present for each school day according to the procedures established by the school.

- I agree to participate and ensure that the student participates in regular telephone, email, web conferencing (LiveLesson® presentations) or, if required, in-person contacts with a teacher, as directed by the school.
- I agree to use Connexus daily, when possible, and not less than three times per week.

Learning Coach Central

Learning Coaches can also prepare for their role by exploring the many family support resources that TECCA offers. Go to your Connexus Homepage, select the Links tab, then select Learning Coach Central to select from a variety of resources. You'll also find a "Getting Started Checklist," a link to the "Prepare for Success" website, announcements about LiveLesson sessions designed specifically to help Learning Coaches support their students in adjusting to virtual learning, and much more!

Student

The student's role at TECCA is to learn and grow to the best of their abilities. Therefore, each student will take age-appropriate individual responsibility for their own learning. This is accomplished by applying themselves to their studies in a focused and serious manner, working hard, being engaged in their lessons and activities, communicating with their teachers, and enjoying everything being a student at TECCA has to offer. Students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code.

Need Help?

You should always contact your student's Homeroom Teacher with any question or concern. Your Homeroom Teacher is the student/family's primary point of contact, and can always point you in the appropriate direction. Homeroom Teachers are assigned upon enrollment, and will reach out to the family and conduct a Welcome Call, which provides an orientation to all-things TECCA. Families may also reference Connexus Help, which has a lot of the answers! Select the MORE tab on your toolbar in Connexus and then select the Help button. You can also call Tech Support at 800-382-6010 or send a Webmail message to Technical Support if you have any issues with your computer, Connexus, or accessing the Internet.

To get to know your student's teacher(s), view the Teacher Communication "Data View" to view their profile. To access this Data View, select your student's name from your homepage. From there, you will see the courses your student is taking. Select the  icon beside the teacher's name, and then select and view the teacher's Teacher Communication information.

Enrollment

It is important for enrolling students and families to balance the reasons for enrolling in TECCA with their ability and willingness to meet the expectations and responsibilities articulated in this School Handbook. The school will provide support for students to enhance their success in online learning before the students start significant coursework. Throughout the enrollment process and post- enrollment, TECCA will work closely with families to help them be successful in the online environment.

Residency

To be eligible to enroll in TECCA, a student must be a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and must provide proof of residency during the enrollment process as described on the school's enrollment website. If your residence changes during the school year, you are required to provide an updated proof of residency in order to remain enrolled as a student at TECCA. Once enrolled, should relevant information arise, TECCA reserves the right to question a student/family status as a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The family will be given an opportunity to come to the TECCA office to present information verifying residency; in the absence thereof, the student may be withdrawn from TEC Connections Academy.

Temporary Location Change

A "Temporary Location Change" request must be submitted if the student is expected to travel or relocate away from the student's primary Massachusetts residence for more than two (2) weeks. For this type of location change, the Caretaker must contact their homeroom teacher to receive a Location Transfer Request Form found in the Virtual Library. Once completed this form must be submitted to the Principal for approval. These forms must be completed and submitted a month prior to the relocation. In emergency situations pertaining to relocation please contact the Principal immediately. No location transfer requests will be granted beyond one semester's length and students must be present in Massachusetts for MCAS testing with no exception. Please reference the "Residency" section of this Handbook for more information.

Compliance with Local, State, and Federal Mandates

TECCA will implement and follow its Student Recruitment and Retention Policy in accordance with the regulations governing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools and in compliance with TECCA's Certificate of Organization. The detailed recruitment and retention policy statement is provided on the school's enrollment web page in the Enrollment Policy Document.

TECCA also abides by all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, policies, and guidelines for student enrollment and will not impose enrollment requirements that are inconsistent with these policies and guidelines, including compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act regarding

homeless students. The school leader or his/her designee shall serve as the liaison for homeless students and the DCF liaison. Students who meet the definition of homeless shall not be barred from enrolling due to lack of required documents.

Assignment of Grade Levels for Enrolling Students

Grade levels are assigned according to the following processes:

Elementary and Middle: Student report cards are reviewed and grade levels determined by the last elementary and/or grade completed. If the student was retained at their former school they will be retained at TECCA as well.

High School: Grade level in grades 9-12 are determined solely by credits earned to date. The School Counseling Department reviews student transcripts and translates credits earned to TECCA's credit system. A full year course at TECCA is awarded 1 credit. A semester long course is awarded .50 credits. A student at TECCA must have earned a minimum of 6 credits for 10th grade status, 12 credits for 11th grade status, and 18 credits for 12th grade status.

Minimum and Maximum age to Enroll

To enroll in Kindergarten the student must be 5 years of age by August 31st. Each child must attend school beginning no later than September of the calendar year in which the child turns 6. A student may stay enrolled in TECCA until the age of 21 for general education students, and 22 for special education students.

In order to verify legal name, date of birth, and to confirm any age eligibility requirements are met, applicants for kindergarten or who are entering 1st grade having not attended kindergarten must submit a copy of the student's official birth certificate. If a student does not have a birth certificate, TECCA will accept alternative documentation such as a religious, hospital, or physician's certificate showing date of birth; an adoption record; an affidavit from a parent; or previously verified school records; or any other documents. Students in other grades may also submit a copy of the student's official birth certificate or a passport, green card, baptismal or birth record. TECCA will not bar or discourage a student from attending school because the student lacks a birth certificate.

Enrollment Incentives

TECCA does not use financial or technology incentives to recruit students.

Enrollment of Students Suspended or Expelled from a Previous School

Students who have been suspended from another school and who are eligible to return to that school system, but who wish to enroll in TECCA, will be required to submit a disciplinary

history to TECCA during the enrollment process. If a student has been expelled from another school they too may be required to submit a disciplinary history to TECCA during the enrollment process which will be reviewed by the principal who will make a final decision regarding enrollment. Failure to accurately disclose a prior suspension or expulsion during the placement process that is later verified through prior school records may result in an immediate withdrawal. Students who have a pending legal matter must indicate so, and describe the circumstances in the “Other” section of their enrollment application. Failure to disclose this information may result in immediate withdrawal.

Students Enrolling After the Start of the School Year

All students who enroll after the first day of a new semester will be skipped ahead to present day and not responsible for completing any school work that was assigned prior to enrollment. Students are encouraged to review coursework covered prior to their enrollment to ensure their understanding and success. Students and Caretakers/Learning Coaches are expected to complete a Getting Started orientation course within 1 week of enrolling.

Middle & Elementary School Students Enrolling after the Start of the School Year

Students may enroll after the start of the school year, provided that there is space available in the school at the time all enrollment tasks are completed. Families should contact the Enrollment Department at 1-800-382-6010 for details on the school’s enrollment capacity at the given time of application or inquiry. Families enrolling mid-year are subject to all the same enrollment requirements as families who enroll prior to the start of the school year. Enrollment may be closed before the end of the school year either if the school reaches its enrollment cap set by the Commonwealth Virtual School Terms of Certificate awarded by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

High School Students Enrolling after the Start of the School Year

High school students entering mid-semester must submit report cards, progress reports and/or teacher notes from their previous school as part of the enrollment process. TECCA reviews the student’s work and progress up to that point in the semester, and attempts to create as similar a schedule as possible.

Dual Enrollment in another K-12 Public School

A student is not allowed to enroll in TECCA while enrolled as a full-time student in another public school. It is incumbent upon the Caretaker to officially notify the “District of Residence” of their student’s withdrawal due to enrollment at TECCA. Failure to do so may result in immediate withdrawal. This statement must be acknowledged by parents/legal guardians prior to final confirmation.

Withdrawing from TECCA

Caretakers withdrawing their student must contact their homeroom teacher to make the request for withdrawal verbally as well as in writing – no requests will be honored without written consent. Caretakers must provide the last day the student is submitting work, the school the student will be attending, the main reason for the withdrawal, and if moving – the forwarding address and moving date. In all circumstances of withdrawal, the District of Residence will be notified. High school students should be aware that their grades will appear as a withdrawal pass or withdrawal fail on their transcript if they withdraw before the semester ends based on their current grade at the time of withdrawal. Unless a student completes the entire semester’s coursework prior to withdrawing, they will not earn high school credit.

School Information and Contacts

School Information	School Contact
School Phone Number	774-315-5123
School Fax Number	774-256-9343
School Address	141 Mansion Drive Suite 300 East Walpole, MA 02032
School Hours	8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Technical and General Support	800-382-6010
Superintendent	Patrick Lattuca
Director of Assessment, Instruction and Professional Development	Heidi Nelson-Buffa
Director of Counseling Services	Sarah Dalton
Interim Director of Special Education	Linda Chase
Interim Assistant Director of Special Education	Virginia Tedesco
High School Principal	Robert Shaw
High School Assistant Principal	Anne O’Connor
Dean of Middle and High Schools	Phillip Saisa
Middle School Principal	Ashley Ferranti
Middle School Assistant Principal	Jessica Hunter
Elementary School Principal	Melanie Joubanian
Elementary School Assistant Principal	Nicole Buckley
EL Coordinator	Rita DeOliveira
504 Coordinator	Meredith Arieta-Heaney
Webmail	All staff and support services are located in the Education Management System’s (Connexus®) WebMail address book.
Board of Directors	Refer to the school web page for most current contact information.

2022-2023 School Calendar

Event	Date
First Day of First Semester	August 31, 2022
Labor Day Break (No School)	September 2-5, 2022
Columbus Day (No School)	October 10, 2022
Veterans' Day (No School)	November 11, 2022
Thanksgiving Break (No School)	November 24-25, 2022
Winter Break (No School)	December 26-30, 2022
WIDA/ Access Testing	TBD
New Years Day, Observed (No School)	January 2, 2023
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (No School)	January 16, 2023
First Semester End Date	January 24, 2023
Intercession (No School)	January 25, 2023
First day of Second Semester	January 26, 2023
100 th Day Countdown Celebration	February 3, 2023
Presidents' Day/ February Break (No School)	February 20-24, 2023
April Break (No School)	April 17-21, 2023
High School Prom	TBD
Memorial Day (No School)	May 29, 2023
Moving up Ceremonies, Grades K and 5	TBD
Moving up Ceremony, Grade 8	TBD
High School Graduation	TBD
Last Day of School	June 13, 2023

All MCAS Testing and Retest Dates	
High School ELA Retest	November 9-10, 2022
High School Math Retest	November 15-16, 2022
High School Science Retest	February 1-2, 2023
High School ELA Retest	March 8-9, 2023
High School Math Retest	March 14-15, 2023
High School ELA	March 28-29, 2023
Elementary School	March 27-April 28, 2023
High School Math	May 16-17, 2023
High School Science	June 6-7, 2023

Link to the Student Master Calendar in the Virtual Library is [HERE](#)

Required Instructional Hours

Grade (s)	Weekly Required Hours	Annual Required Hours
K - 5	25	900
6 - 12	28	990

* Note that these are the minimum hours required by the state and that students are responsible for mastering all material, which may require additional time.

Attendance

Defining, Marking and Verifying Attendance

Attendance is defined as participating in the TECCA School and curriculum.

Learning Coaches MUST enter student attendance in Connexus at a minimum every-other day, and the school verifies that the attendance records are accurate by LiveLesson attendance, lessons/assessment completion, attendance at regularly scheduled meetings, and through conversations with the students at the bi-weekly check-in call. Attendance hours that are entered, but which are not substantiated by the student's lesson completion, or verified through conversations with the student's Caretaker/Learning Coach, may be retroactively changed by the homeroom teacher or attendance coordinator.

