

CONSERVATORY LAB CHARTER SCHOOL

Student & Family Handbook

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por favor llame al 617-254-8904, x100

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Welcome

Summer 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Conservatory Lab Charter School Community. Whether your child is a new or returning student, we are honored you have entrusted your child's academic and music education to Conservatory Lab. We take our responsibility seriously and look forward to partnering with you to realize your child's fullest potential.

We have an open door policy at Conservatory Lab and are eager to hear your suggestions on how to make our school stronger. Every parent/guardian is automatically a member of our Parent Council which meets once a month. I hope to see you there!

This will be another groundbreaking year, as we continue to strengthen and implement our Learning Through Music Expeditions. Students will continue to interview experts, conduct field work, and create quality products. I invite you to attend the incredible showcase events at the culmination of each expedition, which feature performances and exhibitions of student work.

As we enter into the second year of our El Sistema music program, we look forward to building on the strong foundations laid last year. Students will continue to perform in orchestral and choral ensembles, receive individualized instruction, and build their skills of music literacy. Each day will be punctuated by the focused synergy of group rehearsals and the thrill of performing beautiful music together. Conservatory Lab is the first elementary school in the United States to incorporate the El Sistema program into its core school day, and we are delighted with its impact after just one year.

Finally, this year we launch a new Upper School for fifth and sixth grade, which will incorporate elements of the middle school model and offer new opportunities for enrichment. To prepare our students academically and socially for the next phase of their education, the Upper School will include flexible groupings, an advisory class, and new student leadership roles.

Our Board of Trustees meets regularly, and these meetings are open to the public. In July, with very strong parent support, the board requested an amendment to our charter to expand to grades 7 and 8. We will learn about the status of our request this year, and hopefully begin plans to invite our current sixth graders to stay at Conservatory Lab as seventh graders in September 2012.

We are excited to have you with us during this pivotal year at Conservatory Lab. Our faculty and staff as well as our board stand ready to work with you, our parents and guardians, to have the best possible year for every Conservatory Lab student.

Sincerely,

Diana Lam
Head of School

Family and Student Learning Agreements

The Conservatory Lab Charter School believes that a strong parent/school partnership is critical to every child's success, in both academic and social/emotional development. In building this partnership, we believe that making a commitment to the following actions is crucial, and we ask that you join us in doing so.

I commit to my child's education by agreeing to the following:

Learning Agreement: Together, our overarching goal is to support student learning. Our most important job is to ensure that our students are fully engaged in learning, both in school and at home. Therefore, I pledge that:

- My child will attend school regularly, arriving to school on time, ready for the day ahead. My child will, to the best of our abilities, spend the entire day in school, reserving early dismissal for doctor's appointments and emergencies.
- My child will receive help and support at home in all possible ways so that s/he will be prepared for each school day, including support with instrument practice and homework. I will provide a quiet, distraction-free space for homework and practice.
- My child and I will read together every day for at least 20 -30 minutes.
- If my child is experiencing difficulty with homework or practice at home, I will contact my child's teacher and ask for support.
- I will limit excessive TV watching and other screen related activities, such as video games, in our home.
- I will set long range goals for my child that include completing high school, entering college, completing college, and creating life long standards of excellence.

Discipline Agreement: Children learn best when they are fully able to access the academic curriculum, make solid connections in the community, and feel good about their behavior. With this in mind, I pledge that:

- I will support the school's policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct, drop off and pick up policies, good attendance, and safe bus behavior.
- I will communicate joys and concerns to the school, the teachers, and administration. I will also listen and seek to understand when school personnel call to express joys and concerns about my child's behavior in school.
- I will seek solutions with the school that will best support my child as they develop into productive, capable citizens of the world.

Partnership Agreement: A child cannot develop joyfully on his or her own. They need help and guidance when exploring the many aspects of their worlds. Because I am my child's mentor, I pledge that:

- I will take an active role in the school and being our partner. This includes prompt communication about your concerns as well as responding to the school's requests and concerns.
- I will participate in *all* parent/teacher conferences, student portfolio reviews, the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), and other school meetings and activities.
- I will volunteer my gifts, talents, and strengths to the school and in my child's classroom.

I understand that by signing this document I am accepting the above-listed responsibilities. By supporting these responsibilities I will help my child excel academically, musically, and socially.

Academic and Music Programs

Learning Through Music

In order to fulfill our charter, music must become our shared passion at Conservatory Lab. Music unites us and is a powerful means for us to reach out to families and community. Music is a social activity, and therefore, a potential community builder. Music instills discipline and self-confidence. Equally important, one plays music whether as a listener or performer. Music performed well brings joy to performer and audience. Continuous assessment of performance can ensure effective and authentic evaluation.

We aspire to be an exemplary Learning Through Music school where we breathe, listen, perform, create and celebrate music across the curriculum and where every child is also achieving proficiency in all academic subjects. Every adult at Conservatory Lab is not only a teacher, but a teacher of music, just as every adult is a teacher of character implicitly by example, and explicitly through conversation with students. Every adult at Conservatory Lab is expected to commit to our mission by sharing responsibility for instilling an appreciation and excitement for diverse musical traditions. Music appreciation music history, chorus and voice, instrument performance and composition are variations on our central theme of tapping into the power of music to learn and build community.

Learning Through Music encompasses the entire academic and artistic program at Conservatory Lab through three distinct but interrelated components—Music Instruction and Performance (El Sistema), Music Appreciation (Listening Project), and Connecting Music to Academic Content Areas (*Learning Through Music* Expeditions). It is a flexible model that fosters music infusion, but does not require that every subject be taught every day through music. Interdisciplinary teaching that includes music is more effective than teaching each subject in isolation. The pedagogy most consistent with this approach is project- and performance-based learning with clear standards and outcomes. The five music processes—listening, questioning, creating, performing, and reflecting—are evident across the curriculum.

