



CONNECTICUT
COASTAL ACADEMY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

~ 2020-2021 ~

192 Westbrook Road, Suite 2
Essex, CT 06426
(959) 265-8184

<https://www.ctcoastalacademy.org/>

Welcome message from our Executive Director

Dear Students, Parents, Guardian(s):

The mission of Connecticut Coastal Academy is to work in partnership with families and the community to provide our students with the highest-quality clinically based, educational experience, to support students in realizing and achieving their full potential. The “power of engagement” cannot be overstated and this belief is the foundation of all our programs at CTCA. We offer a highly individualized academic curriculum taught by an exceptionally caring and dedicated staff who pride themselves in offering unlimited opportunities to have a meaningful school experience. Our goal is to prepare our students to achieve all their future goals and aspirations, whatever they may be!

We recognize that it is imperative to maintain a healthy relationship between school and home that is based on trust, transparency, open communication, and mutual understanding. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a foundation for this relationship and to communicate important CTCA policies and procedures as well as applicable state and federal laws. We place the highest value on cultivating a respectful, inclusive school environment, and to that end, portions of this handbook were developed with student input and insight.

Whether you are new to our school or are returning to our school community, on behalf of our faculty and staff, I welcome each of you with sincere wishes for an engaging and successful school year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Pamela L. Potemri

Executive Director, CT Coastal Academy

Mission

The mission of the Connecticut Coastal Academy is to help young people build lives of meaning, purpose, and joy. We deliver innovative and effective whole-life learning programs to students with learning differences. Our tailored services give young people a better school experience through strengths-based instruction, restorative practices, meaningful relationships, and renewed opportunity. We emphasize respect, responsibility, creativity, and caring.

Program Highlights

- Approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education
- Multidisciplinary team approach including the coordination of cognitive, emotional, physical, social, vocational, and behavioral development
- Individualized educational program with high academic rigor
- Vocational training with paid stipends
- Therapeutic environment including recreation, celebration, and acceptance
- Evidence-based, trauma-informed counseling
- Social-Emotional Learning curriculum
- Community-based internships
- Small class and group sizes

Our Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email</u>
Dr. Pamela L. Potemri	Executive Director	potemrip@ct-ca.org
Joseph Potemri	Director of Operations	potemrij@ct-ca.org
Henry Fiore Jr.	Director of Career Pathways & Integrated Learning	fioreh@ct-ca.org
Sarah Bochet	Director of Clinical Services	bochets@ct-ca.org
Faye Parenteau	Director of Community Relations	parenteauf@ct-ca.org
Jen Urgo	Executive Assistant/ Office Manager	urgoj@ct-ca.org
Joan Aresco	School Secretary	arescoj@ct-ca.org
Lisa Coakley	School Nurse	coaklevl@ct-ca.org
Meagan Geer	School Social Worker	geerm@ct-ca.org
Ali Konow	School Social Worker	konowa@ct-ca.org
Jeff Sasso	Special Educator	sassoj@ct-ca.org
Adam Kelley	Special Educator	kelleya@ct-ca.org
Linda Jacques	Special Educator	jacquesl@ct-ca.org
Lee Ann Kuderko	Special Educator	kuderkol@ct-ca.org
Robert Smith	Building Technology Instructor	smithr@ct-ca.org
Wilbur Milner	Intervention Specialist	milnerw@ct-ca.org
Dyllin Cappiello	Intervention Specialist	cappiellod@ct-ca.org

August (4)					September (21/25)					October (21/46)					November (17/63)				
M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F
3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4				1	2	2	3	4	5	6
10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	12	13
17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20
24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27
31					28	29	30			26	27	28	29	30	30				
December (17/80)					January (19/99)					February (18/117)					March (22/139)				
M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F
	1	2	3	4					1	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	10	11	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30	31		25	26	27	28	29						29	30	31		
April (16/155)					May (20/175)					June (10/185)					Grade Terms				
M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F	M	T	W	R	F					
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	Term 1: 8/26 - 10/30				
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11	Term 2: 11/2 - 1/21				
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18	Term 3: 1/22 - 3/30				
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25	Term 4: 3/31 - 6/14				
26	27	28	29	30	31					28	29	30							

August 26	First Day of School for Students
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June 14	Last Day of School for Students
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September 7	Labor Day
October 12	Columbus Day
November 11	Veteran's Day
November 26 - 27	Thanksgiving
December 24 - January 1	Holiday Recess
January 18	Martin Luther King Day
February 15 - 16	Presidents' Day Recess
April 2	Good Friday
April 12 - 16	April Recess
May 31	Memorial Day

November 25	Early Dismissal
December 23	Early Dismissal

November 3	Staff Development Day
March 12	Staff Development Day



Day Programs

Connecticut Coastal Academy offers middle school and high school curriculum, as well as an intensive life skills transitional program from ages 18-22. Our full-time day program includes paid internships and vocational training. We also offer tailored programs for students who need credit recovery, an interim school placement, employment support, and/or life skill development. Our students benefit from small class sizes where teachers differentiate instruction in order to engage all learners. Teachers provide individualized feedback and one-on-one instruction as needed.