Connexus Attendance Codes and System Controls

The attendance codes will be implemented in the following manner:

Code	Definition	Who Records?
0 - 9	Hours of Schooling	Learning Coach
V	Vacation (see below for definition)	Learning Coach
E	Excused (see General Handbook for definition)	Teacher or Attendance Coordinator
U	Unexcused - Did Not Attend MCAS Testing	Teacher or Attendance Coordinator

Attendance Responsibilities by Role

Learning Coach:

- Indicate the number of hours (0-9) the student worked each day of the week
- Refer to the Required Instructional Hours section of this handbook for important information on minimum weekly recommended hours, and ensure students spend the required time in schooling activities
- Only enter weekend hours if a student has undertaken educational activity, otherwise weekend days should be left blank.

If the student does not plan to attend school on a particular day, the Learning Coach should indicate that in the attendance system by using the “V” for vacation day. Another option is for the Learning Coach to enter a “0”, and make those hours up throughout the week. Vacation days (Vs) may be entered by a learning coach if a student does not complete schoolwork on a particular day. If a vacation day is used in this manner, it must be deducted from the vacation day scheduled by the school. Students have a total of twenty-six (26) vacation days for the school year, and that number cannot be exceeded.

Vacation days may not be used during mandatory state testing days. If the student is requesting an excused absence for a reason other than a vacation day (V), the Learning Coach must submit a doctor’s note that outlines the reason(s) for the absence.

Family Engagement Coordinators:

In conjunction with the Homeroom teacher, the Family Engagement Coordinators regularly reviews all attendance records, and supports students in the truancy process (per the procedures set forth with the escalation system outlined below). Only the Family Engagement Coordinators can make changes to Connexus Attendance System or Adjusted Attendance field after the lockdown. The Family Engagement Coordinator reviews the teacher or learning coach request(s), adjust the records as necessary, and indicates such actions in the log.

Teachers and Learning Coaches can request these changes by submitting the attendance change form found in the virtual library. Only the Family Engagement Coordinator or Homeroom teacher will mark “E” in the attendance records when proper documentation is provided. Learning Coaches should never mark an “E” in the student’s attendance record.

School Responsibilities:

1. Review Attendance Records - Teachers monitor and review attendance records on a weekly basis. They remind Learning Coaches to enter hours of schooling for all days of the week. If a teacher has concerns about the validity of a student’s attendance records, he or she may adjust the attendance record to reflect schoolwork submitted, and contact the school’s designated Family Engagement Coordinators for further assistance.

2. Monitor Attendance Issues – The school’s Family Engagement Coordinators monitor student attendance. They contact families with low attendance rates, and work to help them stay in compliance. Family Engagement Coordinators also identify and record excused absences, and can alter Learning Coaches’ attendance records (with proper documentation), if necessary.
3. Maintaining the Integrity of the Attendance Data – After the weekly records are reviewed by the teacher, the school locks the system to prohibit further editing. Any requests for adjustments to the previously verified records must go to the school (in writing) for review, approval and adjustment.

Official Attendance Record: The Connexus attendance system is the record of Learning Coach documented attendance. It is, however, only one of many sources used to determine if a student is meeting the minimum instructional hour requirement. In certain cases, where it has been determined that a student has not completed enough work or that certain other program requirements have not been fulfilled, the Family Engagement Coordinators may invalidate the Learning Coach’s record resulting in sanctions and discipline.

Live Lesson Attendance Expectations:

All students at TECCA are expected to attend Live Lessons for their academic courses either live or by watching the recorded live lesson. Students who attend Live Lessons experience a much higher degree of success at TECCA, and learning coaches are expected to support their students in attending. Teachers at TECCA use Live Lesson attendance and participation toward the overall grade in the corresponding course.

Contact Requirements

Webcams and Microphones

All TECCA students are expected to be available to meet with teachers in the live lesson room. As a part of these meetings, students may be asked to use their webcam and/ microphone to demonstrate learning. Please reach out to your homeroom teacher if you do not have these items.

Homeroom Check in Calls

All students at TECCA are **required to speak with their homeroom teachers at least one every two weeks** and there are no exceptions to this requirement. Homeroom teachers will set up a mutually agreed upon time to conduct this call at the start of the school year or upon enrollment. If a student cannot make their scheduled check in call they are responsible for notifying their homeroom teacher and attending a re-scheduled check in call. Missed check in calls are akin to skipping class and can have disciplinary consequences.

K-5 Check in Calls

To ensure students are meeting grade level expectations, teachers will regularly engage students in content based conversations during their check in call and work with students to assess their proficiency on state standards and related skills. These conversations are an important opportunity to provide students with feedback and recommendations to either help them reach proficiency or explore content material in greater depth. Students are expected to participate in these conversations or work sessions approximately once per month and will receive a grade accordingly. Additional work may be assigned (for example, in a Supplemental Instructional Support Program) should the student need additional practice in a content area or skill to meet proficiency. It is expected that students will engage in this program as assigned by the teacher.

Grade 6-12 Teacher Check-in Call

TECCA recognizes that students can (and should) demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. As part of each 6-12 core academic course semester grade, all students are required to demonstrate their learning via a teacher check in call, conducted either on the phone or in the teacher's LiveLesson room. The Teacher Check in Call counts as an assessment grade. If a student does not participate in the Teacher Check in Call they will receive a Zero in their gradebook. However, students will receive a 100% for engaging in content based discussion in their Teacher Check in Call. Additional work may be assigned (for example, in a Supplemental Instructional Support Program) should the student need additional practice in a content area or skill to meet proficiency. It is expected that students will engage in this program as assigned by the teacher.

Escalation System

Escalation is an alert system that TECCA utilizes to inform students and parents as to the student's progress/status in our school. The escalation system itself is not a punishment or reward. The escalation system is meant to inform and empower the student and Learning Coach to reflect and review their current school performance. It enables them to make positive changes when necessary and keep the lines of communication open. The escalation system consists of a combination of measures that indicate if a student is demonstrating adequate participation (and therefore attendance), performance, have completed an appropriate number of lessons or assessments, and has maintained regular contact with the Homeroom teacher. All enrolled students are in one of three escalation statuses at all times:

On-Track: Indicated by a 🟢 Approaching Alarm: Indicated by a 🟡 Alarm Indicated by a 🔴

This status is based on several criteria, as outlined in the School Handbook and not only

includes the actual attendance hours recorded by the Learning Coach, but also lesson and assignment completion rates, and the amount of contact with the teacher. Therefore, even though a Learning Coach may record a high number of instructional hours in the attendance records, if a student's work completion rates are not on track or if he or she fails to communicate on a regular basis with the teacher, he or she will be placed in an Alarm status. **It is important to recognize that simply marking proper attendance will not keep a student's attendance status On-Track.**

When a student is in the Approaching Alarm or Alarm status, the student is not meeting the expectations of TECCA and therefore requires appropriate interventions on the part of the school, student, and learning coach. The school will work with the family to help get the student back on track. It is common for students to fluctuate between any of these statuses during the school year. TECCA will work with families to provide multiple opportunities for students to succeed.

Truancy

Truancy

Truancy at TECCA is defined as:

1. Three (3) or more days of consecutive unexcused absences and/or days in which no work has been completed.
2. Five (5) or more days in which no work has been completed within a six-month period.
3. Not meeting the state-mandated minimum number of hours per week on a regular basis (See "Required Attendance Hours").
4. Low participation or lesson completion rate.
5. Attendance and engagement are two very different dynamics, meaning, a student can be found truant if they are attending but not engaged.

Caretakers and students are jointly responsible for ensuring that students meet TECCA's attendance requirements, and that the student's attendance is properly documented as described above. School administration is responsible for enforcing attendance laws, and students not attending school as mandated by law will be considered truant.

TECCA has **zero tolerance for truancy**. Caretakers are responsible for ensuring their student is fully participating in school, even if they have designated another individual as their student's Learning Coach. If the student does not meet attendance requirements as described above, then attendance hours should not be marked by the Caretaker or designated Learning Coach.

In order to avoid truancy, the Caretaker must ensure that the following activities are taking place:

1. The student must complete all lessons as prescribed in their planner.
2. The student must meet attendance hours as described above.
3. The student must attend regularly scheduled telephone calls with teachers.

4. The student attends or watches all assigned LiveLesson sessions and Recordings.
5. The student attends mandatory school and state testing.

If a student has been found to be truant, TECCA will take the following actions:

1. TECCA will notify the parents and initiate a formal Truancy Meeting. Participants in this meeting will include the Attendance Coordinator, the Caretaker, the student, and other relevant stakeholders.
2. At the Truancy Meeting, a “Truancy Intervention Plan” which outlines the steps and actions required to support a student out of truancy status will be developed. This plan will support the belief that if the student follows the prescribed steps, the student will no longer be in truancy status.
3. If the student does not meet the conditions of the Truancy Plan, TECCA will take action, not limited to, but including returning the student to their sending district.

Mandatory Testing

Renaissance STAR 360 ELA & Mathematics Assessments

All TECCA students from kindergarten through 12th grade **are required to participate in the Star 360 ELA & Math assessments.** The Star 360 assessments will provide teachers with valuable data to promote student growth and learning. Upon completion of the assessments, teachers will personalize instruction to best support each individual student. The results of these assessments will be used to report student growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year to the Department of Education, as a part of our School Accountability Plan.

Both the Star 360 ELA & Math assessments are mandatory and are administered three times throughout the school year.

Students in grades K-8 will complete the Star 360 with one of their grade level teachers or school counselors. The assessments will be completed in small groups in the live lesson room. Teachers will work to schedule testing sessions at the start of the school year. Students who complete the assessments within the two week testing window at the start of either semester will receive a 10/10 quiz grade in the gradebook. Students missing the assessments will receive a 0/10. For testing windows at the end of the semester, students in grades K-8 will have their lowest quiz grade dropped in both Math and ELA once testing is completed for both subjects.

Each TECCA 9th-12th grade student will be assigned to a Star 360 Assessment course, where they will receive a grade for each round of testing. The Star 360 course will be a credit bearing course for all HS students, worth .25 credits. The course will be graded as pass/fail, students

will receive a passing score for the course if they attend all testing sessions offered while they are enrolled at TECCA.

Any student who does not attend Star 360 during the assigned window, will receive a detention (6th-8th) or mandatory study hall (K-5), which will be served in the live lesson room and the Star 360 tests will be administered at this time by a school administrator.

Star 360 testing is proctored virtually and does require students to use their webcams for monitoring throughout the assessments.

MCAS Testing

Students attending TECCA **are required to participate** in the state testing, known as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). **There is no “opt out” option for MCAS exams.** TECCA courses are aligned to the MA curriculum state standards, where instructional activities and assessments are thoughtfully crafted to help prepare students for the content they will encounter on the MCAS. These tests measure academic achievement of all public school students in the Commonwealth.

- Parents/Caretakers are expected to know the MCAS assessment dates in advance and select their testing location site early in the school year with their Homeroom Teacher.
- Transportation can be provided to the closest test site to the student’s residence by request.
- In the event that MCAS is proctored virtually, TECCA students will be required to use their webcams during the testing sessions.
- Students in grades 3-8 take the ELA and Mathematics MCAS exams annually
- Students in grades 10 take the ELA and Mathematics MCAS exam
- Students in grades 5, 8, and 9 take the Science MCAS exam.
- Students in grades 9-12 who do not earn a passing score on their MCAS exams will have opportunities to retake the exams. *

*In order to obtain a high school diploma students must pass the English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS exams. Refer to: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/overview.html> for more information, including requirements for graduation.