Learning Through Music Expeditions

Conservatory Lab has launched twenty-one *Learning Through Music* expeditions, our ongoing curriculum development project, merging our LTM philosophy with our adopted Expeditionary Learning framework. The twenty-one units (3 per grade level) are multidisciplinary learning expeditions, aligned with Massachusetts and Common Core standards that integrate social studies, science, English language arts, music, math, and art. Each extended learning expedition is based on an inquiry-based project and performance approach that incorporates the core practices of Expeditionary Learning: focused learning targets aligned with formative and summative assessments; fieldwork, local expertise, and service learning; producing and presenting high quality student work for real audiences; and learning in and through the arts.

In each learning expedition, music becomes a laboratory for teaching and learning across content areas. In social studies expeditions, students listen to, learn about, and perform musical traditions and genres from the historical periods they are studying. Science expeditions incorporate the science of sound, from investigating the anatomy of a piano in a physical science unit on force and motion to exploring the sound qualities of rocks in an earth science expedition. ELA expeditions seamlessly integrate the natural connections between the rhythm and melody of language and music. Across disciplines, music provides an interpretive lens through which students can creatively express their ideas about a topic.

Building a Culture of Learning Through Music within Conservatory Lab

Sometimes it helps to imagine what we would like a visitor for the first time to the school to see when opening the door to Conservatory Lab. We would like his/her first image to be of a large framed photograph of our students playing violin, viola, trumpet, or whatever their instrument in the school

orchestra may be. Since the strength of our school rests on the strength of our faculty and staff, the next thing she would see in the foyer hallway, are photographs of every adult, with their name, role and a sentence or two about their favorite music genre or period, instrument, composer or performer and why. Scanning these, the visitor would be struck by the many connections our teachers and staff have to music.

Walking to the classrooms, the visitor would notice that each is named after an instrument ranging from flutes to steel drums. Going into the classroom, the visitor would see a music corner with resources including books and cds featuring that instrument. S/he might notice a flyer on the wall announcing the upcoming class concert to be performed by a NEC student.

On the second floor, the visitor would see a sign for “The Green Room” and might smile at the idea of calling space for teachers’ to recharge after the name of the room set aside, at the BSO or in any professional theatre, for performers to prepare and rest before “going on the stage to perform.” Every teacher understands how teaching can feel akin to “going on stage”.

What would strike the visitor most, though, is how often she hears music or discussion of some aspect of music history, in many classrooms – not just in the designated music room.

Expeditionary Learning

The most significant addition to the school’s curricular and instructional core is the implementation of Expeditionary Learning (EL). EL is based on the belief that the purpose of education is to unleash and cultivate the passion and genius of everyone and that schools ought to be organized expressly for this purpose. This is most effectively accomplished by providing authentic and tangible opportunities to experience the joy of learning and service. Expeditionary Learning is a primary concept around which a school community can organize itself without relying on exceptional physical facilities or unusual capital investments. With EL’s assistance we have designed our school’s classroom culture to offer a range of routes to knowledge, understanding, and self-worth for students and the adults closest to them- teachers and parents.

There are ten principles that guide the work:

- The Primacy of Self-Discovery – Learning needs emotion and challenge. People discover their abilities, talents and grand passions in environments that offer adventure and the unexpected and require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, self-discipline and real achievement. The primary job of an educator is to help students overcome fear, discover who they are and find they have more in them than what they think.
- Empathy and Caring – Learning is fostered best in small groups where there is trust, sustained caring and mutual respect between teachers and students, and among all members of the learning community. For example, at Conservatory Lab we will loop K1-K2, Grade 1 and 2, and Grade 3, 4, and 5.
- The Having of Wonderful Ideas – Teaching so as to build on children’s curiosity around the world by creating learning situations that provide them with matter to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed. Foster a community where students’ ideas are respected.
- Success and Failure – Students must have the experience of setting ambitious goals and meeting them with a fair assurance of success to gain confidence and the capacity for undertaking increasingly difficult challenges. At the same time, your disability is your opportunity. Working to overcome adversity or weakness or falling short of personal or group goals can teach even more powerful lessons in courage, compassion and commitment.
- Responsibility for Learning – Students take responsibility for their own learning by asking questions, finding information, demonstrating what they have learned in oral and written presentations. They are able to assess the quality of their work by referring to the rubrics and by listening to their peers’ feedback.

- Collaboration and Competition – Teach so as to join individual and group development with the value of friendship and trust made manifest. Encourage students to compete not against each other but with their own personal best.
- Diversity and Inclusion – Diversity and inclusivity dramatically increase the richness, creative power, compassion and problem-solving ability of groups. Students discover these when teachers encourage them to investigate, value and draw upon the different histories, talents and resources of their own and of other communities and cultures.
- The Natural World – A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and reveals the important lessons of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards on the earth and of generations to come.
- The Solitude of Reflection – Solitude, reflection and silence are important elements in the construction of meaning. Time away from our task replenishes our energy and opens our minds. Time alone encourages us to explore our own thoughts, make our own connections, and create our own ideas.
- Service and Compassion – We are crew, not passengers. We are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others.

These are unlike the traditional principles underlying assumptions that have governed and shaped public schools for the last century. Courage, intellect and compassion are the guideposts. Expeditionary Learning assumes not only that every child can learn but that all children can reach their fullest potential as persons.

Music- “El Sistema”

El Sistema involves every student in the school. Resident musicians teach orchestral instruments such as violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, clarinet, and trumpet and this year we will also have a trombone and a percussion section of the orchestra.

Learning in El Sistema is based on an ensemble experience in which group achievement is balanced with individualized attention. Intensity of study distinguishes El Sistema from other children’s orchestras: students engage in the program for three hours a day, five days a week. El Sistema provides a progressive method of music education experiences, supporting its students from pre-kindergarten through 6th grade. The program consists of sequential repertoire, orchestral levels, and pedagogical practices that create a through line for every child’s learning. It includes choral and instrumental music as well as full ensemble work, section work and individual lessons with continuity in instruction. El Sistema’s intensive, comprehensive approach to music education, combined with its joyful *esprit de corps* enables students to progress quickly.

Performance is an integral component of El Sistema. Central to the El Sistema approach is the use of frequent, informal and even impromptu performances to help students feel at ease performing and allow performance to become a natural part of their musical life.