Academics

- Connecticut Coastal Academy meets Common Core standards for curriculum.
- CTCA has a five-period school day (plus additional vocational periods), 180-day school year, four marking periods, and a supportive and recreational six-week summer school program.
- The average class size is four to eight students.
- CTCA follows all state testing requirements and administers state testing on-site.
- CTCA assists students with transition back to public school, post-secondary programs or employment.
- Educational and vocational assessments are conducted on an on-going and as-needed to help students, families, and their sending schools plan for each student's individualized educational program.

Extracurricular Activities

Music, school improvement, community service, and video technology are among the weekly and quarterly enrichment activities we offer. Students may also request off-site activities and field trips, for the purposes of independent study or enrichment, through their advisory teacher or case manager.

Honor Rolls

- Honors – All students achieving a grade of B or better in all classes earn Honors for the marking period.
- High Honors – All students achieving a grade of A in all classes earn High Honors for the marking period.

Graduation

- High school students follow the schedule of credits needed to meet the graduation requirements of their district. High school diplomas are issued to students by their district after educational and transition goals are met (or students reach their 22nd birthday).
- High school students also complete a comprehensive graduation portfolio which includes a resume and life skills education in housing, employment, and personal budgeting.

Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall (school-wide) meetings with students and staff are held monthly and as needed. The agenda includes topics and issues presented by students and staff. They may include celebration of excellence, recognition of accomplishments, news about updates to the program, reports on progress in different classes, etc. There will be an opportunity for all in attendance to vote on critical issues, and parents are welcome to attend.

Vocational Education/Internships

Students learn skills, earn credits, certifications, and may be eligible for stipends through CTCA's vocational education and internship programs. In-house and community-based paid and unpaid internships are individualized and available to students through the PPT process. Students participating in internships complete their academic requirements in the morning and work with their mentors in their chosen field of interest in the afternoon. Students must meet daily academic and behavioral expectations to be eligible to participate in vocational programs or internships and to earn their full stipend. Programs include:

Building Trades

Pre-Apprentice Certification Training is offered through the nationally recognized Home Builders Institute program, with concentrations in electrical, carpentry, and facilities maintenance. Upon completion of the program, students receive a working tool kit along with their certifications. Students also receive OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR/AED certifications as part of the program.

- **Carpentry:** In the carpentry internship, students learn the fundamentals of structural design and develop core skills in wall layout, framing, roofing, sheetrock, and door and window trim. Students also learn basic construction math, measurement, reading blueprints and preparing for the inspection process. The safe use of hand and power tools and other materials is a key component of this program.
- **Landscaping:** Students learn the basics of landscape maintenance for both safety and visual appeal. Interns will learn how to prune plants and keep trees, shrubs, and flowers in good health. Yard and storm debris clean-up will also be covered.
- **Painting:** In this internship, students learn how to improve appearances and protect surfaces from damage. Prepare a variety of surfaces for painting; apply and finish paints and stains and coatings to walls, ceilings and other surfaces. Safely handle clean up and disposal of painting and finishing products.

Communications/Marketing

- **Content development:** The marketing intern(s) assist the community relations director and executive director with producing promotional materials; including fliers, videos, photography and social media posts. The intern(s) develop an

independent, working knowledge of creative software; and be able to produce content that is in keeping with the Connecticut Coastal Academy's mission and values.

- **Event planning:** Participants will learn the essentials of event planning, promotion and execution; including branding, communication, and creative design.

Small engine repair, bike repair, music production, culinary instruction, Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD) and horticulture also may be offered based on interest and staff availability.

Stipends

To be eligible for stipends, students must abide by the following expectations:

- 1) Attend and participate appropriately in all academic classes.
- 2) Participate in the weekly goal-setting/reflection process.
- 3) Attend vocational classes and participate as directed. (If the student attends and/or participates only part of the time, they will be paid *only* for that portion.)
- 4) Follow CTCA Code of Conduct during vocational time (i.e. dress code, electronics use, language, behavior, etc.)
- 5) Demonstrate appropriate behavior during the day. Any outstanding issues must be resolved with staff *before* participation in vocational time.
- 6) The student must maintain passing grades in all classes. Failing grades in any class will result in the student being removed from the vocational classes until an intervention plan is developed and passing grades are achieved.

Three Strike Policy*

- a) The first infraction of the above stated expectations will result in a "First Strike" of a documented warning from the supervisor of the vocational program the student is enrolled in. Documentation will be provided to the student and their advisor.
- b) A second infraction of the above stated expectations, within a two-week period, will result in a "Second Strike." This is a formal written warning from the supervisor of the vocational program the student is enrolled in and is followed by a meeting with the education director and the student's vocational supervisor.
- c) A third infraction of the above stated expectations, within a one-month period, will result in a temporary suspension from the vocational program. Students are eligible to re-apply following the process outlined below.