- Students who are absent for any reason other than a medically documented condition will be considered to have an Unexcused Absence (U) for the day(s) they did not test.
- MCAS testing days are considered to be “required days of school.” All students must be physically present at their test site on their scheduled test day. Students not testing will be given school work to complete. Being absent from these “required days” is considered to be “skipping school.”
- All students are expected to stay in their assigned testing session a minimum of 90 minutes.

- More information about the administration of the tests, including specific dates and locations, will be regularly updated in the Virtual Library.

WIDA/ACCESS Testing

Students attending TECCA whose first language is not English and who have been identified as English Learner (EL) **are required to participate in the state testing program for English Learners known as ACCESS testing.** The ACCESS test assesses a student's English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing and the results of this assessment are used to determine program placement. All EL students are required to participate in the ACCESS test. The EL Coordinator will work with families to schedule testing days. Parents/Caretakers will be informed of their student's location, and will then be responsible for coordinating transportation to their testing location. Transportation assistance for these tests is available upon request.

*For any testing, STAR, MCAS, WIDA/ACCESS, and for academic integrity violations, students may be required to take the assessment with their camera on and have the testing session securely recorded.

K-8 Placement

Gifted/Talented Coursework in Grades 3-8

1. Language Arts

The Gifted Language Arts course provides students with literature enrichment opportunities and projects in addition to what is provided in the standard Language Arts course. Students who enroll in this course are required to attend an additional Live Lesson session to engage in discussions and deliver presentations.

Students in Grades 3-8 who meet the following criteria are eligible to enroll in the Gifted/Talented Language Arts course and upon recommendation from their language arts teacher:

- Complete the STAR 360 benchmark test by September 15th of the school year
- Demonstrate grade level mastery on the ELA portion of the STAR 360 benchmark assessment
- Attend and participate in Live Lessons regularly
- Scored 'Exceeding Expectations' on MCAS the school year prior (grades 4-8)

2. Math

Students in Grades 3-6 who have demonstrated mastery of grade level math through the STAR 360 benchmark assessment will be provided with enrichment work by their teacher.

Students entering Grade 7 who meet the following criteria are eligible to take the Algebra Readiness course:

- Complete the STAR 360 benchmark test by September 15th of the school year
- Demonstrate grade level mastery on the math portion of the STAR 360 benchmark assessment
- Attend and participate in Live Lessons regularly
- Scored 'Exceeding Expectations' on the MCAS for the two school years prior

3. Science

The Gifted/Talented Science course provides students with enrichment opportunities and multiple short term and long term project options, in addition to those provided in the standard science course. Students in grades 3-8 who are on track, attend and actively participate in Live Lesson are eligible to be enrolled in the Gifted Talented Science course for the following year upon recommendation from their science teacher.

K - 8 Placement Changes during the School Year

Placement changes may be requested by a family or by a teacher in consultation with the family and can only be made within the first four weeks of the semester or enrollment (add drop period). All placement change requests are subject to review and approval by the appropriate administrator.

Placement changes will be determined by the Principal of Elementary and Middle Schools. Placement changes may occur after the add drop period but will result in the removed course being recorded on the transcript as a withdrawal pass or withdrawal fail depending on the student's grade at the time of withdrawal.

K - 8 Mid-year Course Completion

Students who complete their coursework prior to the end of the semester are expected to continue meeting attendance requirements. Students should work with their Learning Coaches and teachers to make sure they have mastered the curriculum of the given course. Students are expected to complete enrichment or extension activities provided by the teacher.

High School Programs and Policies

Promotion

The following minimum credits are required to be promoted from one grade to the next:

Classification	Grade	Minimum # of Credits
Sophomore	10	4.5
Junior	11	10.5
Senior	12	17

At the time of a student's enrollment, school counselors will establish estimated grade levels based on preliminary information about previously earned credits. Student grade levels are then automatically updated twice each year – once in the fall and once again at the end of the school year – based on the student's earned and verified credits recorded in Connexus.

In some situations, the counselor, in consultation with the student, Learning Coach, and/or school administrator, may adjust the student's grade to most appropriately match the student's current academic needs.

Graduation and Diploma Requirements

Students and Families should know that every school's graduation requirements are different.

All students/parents (especially seniors) should consult their School Counselor to ensure their transfer of credits, and progression towards TECCA's graduation requirements.

To be eligible to graduate and receive a diploma from TECCA, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Earn a total of 24 credits (in specific areas and subjects as outlined in this Supplement)
2. As required by state mandate, students must earn a passing score in the English, Mathematics, and Science/Technology MCAS exams.
3. Meet any other additional graduation requirements required by the school or state.

*Credits earned at another Connections Academy school or schools may be included in this total, as these schools all use the same curriculum, technology, and instructional protocols as TECCA.

High School Graduation

When students meet all of TECCA's graduation requirements, they are eligible to participate in one of two graduation ceremonies. Students who have completed all graduation requirements by June will participate in the June ceremony; students who complete their requirements at any other time must choose between a summer graduation ceremony and the following June's ceremony. Once the student has graduated, the student will no longer be enrolled in TEC Connections Academy and will not have access to Connexus. Unofficial transcripts will be available to students via Connexus as long as the student is enrolled in TEC Connections Academy, and official transcripts will be available at any time by contacting the school. Early graduates will receive a school-issued diploma in June when spring graduates receive their diplomas. TECCA will hold June graduate diplomas until the first day of the following school year and Summer graduate diplomas until the end of the first semester for the following school year. After these dates TECCA is no longer responsible for on-going storage of student diplomas and can provide official transcripts as proof of graduation. TECCA does not mail diplomas outside of Massachusetts and any student requesting that their diploma be mailed must complete a waiver form indicating their understanding that diplomas may be lost in the mail and TECCA does not order a replacement diploma.

Area and Subject Requirements

Students must earn the following credits in the following areas and subjects in order to graduate:

Content Area	Credits Required	Required Courses
Language Arts	4	English 9, 10, 11*, 12* (* AP ELA courses can be substituted for these courses.)
Math	4	Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Math Elective
Science	3	Biology plus two (2) Science electives
Social Studies	4	US History II, World History, American Government, Social Studies Elective
Physical Education	1	Personal Fitness, Physical Education
Health	1	Health Fitness and Nutrition A/B
Fine Art	1	Any two: Digital Photo, Art History A/B, HS Digital Arts, Living Music I/II, Foundations of Art, Art and World Culture, Drawing, Intro to Graphic Design, Acting, Intro to Theatre

Foreign Language	2	Choose only 1: Spanish, French, German, Sign Language, Japanese
Electives	4	Courses of student's choosing

Students must earn the following credits in the following areas and subjects in order to graduate Beginning with the class of 2023:

Content Area	Credits Required	Required Courses
Language Arts	4	English 9, 10, 11*, 12* (* AP ELA courses can be substituted for these courses.)
Math	4	Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Math Elective
Science	3	Biology plus two (2) Science electives
Social Studies	4	US History II, World History, American Government, Social Studies Elective
Physical Education	1	Personal Fitness, Physical Education
Health	1	Health Fitness and Nutrition A/B
Fine Art	1	Any two: Digital Photo, Art History A/B, HS Digital Arts, Living Music I/II Foundations of Art, Art and World Culture, Acting, Intro to Theatre
Foreign Language	2	Choose only 1: Spanish, French, German, Sign Language, Japanese
Career/College Prep	2	Freshman Success (9th grade) Career Exploration/Career Tech Course (10th grade) College Prep w SAT or Internship/Work-study (11th) Senior Success (12th)
Electives	2	Courses of student's choosing

Students must earn the following credits in the following areas and subjects in order to graduate, beginning with the class of 2025:

Content Area	Credits Required	Required Courses
Language Arts	4	English 9, 10, 11*, 12* (* AP ELA courses can be substituted for these courses.)
Math	4	Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Math Elective
Science	3	Biology plus two (2) Science electives
Social Studies	4	US History I, World History, US History II, Social Studies Elective
Physical Education	1	Personal Fitness, Physical Education
Health	1	Health Fitness and Nutrition A/B

Fine Art	1	Any two: Digital Photo, Art History A/B, HS Digital Arts, Living Music I/II Foundations of Art, Art and World Culture, Acting, Intro to Theatre
Foreign Language	2	Choose only 1: Spanish, French, German, Sign Language, Japanese
Career/College Prep	2	Freshman Success (9th grade) Career Exploration/Career Tech Course (10th grade) College Prep w SAT or Internship/Work-study/Career Tech Course (11th) Senior Success (12th)
Electives	2	Courses of student's choosing

Course Levels

Foundations: These courses are not applicable to any student who wants to apply to college or NCAA eligibility after graduation. Students should speak with their school counselor before taking a foundations course. These courses move at a slightly slower pace than standard level courses.

Standard: These are standard college prep courses. There is no prerequisite grade to take these courses.

Honors: These courses cover the same content as standard courses but move slightly faster in pace and require additional writing assignments. Students should have a grade of B or higher to be eligible to take these courses.

Advanced Placement: Very rigorous and challenging courses designed for students who feel academically confident in a specific content area. Advanced Placement courses cover a large breadth of material and require a substantial amount of writing and assessments. Students should have a grade of a B+ or higher to be eligible to take these courses. Some colleges will award students college credit for AP courses taken in high school. These credits are awarded based on the student's score on the AP exam and credits awarded vary by college/university. In order to receive AP weighted credit on the transcript students must sit for the AP exam. *In addition to the above required credits, students are encouraged to complete as many of the following as possible:

- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Dual Enrollment courses taken for both high school and college credit
- Work-based learning
- Internships

TECCA uses a standard whereby one credit equals approximately 180 hours of instruction (sometimes referred to as Carnegie Units). Students are required to be enrolled in a minimum of four courses per semester in order to be considered full-time students, with the exception of graduating seniors or students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that designates a reduced course load.

High School Course Add/Drop

The Add Drop deadline for any course is the first week of enrollment in the fall and spring. Students are limited to three changes during any given school year.

Students may remove courses after the add/drop period is complete with permission from their school counselor. Courses removed from a student's schedule after the add drop date will have either a Withdrawal Pass or Withdrawal Fail on their transcript.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility

In order to be eligible for National College Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarships, students must meet certain academic and other requirements, including but not limited to taking NCAA-approved high school courses. Many of TECCA's core and elective courses are NCAA-approved; however, students interested in NCAA scholarships should contact their school counselor to determine an appropriate course schedule that will help them meet NCAA requirements. Students should also visit the NCAA Eligibility Center for more information. Students pursuing NCAA Eligibility may not be individually "skipped ahead" in any course.

National Honor Society

In order to be eligible to apply for TECCA's National Honor Society students must meet the following requirements:

- Enrolled in grade 10 or above.
- In good academic standing
- Have attended TECCA for at least one semester
- Have a cumulative GPA of (3.3 or higher)
- Have no documentation of disciplinary action related to character, scholarship or leadership

*Any NHS eligible student meeting the requirements above will be notified via webmail of their eligibility and may choose to apply at that time. The application period is 2 weeks, and there are no extensions. Students interested in the NHS should contact the NHS Faculty Advisor. Membership in the NHS is an honor bestowed upon a student, not a right.