We systematically assess music achievement and this is part of our accountability plan. We expect our students to be proficient on the Instrument Technique Proficiency Assessment and on the Music-in-Education National Consortium Music Literacy Skills Test at the appropriate level for each child.

Balanced Literacy

Foundations

Wilson Foundations for K-3 is the phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling program used in the Conservatory Lab classrooms. Teachers incorporate a 30-minute daily Foundations lesson into their language arts classroom instruction. Foundations lessons focus on carefully sequenced skills that include print knowledge, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding,

vocabulary, fluency, and spelling. Critical thinking, speaking and listening skills are practiced during story time activities.

Writer's Workshop

Writer's Workshop is an interdisciplinary writing technique which can build students' fluency in writing through continuous, repeated exposure to the process of writing. The Conservatory Lab uses the Writer's Workshop model in the K2-6th grade classrooms.

Writer's Workshop is a teaching technique that invites students to write by making the process a meaningful part of the classroom curriculum. Ideally students write daily through varied activities, organizing thoughts to create a story or write about a given topic and develop it into an understandable narrative with a voice and focus that present information to the reader. Students grow to be able to use writing mechanics comfortably and the shift in their cognitive abilities to higher order thinking allows them to develop a more sophisticated sense of what makes good writing.

Guided Reading

Guided reading is a strategy that helps students become good readers. The teacher provides support for small groups of readers as they learn to use various reading strategies (context clues, letter and sound relationships, word structure, and so forth).

When level appropriate books are selected, students are able to read with approximately 90% accuracy. This enables the students to enjoy the story because there is not an overwhelming amount of "road blocks" that interfere with comprehension. Students focus on the meaning of the story and application of various reading strategies to problem solve when they do hit a road block in their knowledge or reading ability.

Readers Workshop

The Reader's Workshop program emphasizes the interaction between readers and text. Students learn to and previously read texts, and ask questions to clarify faulty comprehension they recognize has occurred. The program includes peer conferences and teacher conferences with students but emphasizes students' independence and allows them to become successful readers outside of the classroom. Once implemented, Reading Workshop can quickly become students' favorite part of the day.

Shared Reading

Storybook reading is a critically important factor in young children's reading development (Wells, 1986). In school, which is different than at home, a teacher reads to a group of children rather than to a single child. The shared reading model often uses oversized books (referred to as big books) with enlarged print and illustrations. Due to the large size of the book being read, as the teacher reads the book aloud, all of the children who are being read to can see and appreciate the print and illustrations. This Shared Reading brings the story time feeling of reading into the classroom while strengthening sight word vocabulary, decoding skills, and comprehension strategies.

- Other aspects of a Balanced Literacy approach include Reader's Theatre, Poem of the Week, Independent Reading, Reading Conferences, and Read Aloud.

Mathematics

In the Conservatory Lab math program, teachers use good math materials, curricula, and texts from a carefully selected math resources, including *ThinkMath!*, ensuring that instruction is differentiated and fits

each student according to need. Lessons are carefully crafted to meet student need, provide a high level of rigor, meet state standards, and prepare students for proficiency on the MCAS.

Every six to eight weeks, we administer math assessments to students in grades two through six. Each assessment takes place during one regular classroom period and tests recently taught material to assess our students' mastery of the state standards and meet the degree of difficulty of the year-end state tests (MCAS).

Social Studies and Science

The social studies and science curricula are addressed through the multidisciplinary LTM Expeditions piloted in the Conservatory Lab over the course of the year.

Enrichment and Intervention

Over the course of a school year, children go through many emotional and academic stages. The Conservatory Lab will ensure that children are supported during these periods of growth by offering a variety of educational opportunities in the school day. This section outlines a few of the support systems we have in place for the school year.

Differentiated Instruction: Intervention and Enrichment

Each day, we, as educators, make decisions regarding how to best educate our students to their fullest academic, artistic and social-emotional capacities. We recognize that our students have different strengths, assets and talents and that our role, as educators, is to help students build upon these. We believe that era of public education is over. It is not consistent with current best practices and thinking in education. The power and promise of differentiated instruction is that it is an all day model for all students. Every student benefits. It is not a rigid approach, but instead values flexibility and cooperation among teachers across grade levels and disciplines. This approach places a high premium on what is best for the student. At Conservatory Lab:

- We take presentation and performance seriously and we want them to be successful, positive learning experiences for the performer. Quality takes time, effort and practice; we therefore do not rush children into performance. It is our expectation that all students at our school will and can perform in a variety of settings.
- Student Data Reviews encourage teachers and all involved to look at and discuss the ways we need to differentiate. As collaborative teams, we meet often to review student data gleaned from interim assessments, looking for ways to differentiate instruction across curricula. We discuss individual students to plan interventions and extensions so that each may meet their full potential in their own way.
- Our Learning Through Music expeditions feature in-depth research and creative projects that provide enriched learning experiences for all students. This project-based model, which incorporates differentiated instruction in reading, writing, and research skills, allows each student to work to his or her potential while contributing to a high-quality, collaborative product.

Extending is not the same as simply moving ahead. For almost any topic we are studying there are more complex ideas that a student can explore, whether it is a more challenging application or a chance to learn something that we don't regularly have time to do in a crowded curriculum. For example, a group of second graders were introduced to Ken-Ken, using skills they already know (single digit addition and subtraction), but using it in a way that requires them to use those skills and logic to solve a puzzle. Last

year a group of fifth graders were introduced to the concept of iteration, exploring a question about counting out rhymes. When we create small group or individual time in the classroom, we have room for the differentiation we need.

Homework

Homework will be required nightly. Students are expected to complete their assigned homework independently in the upper elementary grades (3rd-6th). In grades K1-2 we require that children read at home either with an adult or independently (depending on ability), play and solve the math games, puzzles, and problems the teachers provide, and practice writing as assigned. As musicians, children will need to practice their instruments at home as assigned.

Students will not be excused from completing homework assignments for any reason. We assign homework because we believe it supports our young learners as they develop the disciplines needed to become true scholars.

(Please see the *Homework/Practicing* section of this handbook.)