**Students can be dismissed from vocation at the discretion of their vocational supervisor due to safety violations without going through the Three Strike Policy.*

Program Re-Entry

- d) A student re-applying for the vocational program must submit a new application.

- e) They must also submit a written letter stating why they want to re-engage in the vocational program, and complete a contract of agreement to follow the expectations of the program.
- f) The student must complete a new interview with the vocational supervisor and review the expectations.
- g) If the student is accepted back into the program, they will be allowed back on an agreed-upon trial basis for a period not to exceed four weeks, during which the student will not be paid.
- h) At the satisfactory conclusion of the probationary period, the student is again eligible to earn a stipend.

General Procedures & Protocols

Building Entrance Procedure

Upon entering the building, each student will be required to turn in all their belongings that they will not be needing for classes. This includes cell phones and other electronics, bookbags, clothing/sneakers, lunch, etc. Cell phones and other electronics are not allowed on campus unless approved through the P.P.T. process or by the executive director. Phones and electronics must be turned in upon entering the building and will be locked in the school office during the day. All backpacks and bags must be placed in lockers upon arrival. Should a student need access to their belongings during the day, a staff member will assist the student.*

Contraband - including but not limited to weapons, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes or other prohibited items - will be confiscated and the student's parent/guardian will be notified. Disciplinary action will be taken on any student bringing contraband to school. The Essex Police Department will be notified at the discretion of CTCA administration.

If a student arrives late, they must immediately report to the school office and follow the same procedures. During dismissal, all items will be returned to the student, with the exception of contraband. Failure to follow this procedure is grounds for disciplinary action.

****In the event of a public health emergency, students may be prohibited from using their lockers and/or bringing certain items to school. We will communicate expectations to families/guardians as restrictions are put in place and/or lifted.***

Lunch

All students are provided with lunch at no expense. Parents/guardians are asked to make sure the school nurse is aware of any food allergies or sensitivities at the beginning of each school year and as a student's health status changes.

Fire & Security Drills

Fire or security drills are held monthly. Each student will become completely familiar with evacuation routes for each part of the building. Students must line up and quietly follow the evacuation route and go to the designated area. Attendance will be taken to ensure everyone has safely exited the building. Students do not return into the building until a staff member says it is safe to do so and an “all clear signal” is given. Security drills will require that students and staff stay quiet in a designated area until a staff member directs them to return to normal activities. There may be times when security drills require students to evacuate the building and they should always follow the guidance of staff to ensure everyone’s safety. Fire and security drills are taken very seriously and students are expected to exercise their best behavior during this time.

School Delays and Closings

A determination to delay or close school is made by the executive director. School closing information is posted on Channel 3, Channel 8, Channel 30, and Fox 61 as well as to Connecticut Coastal Academy Facebook and Instagram pages. A morning closing, delay, or early dismissal will be posted as soon as possible after the determination is made. CTCA will contact bus companies and parents to inform them of any decision to close early.

Student Drivers*

Parking on school grounds is a privilege extended to students by the school administration. The recommendation for a student to drive to school will be determined through the PPT process. Students who park on the property of Connecticut Coastal Academy do so at their own risk. CTCA assumes no responsibility for damage to or theft from any vehicle parked or driven on our property. Students must register their cars by returning the appropriate form to the Main Office and obtain a parking pass before driving to school.

CTCA-owned vans will primarily be used to transport students. With the permission of the executive director, students may use their own vehicle to attend work, participate in the Westbrook YMCA extended school year program, or as part of their job training/requirements track. Students are not permitted to transport other students during CTCA hours or for CTCA purposes. Once the student enters the school, he/she cannot return to their vehicle until school is dismissed for the day. No motor vehicle of any kind is to be driven or parked in the fire lane. Automobiles illegally parked will be towed at the owner’s expense.

Failure to obey all traffic regulations will mean loss of the privilege of parking on the school grounds and possible further disciplinary action. Some (not all) of the traffic regulations are:

1. Speed limit— 5 mph on school property
2. No “peeling out” or driving in a reckless manner

3. Pedestrians have the right of way

Violation of any of the regulations listed above, or any others deemed unsafe by school administrators, will mean loss of the privilege of parking as follows:

- First offense: one week
- Second offense: two weeks
- Third offense: remainder of the school year

**Administration reserves the right to revoke driving privileges at any time for a serious safety or discipline infraction.*

Videography, Photography & Audio Recording

Connecticut Coastal Academy uses photographs, videos and audio recordings of students and adults for educational and marketing purposes. Video is also used for reasons related to school security and safety and to prevent vandalism and other criminal acts or prohibited conduct.