Grades and Grade Point Average

Students are awarded credit only for courses in which they have earned a grade of D- (60%) or higher. This applies both to courses taken at TECCA and at other schools. Courses required for

graduation must be retaken by the student if a passing score of 60% or higher is not earned, and re-taking such courses may delay the student's graduation. The school's grading scale is below.

Semester and year-end GPA calculations will follow a four-point scale (below). Grade point averages will only include graded courses; pass/fail courses will not be averaged into a student's GPA. Grades for Honors courses are weighted with one-half (0.5) extra grade point. Grades for Advanced Placement (AP) courses are weighted with one (1) extra grade point.

Grade	Grade %	Passing?	Non Weighted	Weighted (Honors)	Weighted (AP)
A+	97 - 100	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A	93-96	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A-	90-92	Yes	3.67	4.17	4.67
B+	87-89	Yes	3.33	3.83	4.33
B	83-86	Yes	3.00	3.5	4.00
B-	80-82	Yes	2.67	3.17	3.67
C+	77-79	Yes	2.33	2.83	3.33
C	73-76	Yes	2.00	2.50	3.00
C-	70-72	Yes	1.67	2.17	2.67
D+	67-69	Yes	1.33	1.83	2.33
D	63-66	Yes	1.00	1.50	2.00
D-	60-62	Yes	0.67	1.17	1.67
F	0-59	No	0.00	0.00	0.00

Growth Points Program

Students enrolled at TECCA for the full academic year who fail a first semester core-academic course with a score of 45-59 are eligible to participate in the Growth Points Program. During their second semester course, students in the Growth Points Program will have opportunities to complete certain tasks which allow them to earn points toward their first semester grade. Students who successfully complete the Growth Points Program will earn enough points to

bring their first semester grade to 60%.

Growth Points activities will vary by course and teacher discretion but some examples of these activities include, but are not limited to:

- Attending teacher office hours for extra help
- Completing a study guide
- Completing an extra credit writing assignment
- Reading a novel and completing a book report
- Retaking an exam or redoing a project

If students complete the Growth Points Program, and successfully complete their second semester course with a passing grade, they will earn a full credit for the year.

Class Rank

TECCA does not calculate a class rank.

Grade Point Average

Two cumulative grade point averages (GPA) are calculated to the hundredth of a point. A weighted, and an unweighted grade point average, are calculated according to the table described above. The weighted GPA is what is reported to outside educational institutions, and what appears on a student's transcript. Both GPA's are available for viewing in the student's Data view.

Release of High School Educational Records

TECCA will provide educational records, including official high school transcripts, test scores, and letters of recommendation to third parties, such as post-secondary institutions, scholarship committees, and/or potential employers, only with prior written approval from the student's Caretaker or from the student if he or she is aged 18 or older or an emancipated minor.

In order to ensure that application deadlines are successfully met, we require advance notice of at least 10 working days for requests to provide educational records to students, Caretakers, and/or third parties. We require a 30 day notice for letters of recommendation.

Requests for records should be made using the Authorization for Release of High School Records and Letter of Recommendation form available in the Virtual Library under Forms, Colleges and Careers.

Prerequisites and Sequencing

Students must meet all course prerequisite requirements prior to registering in them. Prerequisites are listed by each course overview in the course catalog. Semester “A” courses are only offered in the fall and semester “B” courses are only offered in the spring. The Course Recommendation Process (described in December/January) articulates the course/teacher recommendation and override process.

Transcripts

Students will be able to access ongoing information about their courses through their online grade books within Connexus. To request an official copy of a transcript, families must complete the Authorization for Release of High School Records and Letter of Recommendation form (located in the Virtual Library) and submit it to the school counselor for approval and processing. Official transcripts are generated at the school. These have official school signatures, raised seals, and are sent in a sealed envelope. Caretakers will be able to view a copy of the transcript through the Connexus.

Credit from Other Schools

As part of the enrollment process, families submit their students’ most recent report cards and/or transcripts. Counselors analyze previously earned credits and determine how credits will transfer to TECCA. The school counselor may require complete unofficial transcripts or complete end-of-year report cards before approving a student’s grade level and course selection. Official transcripts are required within the first 30 days of school for final credit transfer approval and for final course approval. Upon graduation or withdrawal, the official TECCA transcript will display both the credits earned at TECCA, as well as any transfer credits.

Credit for coursework completed in a non-standard school program:

Students may request to receive credit for courses completed in previous educational settings other than fully accredited schools, including home school, non-accredited public, private, alternative, or international schools.

There are two options for requesting and being granted credit by TECCA for coursework completed in a non-standard school program:

1. **Assessment:** the student takes and achieves a passing grade (D-) on the Connections Academy exam(s) associated with the course. This may be the midterm and final exam or other proficiency exam as determined by the content area teacher. Alternatively, the student may take a state-approved standardized test. If the student achieves a score of “Proficient” or higher he or she will be granted credit for that course. The test(s) must be taken in a school-approved proctored setting.
2. **Portfolio and Competency:** The student submits a portfolio documenting coursework, which may include:

- Samples of prior work
- List of texts used in prior courses
- Artwork
- Writing samples
- Report card from prior school
- Student interview
- Other materials as requested by the school counselor

The portfolio will be reviewed by each content area teacher. The content area teachers will make final decisions about credit(s) to be granted for the student's prior coursework. The student must also document the number of hours per week, and overall hours that were spent on this course.

For example, a student who shows sufficient evidence of having successfully completed Algebra I, Geometry, English 9 and 10, Earth Science, Biology, U.S. History, Government, and French I and II, will be granted credit by each content area teacher for each of the courses documented, and will be placed in Connections Academy at the grade level appropriate for the number of credits granted.

The school counselor and/or principal may review the student's portfolio along with the content area teachers, but the content area teachers will be responsible for determining if the student is indeed proficient, and may require a competency test based on Massachusetts State Standards in the specific subject to determine whether or not credit is to be granted.

Students may use a combination of the above-listed methods for requesting credit. For example, a student may choose option #1 for mathematics and science courses, and #2 for humanities courses and foreign language. Credits for courses completed in a non-standard school program are granted as described above, but no grades are assigned. Students receiving credit will be given a grade of "Pass," which is not included in the calculation of the student's GPA. These credits are not entered into the student's records until the student has completed a full semester in Connections Academy. The transcript will reflect these credits as "pass" or "fail."

High School Courses taken in Middle School

Middle school students who take high school courses will not receive high school credit or satisfy any high school graduation requirements.

Credit for College Courses: Dual Enrollment

Families must consult with the school counselor for permission to earn high school credit for college courses taken while the student is still enrolled in TECCA. Students wishing to earn high school credit for college courses must have written approval of the school counselor in advance of enrolling in the college course. Students may take up to two core academic courses

per semester in a dual enrollment setting.

Dual enrollment college courses will equate to 0.5 - 1 credit at TECCA based on the credits awarded by the college and duration of the course. In order to receive high school credit for a college course, the student must pass the course with a grade of D- or higher. College credits and letter grades from dual enrollment courses will appear on the TEC Connections Academy transcript.

Work and Independent Study

Students at the high school level may opt to pursue high school credit through work study, internship, or independent study. All work studies, internships, and independent studies must be approved by the student's school counselor and school administration prior to participating in the work, internship or independent study. Students must complete the work/Independent study application in order to be considered. A full credit work/independent study must have 180 hours of participation. A half credit work or independent study must have 90 hours of participation. Students pursuing a work or independent study must have an unbiased supervisor monitoring them. Examples of acceptable supervisors would be a TECCA teacher, a tutor or outside teacher, boss, or direct supervisor.

Credit for Other Experiences

Many students are involved in activities outside their school experiences, such as: music, dance, and art lessons, foreign language instruction, and participation on athletic teams. While TECCA recognizes the value of these activities, they cannot be used to earn high school credit unless granted approval by school administration prior to engaging in the activity.

Applications to Private or Vocational High Schools

Students in grades 8-12 wishing to apply to private or vocational high schools should make an appointment to meet with their school counselor well in advance of application deadlines to discuss this. The school counselor will assist the student in completing any necessary forms and recommendations required to support the student's application. Applications to these schools including student recommendations are not considered part of the academic record and are not maintained by TECCA.

Attending Field Trips and other School-Sponsored Events

Field Trips

Field trips and other school-sponsored events can be a valuable supplement to a student's

educational experience. Any student wishing to attend a field trip or other school-sponsored event must submit a properly completed and signed PERMISSION FORM as well as a CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM. All students attending school field trips and events must be accompanied by an adult over the age of 18 unless they have permission to drive themselves or otherwise indicated. All forms pertaining to field trips and other school-sanctioned events can be found in the Virtual Library. It is imperative the school be kept up to date regarding students' allergies and/or other medical conditions when attending such events.

Students Traveling Independently to Sponsored Events

First and foremost, we highly recommend to parents/legal guardians that students not be permitted to drive unaccompanied to TECCA sanctioned events. Preferred options include having parents, legal guardians or designated adults drive and supervise students, or having students use public transportation options.

In order to be able to drive/travel unaccompanied to a TECCA supervised events such as MCAS testing, Prom, or Graduation, students must meet the following guidelines:

1. Must possess a valid driver's license (to drive oneself)
2. Signed permission from their caretaker
3. Must have access to a currently registered, inspected, and insured vehicle
4. Must be a student in good standing, with good attendance, and with no disciplinary actions noted in the student's file
5. Obtain school permission to drive unaccompanied to Events

All students (and guests) are subject to TECCA's Student Handbook, Code of Conduct, and to follow the rules, regulations, and laws that govern student behavior. Administration may search, when reasonable suspicion exists, students' personal belongings, and/or the vehicle they traveled in, to ascertain a student's safety and well-being.

Students MAY be turned away at school events if the above criteria are not followed. In addition, it is the responsibility of the student who attends an Event without a parent, legal guardian, or designated adult to do the following:

- Obey all time schedules
- Obey all school rules including maintaining acceptable attendance and disciplinary standards.
- Adhere to school rules and procedures for Events.

*If a student arrives late, privileges may be revoked. Under no circumstances shall students drive other students to an Event without parent and administrative approval. If a student nevertheless permits another student or students to ride with him/her, Connections Academy shall not be liable for any injuries or damage to any parties. The student, the student's parent/legal guardian, and/or any insurance maintained by the parent/legal

guardian and/or the student, shall be responsible for any and all injuries and/or any damage that may occur.

Discipline and Due Process

Overview

All students enrolled in TECCA are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the school, and Caretakers are expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. Student codes of conduct are set forth in this Supplement. School students are also guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Sections 37H, 37H1/2 and 37H3/4, and 603 CMR 53.00. At all times, the school administrator may exercise discretion and judgment when considering disposition of discipline to students.

Discipline Measures

TECCA exercises a progressive discipline model to support a student's awareness, understanding, and ultimate correction of negative behaviors. The common progression in this model is: 1) Warning; 2) Detention, 3) Conference with a Teacher/Administrator; 4) In-School Suspension; 5) Out-of- School Suspension; and for some offenses, 6) Expulsion.

Each level has associated conduct breach definitions and corresponding disciplinary actions that may occur. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, discipline may not always take the above listed progression. School administration retains the right to skip steps in the progression. The issuance of a Warning and/or the holding of a Teacher/Administrator Conference is documented in writing, becomes part of the student's internal record, but is NOT reported to outside educational agencies. Warnings are issued when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct, but not as serious as those listed under the detention, suspension, and/or expulsion categories in this Supplement.

*Students are expected to use school appropriate language when using any school channels of communication including webmail, phone calls, texting and within live lesson with their teachers and their peers. Parents should take care to monitor their students' Connexus use and behavior in Live Lesson.