IXL Math

The *IXL* math intervention program is a fun, computer-based program designed to help all students develop fluency with basic math facts. *IXL* automatically differentiates instruction based on each student's individual fluency levels in customized, 10-minute daily sessions. Students are eager to build fluency in *IXL* because of the targeted instruction, engaging practice games, and embedded motivators. Teachers and administrators benefit from instantaneous progress monitoring, comprehensive reports, and a simple implementation model. Best yet, each child has access to this web-based learning at home.

RazKids Reading

RazKids Reading is a program which enables students of all ages to make significant strides in reading fluency and reach an independent reading level and push strong readers further. Students can earn points by reading passages and answering questions about the reading. The points they earn go towards more books at their level of their choice. And, again, families have access to this web-based learning program, strengthening that home-school connection further.

General Program

ATTENDANCE

The Conservatory Lab school day begins at 8:15. The Conservatory Lab does not have an early morning drop-off program and children will not be permitted into the school until 8:15 a.m.

ABSENCES: Your child's attendance patterns often have a direct link with achievement. Frequent absences hurt academic performance. Massachusetts State Law mandates that unless children are ill, they must be in school *on time* every day. Absences are considered excused for the following reasons:

1. Student illness or injury
2. Student medical appointment
3. Bereavement (some restrictions apply ... please contact the school office)
4. Some religious observances

For any of the above reasons, Massachusetts State Law further stipulates that parents must notify their child's school office within 24 hours. This can be done by phone by calling (617) 254-8904 ext. 100, each day of a student's absence. Messages may be left on the school's voice mail system at any time of day and night. When calling, please clearly list (a) your name, (b) your child's name, (c) your child's grade, and (d) the reason for the absence. When your child returns to school, you should send an absence note with an explanation for the child's absence from school. **ALL** other absences are considered unexcused. Three unexcused absences can result in a referral to the Conservatory Lab's principal for a Principal Review. Furthermore, excessive tardies will be cause for referral to Principal Review. If your child has excessive excused medical absences (more than 14 in a school year), the school will require that a doctor's verification of illness be provided for each absence or there may be cause for referral to Principal's Review.

If your child has an unexcused absence, he or she will make up the lost learning time by completing missed work during recess and/or lunch.

More than 15 unexcused absences in a school year will result in a school referral to the Department of Children and Families. Additionally, if a child is not making adequate academic progress, more than 15 absences will result in a Retention Hearing.

TARDINESS: School begins each day at 8:15 am. Tardiness is a serious detriment to each child's and each classroom's success. When a child is tardy, it prevents him/her from benefit of the most important part of a school day when the day's work is outlined. Tardiness is a serious distraction for the teacher and students who are punctual, because it detracts from the progress of the class. Although excessive tardiness is when a child is late in excess of 30 minutes, the habitual tardiness of 5 to 10 minutes is equally detrimental. This is typically the parents' responsibility. Please assist your child to learn the valuable lesson of personal responsibility by setting the example for punctuality. It is a most valuable life skill.

Children who are tardy will make up the lost time doing missed morning work during recess and/or lunch.

INDEPENDENT STUDY: Family vacations are not considered to be excused absences, and should be scheduled only during holidays to minimize absences from school. If your child must be absent from school for more than five or more days, an Independent Study Plan will keep absences from being unexcused. An Independent Study Plan is simply a way for your child to have appropriate academic activities during a school absence, but it is in no way a substitute for school attendance. Please contact your child's teacher a week before the planned absence to have work prepared. You and your child will agree upon a "contract" guaranteeing the work will be done.

BOOK DONATIONS

Please consider donating books that your child has "outgrown" to build our classrooms. Also, to mark a birthday or other special occasion, talk to your child's teacher about donating a new book to the classroom. The Conservatory Lab does not accept text books or books that are not age appropriate.

CLOTHING

In order to reduce distraction from learning and minimize peer pressure, all children should wear practical and comfortable clothes to school, appropriate to age and grade and suitable for "hands-on" learning. Clothing should be free from logos, slogans, sports team names, advertisements and the like. Hats, hoods, scarves, rags are not permitted at any time indoors. Girls should not wear very short skirts, shorts or dresses, or tops with spaghetti straps or bare midriffs. In order to be an appropriate length, skirts, shorts or dresses must be as long as the girl's fingertips touching the outside of her legs with arms hanging straight down each side. Boys should not wear excessively baggy clothing. Sneakers are usually the most appropriate and comfortable footwear for school; platform shoes, Crocs, or sandals are

dangerous, especially for gym and recess, and should not be worn to school. Shoes that light up are strongly discouraged as they distract from the learning.

Because children go outdoors, even on cold winter days, they need warm jackets, boots, hats, mittens and the like during cool and cold weather. Children may also need sun screen on sunny days. We will be heading outside everyday, except in heavy rain.

Children in the younger grades should keep a complete change of clothes in school to use in case of bathroom accidents, etc. Families will be called to pick up a child for whom clothing cannot be found.

Families are strongly urged to label all children's clothing, especially sweaters, coats and jackets, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves.

Hats or other head coverings, gloves and outerwear are not to be worn inside the building. Students will be asked to remove these articles of clothing indoors. Exceptions will be made for religious or medical reasons by the Head of School or Principal.

A lost and found box will not be maintained in the main office. Teachers will make every effort to connect lost items with children immediately. Items left unclaimed are donated to charity once a month, so please check the box regularly for lost clothing. Again, label all clothing.

COMMUNICATION

NOTICES

The Family Notes, a weekly newsletter will be sent electronically to your email account each Friday. Additionally, your child's teacher will maintain a classroom website updating you on class happenings, sharing photos, and informing you of upcoming class events and/or needs. On occasion, the school will send home a classroom report and school administrators might send home flyers, forms, and other notices. All papers will be tucked in your child's school planner or placed in a home school folder in your child's backpack. **Please check your email, classroom websites, and your child's backpack every day so that you don't miss any important information, especially on Fridays.**

If you have an email address, please make sure the school has it as we are moving towards sending all messages home electronically. Please check your email for important information and announcements.