Photographs, videos and recordings of students and adults for all other purposes are prohibited, unless prior written permission is granted by the executive director. Guidelines offered in this handbook shall govern the use of photography, videography and audio recordings on school grounds and at school sponsored activities. Events that are open to the public, such as plays, community and athletic events, shall not be subject to these guidelines.

Opt-Out Provision

Connecticut Coastal Academy shall provide annual notice to parents/guardians of the right to exclude their child(ren) from activities involving photography, videography and audio recordings and the publication of the same through the FERPA directory. This form is also provided to new students, and should be completed prior to the student starting school.

Conduct of Videography, Photography & Audio Recordings

Pictures, videos and audio soundtracks, which must be recorded on CTCA devices, may only be displayed or published by CTCA employees and students in or on CTCA-sponsored or approved publications, platforms, or sites. Disciplinary policies and procedures shall apply when a student's video, photograph or audio recording are used for other than approved reasons.

Media Requests

Connecticut Coastal Academy recognizes the role of local media and its obligations to provide a fair and accurate account of events to the community. All media requests for school entry and related photography, videography and audio recording of students and adults shall be approved in advance by the executive director. The media is expressly prohibited from disrupting the operation of school and/or school activity.

Security & Safety

Security cameras are in place at our school. The purpose of these cameras is to improve conditions related to safety and security. Cameras are not to be located in areas where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as lavatories. Video equipment may capture a disciplinary incident or crime. With respect to the privacy of all students, video may not be viewed by parents/guardians unless their child is the only individual captured in the video; unless the parents/guardians of all children captured in the video agree to an individual viewing or agree to view the video at the same time; or unless editing technology can be used to obscure personal and identifying features of other students. Video will not be provided to any individual. Video will not be edited (except to obscure features, as noted above); it will be destroyed after a period of one month from recording, except when the video constitutes evidence of a criminal or civil violation, in which case the video shall be retained until the respective matter has been adjudicated.

Medical Information and Procedures

1. Health forms are available in the admissions packet every family receives when the child is accepted for admission to CTCA. These forms must be completed and turned in prior to a student starting school.
2. When a student is feeling ill and needs to see the nurse, they should tell a staff member. The nurse will see the student as soon as possible and with priority to the most serious issues/illnesses of that day.
3. If a student is taking a prescription medication, appropriate protocol must be followed for the student to have his/her medication administered during the school day, either by the school nurse or a medication-certified staff member.
4. Over-the-counter medications are available (standing orders are written by the appointed medical physician). Parents/guardians must complete the form (available in the admission packet) for their child to have over-the-counter medications administered.
5. Sports restrictions are generated by the nurse or given to the nurse to keep on file from the student's physician. Limitations are specific to the type of injury experienced.
6. Any allergies, medical conditions or chronic illnesses i.e. asthma or diabetes should be discussed with the school nurse.
7. Physicians names and phone numbers should be made available as well as a plan of care to be followed to ensure proper medical care for the student while at school.

8. Medical appointments should be made after school hours, however when that is not possible the school office should be notified so that an excused absence can be recorded.

Tobacco-Free Policy

Connecticut Coastal Academy has established a tobacco-free environment. It is the policy of CTCA to strictly prohibit tobacco, in any form, anywhere, at any time on its property. Furthermore, no person (employee, student, client, visitor, vendor, etc.) is permitted to use tobacco in any way at any time, including during off-hours on CTCA property/grounds. Distribution or sale of tobacco, including any smoking device(s) is prohibited on CTCA property/grounds and at any CTCA-sponsored event or activity on or off campus. Use of tobacco in any form by a student of the Connecticut Coastal Academy on CTCA property or at a school-sponsored event/activity is strictly prohibited. If a student violates this policy, their parent/guardian will be called, and the student will receive a minimum of an in-school suspension.

Definitions:

Tobacco – includes any cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette and any other smoking product; as well as spit tobacco (also known as smokeless, dip, chew and snuff), electronic smoking or vaping device, and any other tobacco product in any form.

Connecticut Coastal Academy Property – any building, structure or vehicle owned, leased or contracted by CTA.

Grounds – property surrounding buildings and structures, athletic grounds, parking lots or any other outdoor property owned, leased or contracted by Connecticut Coastal Academy.

Tobacco Distribution- Distribution or sale of tobacco, including any smoking device(s) is prohibited on CTCA property/grounds and at any CTCA-sponsored event or activity on or off campus.

Therapeutic Student Management

Our Approach

The goal of the Connecticut Coastal Academy is to provide high quality clinical and educational experiences that empower individuals and families with the skills, confidence and fortitude to achieve their full potential. We utilize a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to care, including the coordination of cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and vocational development.

Based on the individual needs identified in the student's IEP, strengths-based, culturally sensitive and trauma-informed treatment plans are co-created with the student, the student's guardian and

his/her treatment team. Multidisciplinary treatment teams are comprised of the student's clinician, teachers, nurse, the student and relevant family and community providers. Parents/guardians are kept informed of any concerns or significant changes in student productivity or functioning. IEP goals to be formally assessed and reviewed by the treatment team quarterly. Connecticut Coastal Academy utilizes a trauma-sensitive philosophy of care.