Detention: Should a student continue to exhibit the same behavior(s) that resulted in a warning, the student may be assigned a detention This is a serious consequence in which the student is required to log in to a Teacher's or Administrator's LiveLesson Room for a designated period of time. During that time, the student must always be present (responding to questions/inquiries within a 10-minute period of time). The student may do classwork, receive extra help from teachers, and/or research strategies to assist the student in remediating the negative behaviors. Failure to report to the detention, and/or failure to be responsive while in the detention Room will result in further disciplinary measures. Note: The assigning of a detention is provided in writing, becomes part of the student's internal record, but is NOT reported to outside educational agencies.

In-School Suspension: Should a student continue to exhibit the same behavior(s) that resulted in a Conference with an Administrator and/or detention, the student will be assigned a period of time of In- School Suspension. This is a serious consequence in which the student is required to log in to the Administrator’s LiveLesson Room for a designated period of time. During that time, the student must always be present (responding to questions/inquiries within a 10- minute period of time). The student may do classwork, receive extra help from teachers, and/or research strategies to assist the student in remediating the negative behaviors. Failure to report to the In-School Suspension Room, and/or failure to be responsive while in the In-School Suspension Room could result in an Out-of-School Suspension. Note: The assigning of In-School Suspension becomes part of the student’s internal record, but is NOT reported to outside educational agencies.

For an in-school suspension, the principal or designee shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally as soon as possible of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal or designee shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such a meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible.

The principal or designee shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal, if such a meeting has not already occurred. The principal or designee shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by Connexus.

Out-of-School Suspension: Is defined as any time a student is temporarily removed from access to the Educational Management System (Connexus) and/or a school-sponsored program or activity (“locked out”). All student “Lockouts” are considered out-of-school suspensions. A suspension will become part of a student’s permanent record, and reported to outside educational agencies upon request.

During a period of suspension as defined by the school principal, a student’s permission to log on to their account. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or all of Connexus is revoked. In such cases, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to Connexus through their account and obtaining the student’s assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension but may only access the recorded LiveLessons during that period of time.

Expulsion: When a student is expelled, he or she is separated from the school for over ninety (90) days, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion may include, but are not limited to, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia, or assault of staff.

Furthermore, if a student is charged with a felony or poses a serious threat to the school community, TECCA will take immediate action to comply with Massachusetts law regarding suspension and/or expulsion of such student. Suspensions or expulsions for children identified as special education or eligible under Section 504 follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

Violations that may lead to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct:

- Missed Meeting Obligation: Any occasion where a student does not attend an assigned meeting; appointment; detention; Saturday School; regularly scheduled homeroom check-in; in-school suspension
- Cheating on tests or daily work: A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another's work, and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- Plagiarism: A student's use of another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying-and-pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.
- Unexcused absence: An unexcused absence is the absence of a student due to truancy, illegal employment or parental neglect.
- Illegal absence: Illegal absences are unexcused absences by a student who is under the age of 18 who are absent from school due to avoidable absences, parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations, and truancy.
- Abusive conduct: A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.
- Bullying: Please see the definition in the handbook.
- Harassment: Please see the definition earlier in the handbook.
- Vandalism: A Student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances, the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agencies.
- Theft and robbery: A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The

threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances, the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.

- Sexual harassment: A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.
- Violation of acceptable use policy: Students who violate the acceptable use policy in one form or another are open to disciplinary action including suspension. This would include signing on as Caretakers.
- Disruption of the Schoolhouse: As TECCA maintains a top priority of ensuring a safe learning environment for all students, any student who acts in such a manner as to cause other students' learning to be negatively affected may be found to be a disruption to the schoolhouse and thus may be subject to discipline. This could involve inappropriate behavior, language, posts/behavior in a LiveLesson session and/or breakout room, discussion posts with a teacher, or other acts deemed and referred to a school administrator.
- Skipping School: Although TECCA offers our families and students a flexible schooling experience, there are some activities and events that are considered to be "mandatory," where attendance and participation are required. Such events include participation on the MCAS assessment and the expectation that students regularly attend all mutually agreed upon scheduled appointments. Students who do not participate in the MCAS assessment or those who do not regularly attend their scheduled appointments will be considered as "skipping school," and will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Academic Integrity in a Virtual Setting

In a virtual learning environment, maintaining the highest degree of academic integrity, is of the utmost importance. Because students are taking assessments and submitting work not under the direct supervision of their teacher, students and caretakers/learning coaches should be hypersensitive to ensure the student is submitting their own work, expressing their own original ideas, and not utilizing unauthorized supports when producing and submitting answers.

Students in all grade levels (K through 12) and their Caretakers are required to review the Honor Code at the beginning of each school year and indicate their agreement to abide by it. Teachers will discuss the Honor Code and its meaning with their students and the students' Caretaker(s) at the beginning of the year. It is expected that all students will adhere to the Honor Code throughout the year and all schoolwork submitted to meet course or class requirements represents the original work of the student. In addition, students are expected to be proactive in ensuring they are adhering to the principles of academic honesty by: completing, and reviewing as needed, the Academic Honesty section of their Orientation agreeing to, and referring to as needed, the Connections Academy Honor Code using tools provided in Connexus to 'self-check' for academic honesty (e.g. plagiarism checking software), in accordance with school policy. Any form of academic dishonesty may lead to disciplinary action.

What is plagiarism?

Duke University's definition of plagiarism:

"Plagiarism occurs when a student, with intent to deceive or with reckless disregard for proper scholarly procedures, presents any information, ideas or phrasing of another as if they were his/her own and/or does not

give appropriate credit to the original source. Proper scholarly procedures require that all quoted material be identified by quotation marks or indentation on the page, and the source of information and ideas, if from another, must be identified and be attributed to that source. Students are responsible for learning proper scholarly procedures."

(Duke University, "Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism,"

<http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/>)

Academic dishonesty in an online environment includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting work of any kind that is not their own work.
- Plagiarize in any work (written, multimedia, oral, creative, etc.). If work content, other than commonly known facts, is not properly cited, attributed, or credited, the work may be determined to be plagiarism.
- Soliciting answers or post assessments, assignments, answers to assessments or assignments, or any other Connections Academy curricular materials on any media including social media or social sharing websites that can be seen by other students or other third parties, unless specifically instructed do so as part of the curriculum (e.g. a discussion assessment).
- Copying work from another student
- Copying work from an outside source when individual work is required, even with citation
- Purchasing a pre-written paper
- Letting someone else write a paper for you
- Paying someone else to write a paper for you
- Using information from online information services without proper citation
- Using a service that does the critical work for a student, including use of translation services in world language classes
- Presenting a paper or other work that is made up entirely, or almost entirely, of another's work, even if appropriately cited.
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on assessments.
- Learning Coaches, tutor, friend, parent, or anyone giving assistance on assessments.
- Presenting any forged document or signature to the school.
- Learning Coaches presenting any forged document or signature to the school.

Completing School Assessments

When completing assessments on the computer or on paper, students and Learning Coaches should follow these simple guidelines to ensure that assessments are meaningful, worthwhile,

and completed in accordance with the principles of academic honesty:

- Students should complete all assessments independently, and without assistance from their Learning Coach, any other persons, or any external resources. If any support is required of the Learning Coach, the assessment instructions will clearly indicate this.
- Assessments are “closed-book” unless otherwise specified by the course and/or teacher. They should be completed without the support of any outside resources such as textbooks, workbooks, lesson plans, dictionaries, the internet, or the student’s Learning Coach or any other individuals. In the rare instances where assessments are not closed-book, the instructions will clearly specify that the student may use supporting materials. If you have any questions about what may or may not be appropriate for use during an assessment, contact your teacher.
- Skills Checks (K-5) should be completed by the Learning Coach. These short assessments provide an opportunity for the Learning Coach to share with the teacher his/ her observations about the student’s progress.
- Skills Checks (6-12) should be completed by the student. These short assessments are used to assess the student’s readiness for the lesson.

It is never appropriate for students or Learning Coaches to share with anyone, in any format, the contents of any Connections Academy assessments. Some interventions exercised as appropriate in the academic integrity process to support a clear understanding of academic integrity and meet student needs are as follows:

- School Honor Code- signed by students and caretakers
- Academic integrity workshops
- Student Instructional Support Plans
- Academic integrity reflections
- Teacher meetings
- Meetings with administration

Possible consequences for violating the academic integrity policy are as follows:

- Warning
- Teacher Detention
- Office Detention
- In-School-Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Note on your permanent record that will go to colleges
- Removal from National Honors Society and Student Council (if applicable)
- Prohibited from attending school events and/or activities
- Not passing a course
- Possible retention in grade level
- High School: Withdraw/Fail from a course and need to retake class for credit

NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate; The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations. All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

Any student suspended from school shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section. Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident,

determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and

- iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request. Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:
 - i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
 - ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
 - iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
 - iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
 - v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal. If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable, within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10

In-school suspension is defined as an alternative to short term suspension. The student is removed from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year.

A Principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures: The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable

efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H^{1/2}

The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses: Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of staff. A student may be subject to expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to levy a suspension rather than expulsion. A student expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent.

The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense.

Felony complaint or issuance of felony delinquency complaint Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the Principal if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student in writing of the charges, the reasons for the suspension (prior to such suspension taking effect), and the right to appeal. The Principal will also provide the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) the process for appealing the suspension to the

Superintendent. The request for appeal must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days. The hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the request. The suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing before the Superintendent. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Felony conviction or adjudication/admission in court of guilt for a felony or felony delinquency. The Principal may expel a student convicted of a felony, or has an adjudication or admission of guilt regarding a felony, if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for the proposed expulsion. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent, as well as the appeal process. The expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal the decision no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the expulsion. The Superintendent hearing shall be held with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Discipline for Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan

Suspension of Special Education Students

1. Students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and those whose program is described in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan of accommodations.
2. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of special needs students:
 - a. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days, or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern, are considered to represent a change in placement.
 - b. The IEP or 504 Plan for every special needs student will indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code or if the student's handicapping condition requires modification. Any modification will be described in the IEP or 504 Plan. The Principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education Office of the suspendable offense of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

c. When a suspension constitutes a change in placement of a student with special needs, the team will convene a meeting to review the IEP or 504 Plan, and all relevant information in the student's file, including teacher observations, information from the parent/guardian, and all formal evaluations that have already been completed, within 10 days of the decision to suspend, and determine the appropriateness of the student's placement or program, and whether the behavior is a manifestation of his or her disability. The team will consist of the Principal, the Director of Pupil Services, the parent/guardian, the Special Education Teacher, the Classroom Teacher, the School Nurse, and other members deemed relevant, (such as the school psychologist, parent/guardian invitees). The team will make a finding, a "Manifestation Determination", as to the relationship between the Student's misconduct and his/her handicapping condition.

If the team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities. The district must still offer services to enable the student to participate in the general education curriculum, and as appropriate, complete a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and behavioral intervention services and modifications to address the behavior so that it does not recur.

If the Team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, the team will complete an FBA and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already been done. The Team will then recommend to:

- 1) Design a modified program for the student, and/or;
- 2) Write an amendment to provide for the delivery of special education services during the suspension and any needed modification of the IEP or 504 Plan, relative to discipline code expectations.

d. Except when the student has been placed in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) in the following instances, the student returns to the original placement unless the parents/guardians and district agree otherwise, or the hearing officer orders a new placement.

Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES), as determined by the team, for up to 45 school days:

- 1) on its own authority if the behavior involves weapons, illegal drugs or another controlled substance, or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function, or considered case by case for unique circumstances; or
- 2) on the authority of a hearing officer. If the officer orders the alternative placement after the district provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others.

e. If the parent chooses to appeal or the school district requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the period for the disciplinary action whichever comes first, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

f. If, prior to the disciplinary action, a district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible.

The district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:

- 1) The parent/guardian had expressed concern in writing; or
- 2) The parent/guardian had requested an evaluation;
- 3) District staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel, specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

The district may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parents/guardians had not consented to evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

g. If the district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent/guardian requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district will conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.

h. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

Conduct, Due Process, Grievance, and Communication

Bullying and other forms of Prohibited Behavior

TECCA is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community. Harassment, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community or third party, whether by or toward any student, staff, Learning Coach, Caretaker, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, discrimination, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse; and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether or not the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected group, such as sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, age, religion, marital status, or disability.

The following definitions are intended to provide guidance in assessing whether a particular behavior is a prohibited behavior. They are not exhaustive in their scope and are not intended to replace the intuition of the individual. When in doubt as to whether or not a particular suspected behavior is a prohibited behavior, you are urged to rule on the side of caution and report your concerns to the appropriate authority, as provided for in this policy.

Discrimination: treating any student, staff, Learning Coach, Caretaker, or other third parties differently based on sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, age, religion, marital status, or disability.

Harassment: any intentional behavior or course of conduct (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) directed at a specific person or group of persons that causes substantial physical and/or emotional distress or harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive educational environment for the other person(s) and serves no legitimate purpose.

Bullying: the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying: bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Hazing: 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.

Intimidation: a course of behavior that instills fear or a sense of inadequacy.

Violence within a dating relationship: any behavior by a student exhibited towards that

student's dating partner that is an attempt to gain and/or maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, verbal, psychological, and/or mental abuse.

Sexting: knowingly using a computer, or any other device capable of electronic data transmission or distribution, to transmit or distribute to another minor any photograph or video which depicts nudity and is harmful to minors. Knowingly possessing a photograph or video that was transmitted or distributed by another minor as described above.

Connexus Communication: Students are expected to communicate respectfully using Webmail, in the LiveLesson Room (and Chat Pods) and in all school-related communications.

The school Administration (and School Board, if applicable) will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which (i) cause, threaten to cause, or, an objective and reasoned third-party would find was intended to cause, bodily harm or personal degradation, or (ii) creates, or an objective and reasoned third-party would determine was intended to create, an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for any student, staff member, member of the administration, parent or guardian, or other third-party.

This policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards; and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on school property. This policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources. This policy also applies at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school, if the actions create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Any person who believes that student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation to the school counselor, teacher, or Administrator.

The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate school administrator or Board official (if applicable). Complaints about prohibited behavior against the school principal should be filed with the Connections Academy School Director or the Vice President of Schools, or the Board President (if applicable). Complaints about prohibited behavior against the Connections Academy School Director or the Vice President of Schools should be filed with either the Connections Academy Executive Vice President or the Board President (if applicable).

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be prohibited behavior. Reports may be made to those identified above. If a student or other individual believes there has been prohibited behavior, he/she should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action. Any teacher, school administrator, or school staff member who does not timely make a written report of an incident of prohibited behavior shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process (found in the TECCA Employee Handbook). Reports of prohibited conduct may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

All complaints about prohibited behavior shall be kept confidential and be promptly investigated. Investigations will be completed no later than thirty (30) work days from the date of complaint or report, unless impracticable. The investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. The investigation will also include an interview with the person alleged to have committed the prohibited conduct. Each party will have the opportunity to provide evidence and witnesses. During the pendency of the investigation, the principal will put into place interim safety measures to ensure the safety of the alleged victim.

The school principal or appropriate administrator shall prepare a written report of the investigation upon completion. Such a report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether any prohibited behavior(s) were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action, shall be in the report. Where appropriate, consistent with state and federal confidentiality requirements, written witness statements shall be attached to the report. When the target of the prohibited behavior is a student, the school shall provide that student with a written copy of the rights, protections, and support services available to him/her. If there is any evidence that the student has experienced physical harm as a result of the prohibited behavior, the school shall promptly communicate that information to the appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, emergency personnel and /or law enforcement.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process and to restore safety to the victim. This may include up to suspension for students; up to discharge for employees; exclusion for Caretakers, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any official position and/or a request for a Board member(s) to resign. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.

For complaints of discrimination or harassment, the parents of the alleged victim and the alleged aggressor will be notified of the outcome of the investigations in writing,

regardless of the outcome. The report shall include:

- A statement of the allegations investigated;
- A summary of the steps taken to investigate the allegations;
- The findings of fact based on a preponderance of the evidence gathered;
- TECCA's conclusion of whether discrimination or harassment did or did not occur;
- The disposition of the complaint;
- The rationale for the disposition of the complaint; and
- If TECCA concluded discrimination or harassment occurred, a description of TECCA's response.

For all other prohibited conduct, when the prohibited conduct is substantiated or when appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s) Caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, what action has been taken. The school principal or designee will also inform the parents or guardians of the victim about the department's problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. In providing such notification care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying, and/or dating violence. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior will not be tolerated, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of school policy, and suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as prohibited behavior. Making intentionally false reports about prohibited behavior will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This policy shall not be interpreted as infringing upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by State or Federal law). If a student is charged with a felony or poses a serious threat to the school community, TECCA will take immediate action to comply with Massachusetts law regarding suspension and/or expulsion of such student.

TECCA recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics. TECCA will provide instruction to support these vulnerable students and provide them with the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment.

Complaints

Students and/or their Caretakers may file written reports regarding any suspected prohibited behavior by completing the Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form, found in the Forms section of the Virtual Library, and sending this to the school. Such reports should be reasonably specific including the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the school principal for review, investigation, and action.

Students and/or their Caretakers may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing by completing the Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form, found in the Forms section of the Virtual Library. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the building principal for review, investigation, and appropriate action.

In addition to the remedies at TECCA, an individual may file a formal complaint with the government agency or agencies set forth below. Using TECCA's complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim. If you believe you have been subjected to harassment or discrimination, you may file a formal complaint with:

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Quality
Assurance Services
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone: (781) 338-3700
FAX: (781) 338-3710
Email:compliance@doe.mass.edu

The time period for filing a claim is one year from the action.

United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") 5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109
Phone: (617) 289-0111

The time period for filing a claim with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights is 180 days.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The School will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform to any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Caretaker Responsibility and Non Compliance

The school is committed to ensuring parent satisfaction, and takes its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to the student very seriously. These school responsibilities are set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) which articulates expectations regarding contacting the family regularly, delivering educational materials and equipment, and providing accessible support.

The school will also ensure the family and student adhere to their responsibilities stated in the PLCA, and when necessary, will discipline, invoice, refer to collections, or take legal action against the family for a breach of the agreement or a school policy. Reasons for such disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, failure to regularly communicate with the school through Connexus, telephone, WebMail, or other means of communication (including times where Caretaker and/or Learning Coach does not have access to Connexus), failure to attend mandatory state testing, failure to provide a Commonwealth of Massachusetts official immunization form, failure to return materials, or disputing the materials and equipment policy such as invoices for computer damage.

If a Caretaker has concerns with the school's action or performance on any of the above-defined school responsibilities or disciplinary actions, he or she has the following remedies available:

Addressing Issues - For routine issues or for a first attempt at redress, contact the Main Office at (774) 315-5123.

For more serious issues and/or to address lack of resolution of the issue at a lower level, a detailed grievance procedure has been outlined above. All grievance proceedings will be conducted in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts. If a hearing is required for grievance proceedings, the parties will be provided with all due process procedures as required by law.

Bystanders

Bullying involves not only those who are bullies and their targets/victims, but also the bystanders who are witnesses. TECCA recognizes that bystanders may be negatively affected by prohibited conduct, but that they also have the potential to play a positive role in

responding to it.

Bystanders may be negatively affected in the following or other ways:

- Be afraid of being associated with the victim for fear of becoming a target of the prohibited conduct themselves
- Feel discomfort or fear at witnessing prohibited conduct
- Feel guilt, helplessness, or loss of control for not standing up to the aggressor
- Be drawn into the prohibited conduct by group pressure
- Or feel unsafe in the situation.

Conversely, bystanders may be able to help victims by doing the following:

- Ask for help from a trusted adult such as a teacher, principal, or other school official
- Help the person being targeted
- Create a distraction to focus attention on something else
- Try helping the person who is being targeted leave the scene by telling him/her that you need them to play a game or that an adult needs to see them
- Don't give prohibited behavior an audience as aggressors are often encouraged by the attention they receive, so don't support them by watching

Set an example

- Do not target others
- Do not encourage prohibited conduct
- Create posters against prohibited conduct
- Join an anti-bullying club
- Tell an aggressor that his/her actions are not funny
- Be a friend to the victim
- Spend time with the victim
- Talk to them; listen to them
- Tell them you think the prohibited conduct is bad
- Tell them to talk to a trusted adult for help.

TECCA's expectation is that student bystanders will report prohibited conduct to a school official or other appropriate adult in a timely manner. If it comes to the attention of the school leadership or staff that a student bystander did not report prohibited conduct, the school will initiate a conversation with the student regarding the school's expectations for bystanders. Second and subsequent occurrences of non-reporting may subject the student to more serious disciplinary action.

Additionally, if it is determined by the school leadership that a student who was initially a bystander became actively involved in the prohibited conduct, s/he may be subject to disciplinary action as described in 9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students in this Supplement.

Technology Provided by TECCA

Please consult the Hardware and Connectivity section of the TECCA homepage to find out what technology is provided by your school.

Use of Personal Equipment and Software

Families should review the Technology section of the School Handbook or school website to ensure their equipment meets the minimum system requirements.

Use of the Internet and Internet Subsidy

Each family is eligible to request subsidy for their Internet use. Families must meet the USDA federal income eligibility guidelines and request an internet subsidy to qualify. The subsidy is awarded on a per family basis, not a per student basis, and is paid via a debit card. The subsidy will be equal to

\$16.95 a month, but will be paid out three times during the year through a third party vendor contracted through Connections Education, LLC. Therefore, each debit card amount will be \$50.85. In order for the household to receive the internet subsidy, the following information is provided to the third party vendor contracted to issue the debit cards: name of individual to whom subsidy is being made; mailing address of person to whom subsidy is being made. No other information will be provided to such third party vendor. The debit cards will be sent according to the approximate schedule listed below.

Debit Card Schedule: Payments are based upon the household enrollment date. If the family starts school after the first day of any of the three payment periods then the payments are prorated. Families are not reimbursed for the summer months.

Internet Safety Policy

It is the policy of TECCA to:

1. Prevent user access to its computer network to, or transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications
2. Prevent unauthorized access to and other unlawful online activity related to inappropriate material via the Internet
3. Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personally identifiable information;
4. Comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA") (Pub. L. No.106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h)).

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be made

available for all computers accessible by students and placed on the computers located at the school site locations. As required by CIPA, this blocking technology is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or any other material deemed to be harmful to minors.

Technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

To the extent practical, the school takes steps to promote the safety and security of users of Connexus when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and any other form of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking' and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

To the extent practical, the school, through its handbook, the Connexus Terms of Use and its staff, is committed to educating, supervising and monitoring the appropriate usage of Connexus and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, CIPA, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

The school will provide age-appropriate training for students and parents who use Connection Academy's Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote Connection Academy's commitment to the standards and acceptable use of Internet services, as set forth in the school's handbook and the Connexus Terms of Use; and student safety with regard to safety on the Internet; appropriate behavior while online, on social networking websites, and in chat rooms; and cyber bullying awareness and response.

Hazing – M.G.L C. 269 S. 17, 18, & 19 Section 17

Whoever is a principal organizer or participator in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment in the house of correction for not more than one hundred days, or by 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 and 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 provision of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to prosecution under this action.

Section 18

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing 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 himself/herself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as is reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars.

Section 19

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.

Tobacco

TECCA forbids possession of tobacco which includes cigarettes, Vaping products, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, or any other form of nicotine delivery for those persons under the age of 18. Tobacco is prohibited within TECCA's grounds, at TECCA events, TECCA facilities or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel as required by M.G.L. c. 71.37H.1024140v.

Extensions, Retention, Promotion, and Achievement

K-12 Semester Deadline-Extension Policy

All students are expected to complete all work by 5:00pm on the final day of each semester. No extensions for work will be granted.

K-12 Portfolio Deadline Policy

All students are expected to stay current with lessons and assessments as populated on their planner.

Although our school is flexible, some aspects of our schooling experience do need to have deadlines to ensure that students are actively engaged and submitting work with integrity. Portfolios that are not submitted within four weeks of the original due date on the planner receive zero credit. Be sure to reach out to your content teachers for any questions about portfolios.

K-8 Promotion and Retention

All students at TECCA are expected to:

- 1) Attend and participate in Live Lessons, or watch recordings if unable to attend live
- 2) Complete lessons on their planner and related grade level work and demonstrate proficiency on Massachusetts curriculum standards
- 3) Participate in STAR360 benchmark testing at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year
- 4) Attend check in calls with homeroom teachers regularly

- 5) Meet with content teachers on a semi-regular basis
- 6) Meet attendance requirements

In addition to the expectations above, students should achieve an overall course average equal to or greater than 60% for Semester A and B combined in English, Math, and Science, respectively.

Content teachers and homeroom teachers will have regular conversations throughout the school year with learning coaches to discuss student progress toward grade level proficiency and provide recommendations to support student achievement.

Alert of Retention: K-8 students who are being retained will be alerted in writing and/or by phone by May 15 of the given school year.

Appeal: K-8 Caretakers have the opportunity to appeal the retention decision by sending a written request via webmail to the principal with the reason(s) for the appeal, who will make the final promotion/retention determination.

Honor Roll Criteria

Students at TECCA who meet the following criteria will earn a spot on the Honor Roll. Honor Roll certificates are distributed twice a year: once after the first semester ends and once after the second semester ends.

High Honors: Students must have an overall average of 95%, and no courses with a grade lower than a 90%

First Honors: Students must have an overall average of 90%, and no courses with a grade lower than an 85%

Second Honors: Students must have an overall average of 85%, and no courses with a grade lower than an 80%

Services for Special Populations

Enrollment Requirements and TECCA

The school is committed to ensuring parent satisfaction, and takes its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to the student very seriously. These school responsibilities are set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) which articulates expectations regarding contacting the family regularly, delivering educational materials and equipment, and providing accessible support. All special education services are provided virtually.

The school will also ensure the family and student adhere to their responsibilities stated in the PLCA, and when necessary, will discipline, invoice, refer to collections, or take legal action against the family for a breach of the agreement or a school policy. Reasons for such disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, failure to regularly communicate with the school through Connexus, telephone, WebMail, or other means of communication (including times where Caretaker and/or Learning Coach does not have access to Connexus), failure to attend mandatory state testing, failure to provide a Commonwealth of Massachusetts official immunization form, failure to return materials, or disputing the materials and equipment policy such as invoices for computer damage.

If a Caretaker has concerns with the school's action or performance on any of the above-defined school responsibilities or disciplinary actions, he or she has the following remedies available:

Addressing Issues - For routine issues or for a first attempt at redress, contact the Main Office at (774) 315-5123.

For more serious issues and/or to address lack of resolution of the issue at a lower level, a detailed grievance procedure has been outlined above. All grievance proceedings will be conducted in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts. If a hearing is required for grievance proceedings, the parties will be provided with all due process procedures as required by law.

At the time of enrollment, all Caretakers who indicate their student has special needs will be asked to submit a copy of the student's most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or most recent evaluations. It is important that the IEP is current and complete, and that any educational assessments and evaluation reports that support the IEP are also submitted.

All documents are reviewed by the Director of Special Education, and if necessary, a member of the special education staff contacts the family to discuss specific student needs or to clarify the information. A meeting will be convened within 30 school days of enrollment to discuss the presented IEP and how the "brick and mortar" IEP translates to a "virtual" IEP. As agreed upon by all stakeholders, it is mandatory for the student to attend all LiveLessons required to receive the special education services as outlined in the IEP. This includes both services within the general education setting as well as special education support LiveLessons. Failure to attend these LiveLessons will impact TECCA's ability to provide your student with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and will result in the need for TECCA to report the lack of FAPE to the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA). The student's annual review date and re-evaluation date are noted, and once enrollment is complete the team begins to schedule IEP meetings, as necessary.

Additionally, at the time of enrollment, any parent/caretaker who indicates a home language other than English on the Home Language Survey (HLS) will be asked to sit for a language screener to determine English proficiency and eligibility for English Language Learner (ELL) services.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, the special education team ensures that general education teachers have access to the student IEPs. The teachers are made aware of each student's special learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations.

For EL Students, the EL Coordinator will ensure that teachers have access to the students' ACCESS scores and English proficiency levels, as well as provide guidance on how to support ELs in the general education setting. ELs annual ACCESS test scores will be used to determine continued enrollment in EL Services.

Participating in Services

TECCA sometimes uses third party vendors to facilitate the completion of services. Appointments are made between the vendor and the family; once confirmed, TECCA considers that student's appointment to be a scheduled class period. Note that TECCA is financially responsible for both the service, and the fee associated with a "no-show." NOTE: Each vendor has its own cancellation policy AND contact number to report a cancellation. Families are responsible for contacting the provider in accordance with their Cancellation Policy. Failure to attend scheduled services may result in the need for TECCA to report the lack of FAPE to the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA). In addition, the Caretaker may be requested to attend a meeting with the Director of Special Education to discuss strategies to assist in improving meeting attendance.

Conducting IEP Meetings

The special education team plans for and schedules all annual reviews and other IEP-related meetings. Families are given the opportunity to meet on a date and time that is mutually convenient. Although typically held virtually in the LiveLesson Meeting Room with accompanying Conference Line, the IEP meetings occur in compliance with all state and federal laws. In person IEP meetings can be scheduled upon request.

Special Education Related Services

According to their IEPs, some students qualify to receive special education and related services. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. The IEP team ensures the service is provided in compliance with the IEP. The team locates and secures the provider and handles all contracting and financial issues, and coordinates the student's academic program. As agreed upon by all stakeholders, some services are provided to students in the LiveLesson Room. Any service that is scheduled "live" in the LiveLesson Room is mandatory for the student to attend in order for the student to receive the special education services as outlined

in the IEP. This includes both services within the general education setting as well as special education support LiveLessons. Failure to attend these LiveLessons will impact TECCA's ability to provide your student with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and will result in the need for TECCA to report the lack of FAPE to the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for special education assistance. The teacher may first help the Learning Coach implement a series of program accommodations or may refer the student to the school's Student Support Team (SST) who will support the student through a comprehensive Response to Intervention (RtI) Process. This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the special education team. If after all the recommended strategies fail or if it is believed at any time that the student requires special education assistance, the team (along with the Caretaker) will refer to the school's special education team. Any response to interventions will not be used to delay a special education evaluation. Once the team receives the referral they will begin the process of determining if the student is in need of a special education evaluation, an IEP, and ultimately special education services.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the "Act"), is a federal statute designed to prohibit discrimination and to ensure that students with significant impairments have educational opportunities and benefits comparable to those of their non-impaired peers. A "504-Eligible Student" is a student who either (a) has, (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Section 504 plans are written for students who are impaired as defined in § 504 of the Act, and who require accommodations, services, and modifications to their instructional program (which may include services and/or assistive technology) to receive a free appropriate public education.

Caretakers of students with Section 504 plans seeking to enroll in the school are asked to submit a copy of the Section 504 plan during the enrollment and academic placement process. When a student enters the school with a Section 504 plan developed by a prior school, the school will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with Section 504.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, the 504 Coordinator ensures that teachers have access to a student's 504 Plan. The teachers are made aware of each student's 504 Plan, and are given

guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations.

Students who have Section 504 plans will participate in the regular education environment, with the use of supplementary aides and services. The regular education teachers (with the support of the Section 504 coordinator and/or special education staff) will implement the provisions of Section 504 plans. A case manager will be assigned to notify teachers about the accommodations and to assist with and monitor implementation of the Section 504 plan. Teachers will also have access to information, such as to accommodations and modifications on their homepage.

504 Eligibility Review

The school will annually review students' 504 plans and continued eligibility every three years. For students who enter the School with an existing Section 504 plan, the Section 504 Coordinator will coordinate the review of the plan based on the following: when the plan was developed, the appropriateness of the plan for virtual schooling, changes to the student's impairment, etc.

Section 504 Accommodations

According to their Section 504 plans, some students qualify for accommodations and modifications to their educational program. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. The 504 Coordinator ensures the service is provided in compliance with the student's Section 504 plan.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for accommodations and modifications, supplemental aides and services as required under Section 504. The teacher may first help the Learning Coach implement a series of recommendations to support the student or may refer the student to the school's Response to Intervention Team. This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the 504 team. If after all the recommended strategies fail or if it is believed at any time that the student requires a 504 Plan, the team (along with the Caretaker) will refer to the school's 504 Coordinator. Any response to interventions will not be used to delay a 504 evaluation. Once the team receives the referral they will begin the process of determining if the student is in need of evaluations and a Section 504 plan.

Federal law requires TECCA to provide its students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. TECCA is committed to providing its students with equal access to its education program. We provide

students with accessibility through resources tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support.

If your student is in need of assistance in order to fully participate in TECCA's education program, please contact the school's special education or the school's 504 Coordinator. You can also obtain 24-hour technical support by calling the Accessibility Hotline at 888-639-5960.

TITLE IX THE FINAL RULE

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal funding. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) enforces Title IX and has created regulations relating to how schools are required to respond to reports of sexual harassment. The regulations are known as the *Final Rule*. The Title IX sexual harassment protections apply to Connections Academy schools that do or may receive Federal financial assistance.

Under the *Final Rule*, Connections Academy is required to promptly respond to and investigate every formal complaint of sexual harassment by a student. The *Final Rule* establishes an emphasis on restoring a student's access to the Connections Academy's education program and/or sanctioned events and activities using supportive measures. Additionally, the *Final Rule* places the burden of proof on the school and requires a strict adherence to due process measures.

Definitions

Actual Knowledge

Notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or any designated school official/employee with the authority to institute corrective measures. Under state law, school employees are mandatory reporters. In the K-12 environment any employee may receive notice of sexual harassment.

This standard is not met when the only person with actual knowledge is the respondent. Additionally, the ability or obligation to report sexual harassment or to inform a student how to make a report of sexual harassment, or having training on how to report sexual harassment does not qualify an individual to have the authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the school.