The Conservatory Lab will also contact you via our mass messaging phone system. We will use this phone system to call and alert you to upcoming events such as a PAC meeting or the Book Fair. We may also use this phone system in case of an emergency. *It is important that we have your current phone numbers at all times.*

CONTACTING TEACHERS (Also, see www.conservatorylab.org)

An open line of communication between home and school is vital to your child's academic success. Our teachers welcome your input, and encourage you to maintain a dialogue with them. To make this communication possible, *it is important that we have your current phone numbers at all times.*

If you need to reach a teacher, please call the school, at (617) 254-8904, and leave a message on his/her extension, or send in a note with your child, including information about when and where the teacher may contact you. Please be aware that teachers are generally not available to talk on the phone during school hours. Teachers' school email addresses are also available as another way to communicate.

CONTACTING ADMINISTRATORS (Also, see www.conservatorylab.org)

The school administrators maintain an open-door policy. Please feel free to stop by to discuss any issues or concerns. Telephone calls will receive a prompt response, and individual meetings can be easily arranged. You may also contact administrators by email.

PARENT/GUARDIAN TEACHER CONFERENCES

All parents/guardians **must** participate in scheduled parent-teacher conferences, portfolio reviews, and expedition exhibitions each year. In addition, conferences may be scheduled at any time if any special concerns need to be addressed. These meetings have two major objectives. The first is to provide an opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to build a working relationship based on trust, mutual understanding and support for each student. The second is to share insights and perceptions and explore goals for your child, while reviewing student progress and achievement with the teacher and your child.

WRITTEN REPORTS

Students receive three comprehensive, written report cards based on homework, class work, written reports, quizzes, and assessments. These reports track your child's progress over the course of a year in the areas of Math, Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Science, Music, Violin and Social/Emotional Skills. Each subject area is broken down into several specific content areas and skills, and children are rated on a developmental scale of At Risk to Advanced. Students are expected to earn grades of Proficient or higher to indicate they are on or near grade level. Students will also receive progress report cards. *We ask that you attend Parent Teacher Conferences, our Exhibition Celebrations, and Portfolio Reviews.*

The school is required to administer the MCAS test in the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Also, the Fountas & Pinnell Running Records literacy assessments are administered three to four times yearly in kindergarten (K2) through 6th grade. The school also administers frequent writing, math, and music assessments throughout the year. The results of all these assessments are used for report card grading.

DISCIPLINE

Please refer to the Conservatory Lab "Code of Conduct" at the end of the Family Handbook.

DISMISSAL

5:00 p.m. pick-up. The regular school day ends at 5:00 p.m. **Students will not be dismissed from class between 4:45 and 5:00 p.m. as it is extremely disruptive to learning in each class.** Parents picking up their children at the 5:00 p.m. dismissal time are asked to do the following:

- Wait outside! The front hallway is being used as an office and two kindergarten classes are being housed in the first floor. Literally there is no waiting space available. Students that are picked up will be dismissed before the bus students.
- At 5:00 p.m., Conservatory Lab students will be released for bus departure or parent pick up.
- Parents and siblings should wait in the school lobby (do not enter any classroom) for the children to be dismissed.

Other pick-up times. If you need to pick up your child at a time earlier than his/her normal pick-up time, we ask that you follow this procedure:

- Please send a note or call the school that morning, so we can have the child(ren) ready.
- At the time of the pick-up, come in to the school and sign your child out.
- Wait in the reception area for your child to come downstairs and join you.

Please note. Dismissal time is a busy transition time and it is not an appropriate occasion to meet with a teacher. If you wish to meet with a teacher, please leave a note with the school's administrative assistant or a message on her/his voicemail. Your cooperation will help to make this busy end-of-day period run more smoothly for all children and staff.

Staff Development Days. Please note on the school calendar that there are 4 staff development days in which students do not attend school. These days are November 11th, January 2nd, March 9th, and June 1st.

If there is a change in the normal pattern of dismissal for your child, please send a note in with your child in the morning and call the school's administrative assistant during the day to confirm. Children will be

permitted to leave with someone other than their parent/guardian only with written or oral permission, and the person will be asked to show ID.

EL SISTEMA POLICIES

All students must participate fully in El Sistema as an integral part of the school curriculum, which includes attending all concerts that occur during school hours. In addition, students must adhere to school-wide rules, norms and expectations during El Sistema music classes.

Reed and Rosin Policy

String Students and Families:

At the beginning of the year, all string students will receive their own rosin, labeled with their instrument number and name. Each student will be responsible for this rosin, and if the rosin is lost, that student will be responsible **for bringing in \$2 to replace it.**

It is forbidden for any student to touch a fellow student's rosin. If any student is found taking someone's rosin, the incident will be brought to the school principal and treated as theft.

Wind Students and Families:

All wind players, as they get more advanced, must take responsibility for their instrument accessories, such as flute cleaning cloths, clarinet reeds, trumpet valve oil and trombone slide grease. As the students progress, we will be asking families to help their children take on this responsibility. For the moment, we will begin with **second year clarinetists only**, who will be responsible for ordering their own reeds online. More information will be provided to the families concerned by Mr. Malek.

Private Lesson Policy

All Conservatory Lab students receive private instruction on their instruments as a part of El Sistema at Conservatory Lab. If parents wish to supplement their children's learning through private lessons outside the school, they are of course welcome to do so, and the school will be happy to recommend private instructors. *It is the school's policy, however, that currently employed Resident Artists may not teach Conservatory Lab students outside the school.*

Instrument Take-home Policy

There will be meetings at the beginning of the year to review El Sistema policies with parents and to provide them with an instrument care demo. Parents must attend one of these meetings in order for their children to take their instruments home. Parents will also sign a form agreeing to take full financial responsibility for any loss or damage that may occur to the instrument. If any student is found to have purposefully damaged an instrument, the incident will be brought to the school principal for possible disciplinary action.

Each Conservatory Lab student in grades 1-6 is allotted one (1) instrument, to be provided by the school.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS SERVICES

Some students may be eligible for language instruction and academic support through the services of the English Language Learners (ELL) Program at Conservatory Lab. The recommendation for ELL service is based upon a combination of classroom teacher's observation and a language assessment conducted by the ELL specialist (LAS-oral and LAS w/r.)