Advisory/Case Management

Each student is assigned to an advisory teacher as well as a case manager, who serves as their academic advisor. The case manager is the student's primary contact, along with his/her clinician. The case manager attends the student's treatment team meetings, and follows the student's progress on his/her goals. The advisory teacher meets with students periodically throughout the school week, including 15 minutes at the start and close of each school day.

Goal setting

Students set personal goals on an ongoing basis. Progress toward goals is charted, reviewed and recorded, and is an essential part of each student's success.

Therapeutic treatment

Each student participates in individual and group therapy, as clinically recommended. The following therapeutic approaches may be utilized to address the needs of each student:

- **Motivational Interviewing:** A directive, person-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping individuals explore and resolve ambivalence. This method of therapy is focused and goal-directed with the resolution of ambivalence at its central purpose.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy:** A type of psychotherapeutic treatment that helps individuals understand the thoughts and feelings that influence behaviors.
- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy:** This approach focuses on teaching people how to live in the moment, cope healthily with stress, regulate emotions, and improve relationships with others.

Social Emotional Learning and Curriculum

At Connecticut Coastal Academy, all students are enrolled in a social emotional learning (SEL) class and curriculum. Students engage in various assignments related to the five core competencies from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). *"CASEL is a trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL). CASEL supports educators and policy leaders and enhances the experiences and outcomes for all PreK-12 students"* (CASEL, 2019).

The five core competencies include:

1. **SELF-AWARENESS:** The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”
2. **SOCIAL AWARENESS:** the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand the social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
3. **RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING:** The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.
4. **SELF-MANAGEMENT:** The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.
5. **RELATIONSHIP SKILLS:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

Health & Wellness Curriculum*

**CTCA’s health curriculum is explained in detail in the Admissions Packet.*

All adolescents are at risk for the spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The State of Connecticut General Statute (C.G.S.) Section 10-19(b) requires that instruction in Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) be offered in kindergarten through Grade 12, during the regular school day in a planned, ongoing and systematic fashion.

C.G.S. Section 10-19(a) also requires instruction regarding the use of alcohol, nicotine, tobacco and drugs every academic year to all students in kindergarten through Grade 12 in a planned, ongoing and systematic fashion. Required content includes teaching about the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand and avoid the effects of alcohol, of nicotine or tobacco and of drugs on health, character, citizenship and personality development.

Connecticut Coastal Academy offers planned, ongoing and systematic instruction on AIDS during regularly scheduled Health & Wellness (life skills) classes. Parents/guardians have the right to opt their child out of such instruction by requesting an exemption in writing. Upon receipt of a written request to the education director by the child’s parent or legal guardian, the child will be exempt from participating in the health education program at Connecticut Coastal Academy.

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

During a crisis, our goal is to provide immediate emotional and environmental support to the student in a way that reduces stress and risk. Each student, along with their clinician, develops an

individual crisis management plan. This plan outlines student-identified triggers, the behaviors that result from being triggered, and effective interventions that will help the student de-escalate.

Intervention Techniques

- ❖ Staff model respect and appropriate interactions
- ❖ Advisory periods which allow students to ‘check in’ with trusted teachers and peers
- ❖ Regular check-ins with school social worker
- ❖ Positive reinforcement
- ❖ Opportunity to earn tangible rewards for demonstrating positive character traits
- ❖ Students have opportunity to address inappropriate behavior and formulate resolutions
- ❖ Consistent progress monitoring
- ❖ Stress reduction activities
- ❖ Communication with parent/guardians
- ❖ Restriction from activities
- ❖ Academic assistance

Harassment and Bullying Policy

Connecticut Coastal Academy believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. Our school and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

Connecticut Coastal Academy will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation. In addition, the following behaviors are prohibited:

- Cyberbullying
- Retaliation against those reporting such defined behaviors; and
- Making knowingly false accusations of bullying behavior.

Any person who engages in any of these prohibited behaviors that constitutes bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Defined

- “Bullying,” including “cyberbullying,” is any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward

a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to their person or property
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health
- Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance
- Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school
- Cyberbullying" is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, or text messaging device.