Complainant

An individual who has alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Formal Complaint

A document filed by the complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting an investigation of the alleged sexual harassment. A complainant must be an active student participating or attempting to participate in the education program provided by Connections Academy.

Respondent

An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment

Conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An employee of Connections Academy conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (quid pro quo).
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to a Connections Academy education program or sanctioned activity.
- Sexual assault as defined by 20 USC 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking as defined by 34 USC 12291(a)(10), (8), (30).

Supportive Measures

Non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, free of charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint, as well as, instances where no formal complaint has been filed.

Supportive measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy education programs and sanctioned events and activities. Such measures are designed to protect the safety of all parties, the education environment, and ultimately deter sexual harassment.

Supportive measures may include:

- Counseling
- Deadline extensions or other course related adjustments, including changes to class schedule
- Modification of class schedules
- Restricted contact between parties

Supportive measures provided to the complainant and/or respondent will remain confidential to the extent that confidentiality would not impair the ability of the school to provide such measures.

Effective implementation of supportive measures is the responsibility of the Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator

The employee designated by Connections Academy to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX responsibilities will be referred to as the Title IX Coordinator. In addition to students and current employees, the Title IX Coordinator's contact information must be provided to prospective employees, parents or legal guardians, and all unions (if applicable).

The name or title, office address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator shall be prominently posted on the school's website.

Any person, including a student's parent or guardian, may report sex discrimination and sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email at any time, including non-business hours.

Formal Complaint

A formal complaint of sexual harassment should be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by electronic mail, or by phone using the contact information provided below:

Current Designated Title IX Coordinator or Manager of Counseling

OBLTitleIXCoordinator@pearson.com

School Address: 141 Mansion Drive Suite 300 East Walpole, MA 02032 School Phone Number: (774) 315-5123

Initial Response

The school must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to a complainant and respondent. The grievance process outlined below is followed prior to imposing disciplinary sanctions or other actions outside supportive measures against a respondent.

The Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures and consider the complainant's wishes with respect to the use of such supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures regardless of filing a formal complaint, and explain the process for filing a complaint.

Anyone may report instances of sexual harassment or potential violations to the Title IX Coordinator; reports may be anonymous. However, formal complaints of sexual harassment can only be filed by the complainant or the Title IX Coordinator.

In instances where the respondent faces allegations of sexual harassment and is determined to be an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of a student or other individual, they may be removed upon completion of an individualized safety and risk assessment. If a student is removed under emergency conditions, instant notice will be provided, and the student will be

afforded the opportunity to respond to the emergency removal. An employee respondent may be placed on administrative leave during the grievance process.

Required Grievance Procedures

Formal Complaints

Connections Academy is required to follow the grievance process defined by *the Final Rule* before disciplinary measures, not to include supportive measures, against the respondent are made. The procedures include:

All parties will be treated equitably through the remediation process. Remedies under *the Final Rule* are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy's education program and sanctioned events and activities.

An objective and thorough investigation and evaluation of the relevant evidence will be reviewed. This includes both evidence that can establish guilt (inculpatory) and evidence that can exonerate guilt (exculpatory).

Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision makers, and any designee tasked to assist in the informal resolution process must be free of bias or conflicts of interest. Additionally, training must be completed on:

- the definition of sexual harassment;
- the scope of Connections Academy's education program or sanctioned events/activities;
- the process for investigation and grievance process including, hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes;
- how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at hand, conflicts of interest, and bias;
- any person identified as a decision maker must complete training on any technology used during any part of the grievance process, on issues of relevance of questions and evidence (including instances when questions and evidence arise that are not relevant regarding the complainant's sexual predisposition or previous sexual behaviors);
- any person identified as an investigator must complete training on issues of relevance to properly compose a report that summarizes the relevant evidence;
- all training materials must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote objective investigations and final disciplinary decisions (adjudications) of formal complaints of sexual harassment.

A presumption the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until the conclusion of the grievance process.

A reasonably prompt time frame for conclusion to the grievance process, filing and resolving appeals and informal resolutions processes, if offered. A temporary delay or the limited extension of time frames for good cause may be granted. In such instances, written notice

outlining the reason for the delay shall be sent to all parties. Examples of good cause are the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or to provide an accommodation of disabilities.

There will be a range of disciplinary sanctions and remedies that may be issued in the event responsibility of the respondent is determined.

The standard of evidence used may be the preponderance of evidence standard **or** the clear and convincing standard. The chosen standard must be used throughout the complaint process.

Include the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

List the range of supportive measures available to complainants and respondents.

Disallow the use of questions or evidence that seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless waived by the party holding such privilege.

Notice

If a formal complaint is made, written notice will be provided to all known parties. Included within the notice are the grievance process and the informal resolution process. Any details known at the time of report of sexual harassment may include the identities of the parties involved (if known), the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident (if known). The notice will include a statement acknowledging the respondent is presumed not responsible until the conclusion of the grievance process. The parties may have an advisor who may inspect and review evidence. Such an advisor may be an attorney, though the presence of an attorney is not required. All parties will be afforded enough time to prepare. Finally, the notice will include that knowingly making false statements is against the student and employee code of conduct.

If, during an investigation, Connections Academy decides to investigate allegations not included in the original notice, the school will provide subsequent notice to include the additional allegations to all known parties.

Dismissal

Under some circumstances, Connections Academy must dismiss a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

If the conduct did not occur while participating in the school's education program or sanctioned events or activities or did not occur in the United States, the complaint will be dismissed. However, the school may pursue action under the Code of Conduct Policy.

The school may dismiss the formal complaint if:

- a complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing wishing to withdraw the formal complaint and included allegations,
- the respondent is no longer enrolled, registered, or employed by Connections Academy, and
- specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering enough evidence to reach a determination regarding the formal complaint and/or allegations.

If conditions exist that require the school to dismiss the complaint, prompt written notice indicating a dismissal including any reason(s) must be sent to all parties.

Consolidation of Formal Complaints

Consolidation of formal complaints to allegations of sexual harassment may occur under the following conditions due to the same facts or circumstances:

- against more than one respondent
- by more than one complainant against one or more respondents
- by one party against the other party

Investigation

Under *the Final Rule*, the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence to make a determination as to responsibility of alleged sexual harassment falls to Connections Academy. Voluntary written consent must be obtained to use a party's physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other professional treatment records.

An equal opportunity to present witnesses and evidence will be provided to all parties. The ability of either party to discuss the allegations investigated or gathered and present evidence may not be restricted.

All parties will be provided the same opportunities to have others present at any grievance proceeding. If either or both parties are joined by an advisor, including an attorney, at a proceeding, Connections Academy may limit or restrict their participation.

Written notice of the date, time, location, participants and purpose of all hearings, investigations, or any related meetings will be provided to all parties. Such notice shall permit enough preparation time for all parties.

Equal opportunity to inspect and review all evidence regardless of intent to rely upon said evidence in reaching the final determination will be provided to all parties. Prior to the investigative report, an itemized evidence list subject to review will be sent to all parties, including advisors/attorneys if applicable, in electronic format or hard copy. The parties will have ten (10) days to submit a written response. The response will be considered by the investigator prior to completing the investigative report. All evidence subject to inspection and review will be available at any hearing for reference and purposes of cross-examination.

Finally, an investigative report will be prepared to summarize the relevant evidence and sent in an electronic format or hard copy to all parties and their advisors/attorneys, if applicable. The report shall be sent to the relevant parties at least ten (10) days prior to a hearing to permit review and the opportunity to provide a written response.

Hearings

The Final Rule does not require hearings in the K-12 environment.

The designated decision maker shall provide each party the opportunity to submit relevant written questions to any party or witness, permit time for parties to respond, and subsequently allow for limited follow-up questions.

It is an important distinction that questions and evidence relating to the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual history are not considered relevant to the final determination.

The exceptions to this rule are if the pertinent information proves that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged sexual harassment, or if the evidence offered relates to specific incidents and prove consent between the complainant and respondent.

Determination

The decision maker may not be an investigator or the Title IX Coordinator.

The decision maker will issue a written determination with respect to responsibility. Under *the Final Rule*, the determination must include:

- A description of the allegation that meets the definition of sexual harassment
 - A full description of the procedural steps from receipt of the complaint through final determination (notices, interviews, site visits, evidence gathering methods, and hearings)
 - Findings of fact supporting the final determination
 - Conclusions as to the application of the school's code of conduct and the known facts
- A statement and rationale for:
 - Each allegation and determination of responsibility
 - Disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, if any
 - If remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy's education program and/or sanctioned activities will be provided by the school to the complainant; any such remedies will be implemented by the Title IX Coordinator
 - The school's allowable reasons and procedures for appeal (see Appeals section below)

The school shall issue written determination to all parties at the same time. The determination will be considered final when the time for filing a timely appeal has passed. If the allegations

are appealed, the decision is considered final upon receipt of the final written determination.

Appeals

Both the complainant and respondent have the option to appeal under the following circumstances:

- A procedural irregularity
- New evidence that could affect the outcome – not available prior to dismissal or determination
- Conflicts of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), and/or decision maker(s)

The school may provide additional equitable circumstances as situations warrant. If a party wishes to appeal the determination, written notice will be provided to the other party that an appeal has been filed and provide procedures that apply to both parties. A new decision maker(s) will be appointed on appeal and such person will not have participated in the complaint prior to appeal, including investigators or the Title IX Coordinator.

Both parties will be permitted and equal opportunity to submit written statements supporting or opposing the outcome. A written decision will be provided to both parties at the same time and will indicate the result of the appeal and the rationale for the final determination.

Informal Resolution

Informal resolutions may be offered once a formal complaint is filed.

Parties are not required to participate in an informal resolution however, the school may offer this option instead of a full investigation and determination. The school will disclose information about the informal resolution process, including the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process prior to an agreed resolution. Once a party withdraws from the informal resolution process, the grievance process of the formal complaint will resume.

If both parties wish to proceed with an informal resolution, a voluntary written consent must be obtained waiving the right to an investigation and adjudication of a formal complaint. A common example of informal resolution is mediation.

The informal resolution process may not be used in instances where the school's employee is the respondent of alleged sexual harassment against a student.

Recordkeeping

The school shall maintain a complete record for seven (7) years relating to:

- All investigations, determinations regarding responsibility, disciplinary sanctions (respondent), and remedies (complainant); including audio/audiovisual recordings and/or transcripts

- Appeals and their result,
- Any informal resolutions and their result,
- Training materials used (posted publicly on the school's website), and
- Any actions, including supportive measures, in response to a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

The records shall provide a basis for the conclusion and show the response was not deliberately indifferent. Additionally, records should document the measures to restore or preserve equal access to Connections Academy's education program or sanctioned events and activities. Further, records shall indicate the rationale for not providing the complainant with supportive measures, if applicable.

Retaliation

Retaliation is prohibited. Prohibited behavior includes intimidating, threatening, coercing, or discriminating against anyone for the purpose of interfering with the rights protected by *the Final Rule*.

Specifically, retaliation because an individual made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in a Title IX investigation, proceeding, or hearing. Retaliation against a student for code of conduct violations that arise from the same facts and circumstances as a report or complaint of sexual discrimination/harassment is also prohibited.

Speech protected by the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation.

The identity of parties and witnesses shall remain confidential except as permitted by FERPA.

Any party that makes a false statement in bad faith may be charged with a code of conduct violation.