Students identified as English Language Learners will receive language and content support while immersed in regular classroom activities. There will be pullout sessions on a weekly basis, if necessary, for them to work with the ELL teacher on targeted areas and skills.

As mandated by the state, ELL students will participate in two English language proficiency assessments annually until they graduate from the program. They must take these two assessments in addition to any grade level MCAS tests they may be required to take during the same school year.

Classroom teachers are being trained in Language Acquisition, which will allow them to provide English language learners with support in the content subjects.

Parents of ELL students have the right to visit the school and observe the services their child is receiving. Please schedule the visit with the school or classroom teacher.

EMERGENCY AND CRISIS PLANS

Copies of the Conservatory Lab *Emergency and Crisis Plan* are available in the front office. Please contact the school's office or Annie Sevelius, Principal, if you would like to receive a copy of these plans.

FIELD WORK

Field Work is an important part of our curriculum, providing the children with experiences outside of the school that directly connected to what they are learning in the classroom. It is expected that all Field Work will correlate in a *significant* manner with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and/or the Conservatory Lab curriculum. A few examples are a walk through the neighborhood, collecting specimens at Thompson's Island, exploring the Freedom Trail, writing poetry on Walden Pond or visiting a factory. Field Work gives children the opportunity to explore subjects more deeply, work with experts, ask questions, and explore new ways to gain knowledge from the world around us all.

Parents are always notified when field work will take place outside of the building. Families may be expected to contribute towards the cost of field work trips, but we attempt to keep these costs to a minimum. Families are asked to help with chaperoning when necessary and encouraged to participate in the field work at hand.

Parents are asked to sign a general permission slip allowing their children to participate in field work at the beginning of the school year—please see the accompanying packet of forms. Prior to each individual trip, a notice of field work (some requiring payment) will be sent home. If you require a scholarship, please contact your child's teacher or Principal *prior* to the day of the trip.

The Conservatory Lab main office must, AT ALL TIMES, have current contact information including home, cell, and work phone numbers and email addresses of parents/guardians as well as family emergency contacts.

FOOD

The Conservatory Lab provides a school breakfast and lunch program. Breakfast and lunch may be purchased, and are available at free or reduced cost to those who qualify. Students may also choose to bring lunch from home. We ask each family to return a Meals Form to the school so that we know which students qualify for the Free or Reduced lunch program. Even if you do not plan on taking advantage of the meals program, we must have this form returned. These forms help us determine the overall spending formulas for the entire school community.

The Conservatory Lab does not have a cafeteria. The meals are delivered daily by City Fresh foods and meet all school nutritional food requirements. All meals delivered are the exact same. Therefore, the Conservatory Lab cannot provide substitutions for meals. If you have religious or dietary restrictions,

please contact the school's administrative assistant for a monthly meals calendar. With this information, you can send a lunch to school with your child on days that you know your child will not be able to eat all or a portion of the meal (for example, restrictions around dairy, pork, beef, etc.).

Also, if you do not meet the requirement for the Free lunch program and must pay either full price or a reduced fee for breakfast and lunch, the Conservatory Lab must receive monthly payments **in full** at the start of each month in order for your child to participate in the program.

Please inform the school if your child has any food allergies and should not have specific foods. While the school will make every effort to monitor and keep such foods away from an allergic child, it is ultimately the child's responsibility not to eat forbidden foods. Students who bring lunch are asked to pack healthy food. Soda, candy, and chips are not considered healthy or appropriate lunch foods. Do not send any glass containers, or anything that requires heating or refrigeration. Also, parents are asked not to deliver "fast food" to their children during the school day.

As of August 2009, the Conservatory Lab is a Peanut and Tree Nut free school. Thank you for not sending peanut or tree nut foods into the school.

HEALTH

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The school will notify parents/guardians when cases of serious communicable diseases occur anywhere in the school.

Please do not send a child to school under the following circumstances. It is the parent/ guardian's obligation to inform the school of any of the following:

- Child has had a fever within 24 hours
- Child has conjunctivitis ("pink eye")
- Child has vomited that morning or the night before
- Child has strep throat
- Child has open sores, ringworm, or infectious skin ailments or contagious illness
- Child has head lice or nits (lice eggs)

IN-SCHOOL ILLNESS OR INJURY

The Conservatory Lab does not have a nurse in the facility. A child with minor bumps, bruises or abrasions will be treated at the school. We have staff trained in CPR and First Aid. In the case of fever or other signs of illness, the family **must** pick up the child. The child should be picked up within 30 minutes by an identifiable adult (ID may be required).

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a major injury or serious illness, every attempt will be made to notify a parent/guardian or emergency contact person. If no one can be reached, the school will call 911 for ambulance services. If the child is in stable condition, the ambulance will take the child to the hospital requested by the parents/guardians on the medical emergency form. If the child is in unstable condition, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. **The parent/guardian is financially responsible for all expenses incurred by the ambulance and hospital.**

RECORDS (See also *Family Contact Information and Health Forms*)

Parents/guardians **must** submit the following to the school **before the school year begins** (please see Health forms packet):

1. A new health history form filled out by parent/guardian
2. The most recent physical exam report, must be within the last two years
3. Emergency contact form, indicating emergency contact information and the preferred hospital to use in case of an emergency (please see Health forms packet)
4. **An up-to-date immunization history.**

Health records must be returned to the school before the school year begins. **Students will be excluded from school if the school does not receive the required medical records. No exceptions.**

Teachers check the records so that they know of any special medical conditions; parents/guardians are also urged to talk over any special issues with teachers and appropriate staff members.

MEDICATION

No medication of any kind will be dispensed without a **written, signed parent/guardian permission** form. A **physician's order is also required** for dispensing any medication including both prescription and "over-the-counter" medications. Medication must be sent to school in its original container. All medicine will be kept in a locked drawer or refrigerated and dispensed only by the appropriate staff.

ALLERGIES

As of August 2009, the Conservatory Lab is a Peanut and Tree Nut free school. Thank you for not sending peanut or tree nut foods into the school.