Examples of Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying may take various forms, including, but not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking, put-downs, or demeaning humor
- Behavior that is likely to harm someone by damaging or manipulating his or her relationships with others, including, but not limited to, gossip, spreading rumors, and social exclusion
- Non-verbal threats and/or intimidations
- Hate speech, such as the use of words or images to harass individuals or groups based on gender, gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of identity

Cyberbullying may take various forms, including, but not limited to, the following actions on any electronic medium:

- Posting slurs or rumors or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, disparaging, violent, abusive, profane, or sexually oriented material about a student on a website, an app, in social media, or any other electronic platform;
- Posting misleading or fake photographs or digital video footage of a student on websites or creating fake websites or social networking profiles in the guise of posing as the targeted student;
- Impersonating or representing another student through the use of that other student's electronic device or account to send e-mail, text messages, instant messages (IM), phone calls, or other messages on a social media website;
- Sending e-mail, text messages, IM, or leaving voice mail messages that are mean or threatening, or so numerous as to bombard the target's e-mail account, IM account, or cell phone; and
- Using a camera phone or digital video camera to take and/or send embarrassing photos or "sexting" photographs of other students.

Connecticut Coastal Academy cannot control the bullying behavior of students through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function, or program, or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school. If the out-of-school bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of school, parents of all parties will be contacted, and the school will determine the appropriate natural consequences. This applies if a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred.

- “Retaliation” means an act or gesture against a student for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. “Retaliation” also includes knowingly falsely reporting an act of bullying.
- “Alternative discipline” means disciplinary action other than suspension or expulsion from school that is designed to correct and address the root causes of a student’s specific misbehavior while retaining the student in class or school, or restorative school practices to repair the harm done to relationships and persons from the student’s misbehavior.

Reporting an Incident of Harassment or Bullying

Connecticut Coastal Academy expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the administration, as soon as possible. Staff who witness such acts take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of harassment or bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity. Staff who witness a harassment incident are required to complete the *Connecticut Coastal Academy Incident Report Form* and provide a copy to both the educational director and executive director.

Administrative Response to a Complaint of Harassment or Bullying

Connecticut Coastal Academy administration will:

- Promptly (usually within ten days) investigate and respond to allegations of bullying behavior;
- Keep written documentation of all allegations of bullying behavior and outcomes of the investigations, and report alleged and substantiated incidents to administration;
- Inform parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student(s) who was alleged to have bullied AND of the student(s) who was believed to have been bullied that a report of an alleged incident of bullying has been made;
- Communicate to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student(s) who was believed to have been bullied the measures being taken to ensure the safety of the student(s) who was believed to have been bullied and to prevent further acts of bullying;
- Inform parent(s) or guardian(s) of the students involved the findings of the investigation and actions to be taken;

- Communicate with local or state law enforcement agencies, if, in the judgment of the school, it is believed that the pursuit of criminal charges or a civil action under Connecticut state law may be appropriate.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation and bullying: at the beginning of the school year, as part of the student handbook and/or information packet, as part of new student orientation, and as part of the school system's notification to parents.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.
- Staff who witness acts of harassment or bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing harassment or bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.

Conflict Resolution

Connecticut Coastal Academy believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. Part of a healthy environment is the freedom to openly disagree. With this freedom comes the responsibility to discuss and resolve disagreements with respect for the rights and opinions of others.

Connecticut Coastal Academy will provide staff training to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills students need to choose alternatives to self-destructive, violent behavior and dissolve interpersonal and intergroup conflict. The Connecticut Coastal Academy student code of conduct will be followed during the school day, when traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity and while out in the community.

Students are to resolve their disputes without resorting to violence.

- Students, especially those trained in conflict resolution and peer mediation, are encouraged to help fellow students resolve problems peaceably.
- Students can rely on staff trained in conflict resolution and peer mediation strategies to intervene in any dispute likely to result in violence.
- Students needing help in resolving a disagreement, or students observing conflict may contact an adult or peer mediators.
- Students involved in a dispute will be referred to a conflict resolution or peer mediation session with trained adult or peer mediators. Staff and mediators will keep the discussions confidential.
- Conflict resolution procedures shall not supplant the authority of staff to act to prevent violence, ensure campus safety, maintain order, and discipline students.

Bullying and Harassment Prevention

To ensure bullying does not occur on our school campus or while traveling in our community, Connecticut Coastal Academy will provide staff development training in harassment and bullying prevention, and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to build the school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

To prevent conflict, Connecticut Coastal Academy will include conflict resolution education and problem solving techniques into the educational curriculum. This is an important step in promoting respect and acceptance, developing new ways of communicating, understanding, and accepting differing values and cultures within the school community and helps ensure a safe and healthy learning environment.

Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of harassment or bullying. Students who harass and/or bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Behavior Referrals

Referrals are written for a behavior that is unable to be re-directed and includes behavior that is targeted toward staff or another student, deliberate non-compliance and non-responsiveness to adult directive (i.e. out of area), and/or shows a pattern of behavior that requires administrative consultation. Staff should complete a referral form when the incident occurs or at the end of the instructional period.

Referral procedure

1. The referral form includes what staff has done to resolve the issue before requiring administrative intervention.
2. Referral forms are given to the lead teacher as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day.
3. The incident is reviewed by the lead teacher and staff who completed the referral.
4. The referral is discussed with the student and recommended staff. A conference or call with parents may take place. (***If a suspension is warranted prior to any discussion with the student, administration is consulted, parents are notified, and a re-entry meeting is scheduled.***)
5. Consequence for the behavior is determined during the intervention meeting with the student either the same day or the following day.
6. The intervention team determines whether the referral should be considered when determining eligibility for incentive-based activities.

Consequences

1. When disruption of learning environment is occurring, removal from the classroom for a specific amount of time.
2. Restriction from all general population areas when behavior is repetitive.
3. Not eligible for incentive-based activities, privileges, and stipends.
4. Suspension.
5. Program review with administration.
6. PPT review- recommendation for program change.

Actions Leading to Suspension or Expulsion

Students may be suspended* or expelled for conduct that endangers persons or property; whose conduct, on or off school grounds, is seriously disruptive of the educational process; or is violative of a publicized policy of the Connecticut Coastal Academy's Executive Team,. Conduct that may lead to suspension or a recommendation for expulsion includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fighting, physical assault or attempted physical assault;
- Making threatening statements to or about any student or staff member;
- Defiance of the authority of a teacher, administrator or any other persons having authority over the student;
- Taking or attempting to take property or other possessions from another person by means of force, threat, fear, theft, or intimidation;
- Smoking in or on school property;
- Gambling in or on school property;
- Leaving a school building or school grounds without authorization;
- Possessing or using any type of firearm, firearm facsimile, explosive, weapon, deadly weapon, or knife, or any other dangerous instrument, which means any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury;
- Unauthorized possession, offering for sale, use or distribution in the school or on school grounds, or at any school sponsored activity or in school provided transportation of drugs, narcotics, controlled substances, or alcoholic beverages;
- The use of abusive, obscene and/or profane language or gestures or social or ethnic epithets;
- Turning in a false alarm or bomb threat;
- Conduct of any pupil while waiting or receiving transportation to or from school which endangers persons or property, or is violative of a publicized policy of Connecticut Coastal Academy's Executive Team;
- Violation of any local, state or federal law.

In rare instances when a student refuses to or cannot regain control within the school setting, a youth may be sent home (suspended from school). Parents/guardians will be notified

immediately, and the partnering school district will be notified within 24 hours. An emergency treatment team conference will be held as soon as possible to review the incident, the student's crisis management plan, and IEP. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend this conference.

Compliance with State Standards

In accordance with the State of Connecticut, Department of Education:

- Each student and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student is informed of the rules of our program and of the types of behaviors which may result in suspension from the program.
- No suspension of a student may exceed ten school days.
- Unless an emergency exists, no student is suspended without an informal hearing with school administrators during which the student is informed of the reasons for the suspension and is given the opportunity to communicate their perspective.
- A written record of each suspension of a student is maintained.
- Within 24 hours of the time a student is suspended, we will notify the student's school district, parent or guardian, and the surrogate parent (if appointed) of the suspension, at a standard at least equivalent to the standard utilized by the student's school district in providing such notification to parents.
- No suspension of a student for a particular behavior occurs if the student's IEP mandates an alternative response to the behavior.
- No further suspension of a student occurs upon notification from the student's school district that a PPT must meet to discuss the student's behavior before any further suspension of the student.
- In the event that a student is suspended repeatedly, Connecticut Coastal Academy will make a written request that the student's school district convene a PPT meeting to discuss the needs of the student.

Grievance Procedure

The Connecticut Coastal Academy recognizes that there are incidents where a student believes his/her rights have been infringed upon. A specific procedure is followed to resolve the conflicting issue. A student may initiate a grievance with anyone in the chain of command, but the following is suggested:

1. Case Manager
2. Clinician
3. Clinical Director
4. Director of Operations or Executive Director

Process:

1. The student discusses his/her grievance or concern to the attention of one of the people listed above.
2. If there is a decision to formally file a grievance, the adult involved will assist the youth in completing a grievance form.

3. That adult can facilitate a discussion with the parties involved or may feel a need to advise the education director.
4. If resolved, copies of the grievance are filed accordingly.
5. If unresolved, the youth/advisor/clinician may bring the grievance to a treatment team meeting.

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Connecticut Transition Academy receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Connecticut Coastal Academy to amend a record should put their request in writing to the Education Director, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, omitted or amended, and specify the reason for the request. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other

volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the Connecticut Coastal Academy discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The Connecticut Coastal Academy will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Connecticut Coastal Academy to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).

FOR STUDENTS

Who We Are

We are on a quest to be our best.
We help each other out and hold each other up.
We stick together through hard times.
We celebrate good times.
We protect each other's right to learn.
We honor each other's right to succeed.

Our school symbol is a compass and our slogan is: "Nos viam inveniam" – We find a way. This guiding emblem reminds us to hope, to strive, to lean on one another, and to believe in ourselves.

Expectations and Aspirations

School is a dress rehearsal for life. It's a place to discover things about yourself and other people. It's a chance, every day, to practice behaviors that build confidence, health, happiness, and independence.