WELLNESS POLICY

Policy /Intent /Rationale

Conservatory Lab Charter School promotes a total learning environment by supporting wellness, positive lifestyle practices, optimum nutrition, and regular physical activity. The school contributes to the basic health status of children through positive role models, and by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition, pro-active health practices, and physical activity. Overall good health fosters good student attendance and optimizes student performance potential to ensure that no child is left behind.

The purpose of the policy is to insure that each student is provided ongoing opportunities designed to maximize the prospect that the student will make positive decisions throughout life. Health education provides critical content for students to develop and demonstrate health-related knowledge, attitudes and practices. Physical education and regular physical activity is an integral part of the total education of students, which contributes to the physical development of the individual through promotion and appreciation of physical fitness. School food services will provide students with a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of the students.

A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition, regular physical activity, and healthy lifestyle practices. In the school newsletter, pro-active health information and anticipatory guidance is disseminated to the whole school community by our school staff. Bulletin boards and posters will be used to display health promotion messages throughout the school year.

B. Support and promote good nutrition and proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.

School Food Program:

All foods and beverages served at school for breakfast and lunch meet or exceed acceptable nutritional standards. Emphasis is placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. To ensure high quality, nutritious meals, foods are served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging.

- Reimbursable school meals meet, at a minimum, the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (ACT U.S.C. 1779) and sections 9(f)(1) and 17(a) of the Richard B. Russell National School lunch Act (42U.S.C. 1758 (f)(1), 1766(a), the USDA Nutritional Standards and the American Dietary Guidelines

- Menus are prepared and foods are served to incorporate variety, appeal, taste and safety to ensure high quality meals. The Conservatory Lab meals are provided by City Fresh Foods. According to the school's contract with City Fresh Foods, provided food portions meet or exceed the above-mentioned guidelines.
- Meal times and Scheduling:
 - The school will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
 - Lunch periods are scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.
- **The Conservatory Lab is a Peanut and tree nut free school. For the safety of our students with severe nut allergies, snacks and/or lunches that contain peanuts are not permitted in the school community.**
- Vending machines are not permitted in the school building.
- Parents who provide food for children to bring to school are encouraged to provide healthy lunches. No soda or sugar drinks are permitted.
- Parents are to consult with the classroom teacher or school Principal before sending food to be shared. This is because every school has children who have severe, life-threatening allergies of all kinds and other restrictions on some children's diets. No child shall be put at risk of having an allergic reaction to foods brought into school.
- Staff members will be regularly updated by the school administration regarding children who have severe food allergies.

Nutrition and Health Education

- Nutrition instruction will be taught as part of classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective in order to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect health.
- Nutrition instruction includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, multicultural festivals and food tasting, promotions, farm visits, and school gardens;
- A comprehensive sex education component will be taught in grade five to prevent risk-taking behaviors that can adversely affect student health and well being. Permission for participation in this program will be secured for each student by his/her parent or guardian.

C. Provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity as well as to develop life-long skills and enjoyment of physical activity.

- Weekly physical education classes of forty-five minutes each are provided for all grades.
- The school schedule includes a daily recess period. During daily recess, students are encouraged to participate in organized games which foster gross motor development and aerobic activity.

E. Local Wellness Policy Committee

The School and Community positions that maintain this wellness policy are:

- Diana Lam, Head of School
- Annie Sevelius, Principal

- A teacher, as appointed
- A parent, as appointed

HOMEWORK/PRACTICING

Homework will be required nightly. Students are expected to complete their homework independently in the upper elementary grades (3rd-6th). Parents are welcome to go through each assignment with their child and check the work, but they are not required to review and sign it like they are required to in the primary grades. Reviewing homework with your child and helping on the areas that are difficult can show our scholars how much their parents value academic success and also offers them additional academic tutoring; however, if a parent always completes a child's homework with him/her, it does not teach the child independence.

In grades K1-2 we require that children read at home either with an adult or independently (depending on ability), play and solve the math games, puzzles, and problems the teachers provide, and practice writing as assigned. The Conservatory Lab believes that scholarship takes practice and that this practice begins as early as possible.

As musicians, children will need to practice their instruments at home as assigned. Conservatory Lab students are well trained in their musicianship and should have no problem monitoring their practice at home. Families are encouraged to provide a safe a space for instruments, provide praise for efforts, and be enthusiastic audiences.

Students will not be excused from completing homework assignments for any reason. If a student has an absence, the student will need to complete the homework no later than one day after returning to school (unless the teacher has given approval for an extension). Students who do not turn in homework will lose privileges. This may include missing recess, field work, assemblies, and other activities. Additionally, if a child accumulates a significant amount of missed homework, we require a family conference to strategize getting back on the track to true scholarship.

Please contact your child's teacher for more information on homework and practicing policies.

NONDISCRIMINATION

All programs, activities, and employment opportunities at Conservatory Lab are offered without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability. Conservatory Lab has a Civil Rights Complaint Policy and Procedure, which is available upon request from the school office. If you believe that you or your child has been subjected to illegal discrimination or harassment at Conservatory Lab, you may file a complaint with Diana Lam, Head of School, or Annie Sevelius, Principal, who are the school's Title VI, Title IX and Section 504 Coordinators. They can be reached at (617) 524-8904, or by email at dlam@conservatorylab.org or asevelius@conservatorylab.org.

Using the Conservatory Lab complaint process does not prevent you from also filing a complaint with an outside governmental agency, as outlined in the Complaint Policy and Procedure.

PARENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

In keeping with the school's commitment to creating partnerships for learning between parents and teachers, parents are expected to initially contact their child's teacher when any questions or concerns arise.

If parents believe that their concern has not been adequately addressed by their child's teacher, any parent, guardian, or other member of the school community may file a complaint with the Conservatory Lab Principal, Annie Sevelius. Complaints concerning buses, behavior, suspensions, issues concerning teachers, academics, civil rights, etc. may be filed in person, by telephone (617 254-8904), by mail (25

Arlington Street, Brighton, MA 02135) or by email (asevelius@conservatorylab.org) and may be verbal or in writing.