No matter where we've been or what we've been through, each of us has the chance to change and grow into a person we are proud to be. It's OK if we mess up and have to start our day over. It's better to start a day over many times, than to give up. Not giving up builds strength, resilience, and self-respect.

Our words, appearance, and especially behavior tell the world how we see ourselves. This is why it is important to try to be our best selves.

It is also why we have the following expectations for student conduct:

Language

- Language that is positive and respectful shows maturity. It shows that you have intelligence, self-control, and dignity. This is why we avoid profanity and unnecessary gestures like eye-rolling, etc.
- We also ask students to use appropriate volume when speaking with others.

Conflict

We strive to create a culture of acceptance and support. We understand that disagreements are part of life, and especially part of growing up. Each conflict we encounter is a chance to grow. When disagreeing with another person, please use the appropriate venue including our resolution models and the grievance procedure.

Student Dress Code

The dress code is not meant to be restrictive but is intended to guide students and their parents/guardians in choosing clothing that is appropriate. Students may dress in a manner reflecting personal style and/or current fashion; however, clothing may not be distracting or disruptive to others' learning.

Clothing, insignia, buttons, jewelry, labels, signs or items which materially and substantially interfere with appropriate discipline in the operation of our schools; materially disrupt classwork; involve substantial disorder or invade or impinges upon the rights of other students, shall not be worn carried, or distributed on school property. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- clothing which promotes drugs, alcohol, smoking, or sexual activity
- clothing which contains profanity or displays obscene messages or images
- chains, necklaces or bracelets that could cause injury or disrupt the educational process
- clothing that reveals underwear
- pajamas (unless participating in a school-wide spirit activity)

Students may wear shorts, jeans, khakis, or sweatpants. Pants must be worn at the waist (not revealing undergarments). Tube tops and spaghetti straps are not permitted. Tank shirts may be worn during the summer session in the event of extreme heat. Sunglasses are not permitted in class. Appropriate and safe footwear must be worn in classes and vocational areas.

In the event that this policy is not followed the following action will be taken:

1. The student will be required to cover the offensive clothing, or remove material (hat, jewelry, etc.)
2. The student will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing (if already available at school), to be dressed to code for the remainder of the day.
3. The student may be provided with temporary school clothing to be dressed to code for the remainder of the day.
4. If necessary, the student's parent may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.

First Offense - Warning by administration

Second Offense - Meeting with parent/guardian and student

Attendance

Attending class is critical to success. Attendance calls are made daily. Parents/guardians and school districts will be provided reports regarding student attendance on a regular basis. Make it a good habit to be on time to classes and ask for permission to go to the lavatory, see another teacher, go to the office, or take space. Students who are absent without permission from school or class will not earn the credit for that time. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately if a student leaves the grounds during the school day.

Distance Learning

In the event of a health emergency, Connecticut Coastal Academy may move or may be advised to move to a distance learning platform until students can safely return to school. Students participating in distance learning are asked to log in to their classes on time and prepared. Students are asked to have breakfast, secure a private area to use their Chromebooks, and to attend online classes dressed appropriately and ready to learn. Families are asked to ensure that students have a quiet, private place to attend class, for their own privacy and the privacy of others.

Embracing Differences

Being a citizen of the modern world means interacting with people of different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds; of different religious views; differing talents and abilities; and of different sexual orientations and gender expressions. Sensitivity to each person's unique history and identity is a priority at the Connecticut Coastal Academy. It is important that students develop respect as we learn from and about each other.

Self Advocacy

Teachers and staff are dedicated to helping students succeed. Students are encouraged to ask for what they need, in terms of goals and academic and personal support. This includes any concerns or difficulties with classwork, with relationships, and with IEP goals. Students are encouraged to speak with their advisory teacher, case manager, school counselor, or any trusted adult.

Acknowledgement of Information Contained Herein

By signing this acknowledgement, I am voluntarily agreeing that:

I have been given a copy of the Connecticut Coastal Academy Handbook to review;

I understand that the Connecticut Coastal Academy Handbook contains several rules governing student behavior and provides that students may be disciplined for violating many of these rules;

I have had a chance to read and review the Connecticut Coastal Academy Handbook with my parent/guardian and I have done so;

I have reviewed and discussed the Connecticut Coastal Academy Handbook with my child; and

I understand and accept the contents of the Connecticut Coastal Academy Handbook.

I, _____, have reviewed a copy of the
(PRINT NAME)
Connecticut Coastal Academy's Student Handbook. I understand the contents of the Student Handbook and will do my best to follow all school rules.

(STUDENT'S SIGNATURE)

(DATE)

I, _____, have received a copy of the
(PARENT/GUARDIAN'S NAME)
Connecticut Coastal Academy's Student Handbook and have reviewed its content with the

above-named student.

(PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE)

(DATE)