The appropriate administrator will respond within 7 days of receipt of the complaint to the complaining person.

If the person believes that his/her complaint has not been adequately addressed by the Principal, s/he may submit the complaint in writing to the Conservatory Lab Head of School, Diana Lam.

If the person believes that his/her complaint has still not been adequately addressed by the Head of School, s/he may submit the complaint in writing to the Conservatory Lab Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees shall investigate the complaint. The complaining person and all school personnel shall cooperate fully in the investigation. The Board of Trustees shall provide a written response no later than 30 days from the receipt of the written complaint.

If the person believes that the Board of Trustees has not adequately addressed his/her complaint, and that the Conservatory Lab is violating the law and regulations that govern charter schools (M.G.L.c.71, s.89; 603 CMR 1.00), s/he may also submit the complaint in writing to the Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner shall investigate the complaint, make a written response, and if the school is found to be in non-compliance, take further action as deemed appropriate.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Parent/guardians of students at the Conservatory Lab are expected to sign a Family Learning Agreement indicating their willingness to make a significant commitment to the education of their child in the following ways:

- Communicating often and routinely with their child's teacher
- Making sure their child arrives at school on time each day
- Reinforcing the school's behavioral expectations at home
- Keeping informed about school policies and requirements of their child's academic program
- Assisting with homework and practicing
- Participating in parent/guardian-teacher conferences
- Attending school events
- Responding promptly to school communications
- Serving as volunteer in the school
- Participating in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

During Parent-Teacher Conferences, at Open House, and during other meetings, teachers will be checking in with families to make sure our agreements are being upheld.

The Conservatory Lab has a very active Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The mission of the Conservatory Lab PAC is threefold: (1) to build communication within the school community; (2) to support parents/guardians in being effective educational partners; and (3) to assist and work as a team with the Conservatory Lab staff. The PAC holds monthly business meetings, and several informational/social events throughout the school year. The Steering Committee of the PAC includes two co-chairs, a secretary, a treasurer, a representative to the Board of Trustees, and two room parents from each classroom. All parents and guardians are urged to become active members of the PAC.

The PAC gives parents, teachers and administrators a voice in decisions that affect them. The PAC is chaired and supported by parents and a Conservatory Lab administrator and the Special Education Administrator attend as well. This group meets monthly over the course of the school year and serves the school community by acting as a formal clearinghouse on issues, including Special Education, that directly impact student achievement in school and at home and as a conduit for parent, teacher,

administrative, and student concerns. Its function is to assess, prioritize, act on and direct these concerns through appropriate channels and also to communicate with all members of the school community regarding decisions and procedures.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Toys, electronics, cell phones, and other personal items should be left at home. The Conservatory Lab can not be held responsible for items broken, lost, or stolen if brought from home to school. If your child does bring one of these items to school, they must turn them in to a Conservatory Lab Administrator immediately upon arrival for safe keeping. If they do not and the items are later found in the school, the item will be confiscated and a parent must personally retrieve the item from the school.

PROGRESS REPORT CARDS AND REPORT CARDS

Students receive three comprehensive, written report cards based on homework, class work, written reports, quizzes, and assessments. These reports track your child's progress over the course of a year in the areas of Math, Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Science, General Music, Instrumental Music, and Social/Emotional Skills. Each subject area is broken down into several specific content areas and skills, and children are rated on a developmental scale of At Risk to Advanced. Students are expected to earn grades of Proficient or higher to indicate they are on or near grade level. Students will also receive progress report cards.

You must attend Parent Teacher Conferences, and we encourage you to come to our Exhibition Celebrations, and Portfolio Reviews.

PROMOTION POLICY

The Conservatory Lab takes student promotion very seriously. Promotion decisions will be made on a case by case basis. Decisions will be made based on a student's academic achievement, social and emotional needs, and academic assessments through the year. Parents are a critical part of the team and will be contacted throughout the year if academic or social/emotional concerns are prohibiting their child from fully engaging in the Conservatory Lab academic and music programs. The Conservatory Lab teachers and administrators have the final word on promotion; however, parents are expected to participate fully in the conversation and actively engage in maximizing their child's learning potential.

RESEARCH

From time to time, educational research projects may take place in the Conservatory Lab either through internal assessments or through community partnerships. The Conservatory Lab, for example, is the site of significant research into the "Learning Through Music" model, assessing its impact on children as well as on the total school environment. If projects are designed and implemented, families will be informed about what the research will entail, as well as the results of the work as it is completed.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Please note that for 2011-2012, the first day for children is Tuesday, August 29th. The Conservatory Lab calendar essentially conforms to the Boston Public School calendar for MOST holidays and vacations, but please check carefully for differences from BPS. The Conservatory Lab **will** be in session on Bunker Hill Day. Students are expected to be in school on those days. We will **not** be in session on November 11th, January 2nd, March 9th, and June 1st.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

As a public school chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Conservatory Lab is directly accountable to the state for all aspects of its operation. The Conservatory Lab is overseen by a **Board of**

Trustees, which meets regularly to establish policy and ensure sound financial management and fundraising success. Included on the Board is a representative from the school's Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The Board is organized into several committees: executive; governance; facilities; finance and audit; development; education; and research and replication.

Additionally, The Conservatory Lab has a very active **Parent Advisory Council (PAC)**. The mission of the Conservatory Lab PAC is threefold: (1) to build communication within the school community; (2) to support parents/guardians in being effective educational partners; and (3) to assist and work as a team with the Conservatory Lab staff. The PAC holds monthly business meetings, and several informational/social events throughout the school year. The Steering Committee of the PAC includes two co-chairs, a secretary, a treasurer, a representative to the Board of Trustees, and two room parents from each classroom. All parents and guardians are urged to become active members of the PAC.

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Board meetings and Parent Advisory Council meetings are subject to Massachusetts Open Meeting law and, as such, any member of the school community or the public is welcome to attend.

SNOW DAYS AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Conservatory Lab is closed when the Boston Public Schools are closed due to severe weather. Closing is broadcast over WBZ (AM 980), WCRB (102.5 FM) and TV channels 4, 5, and 7. If the school closes at other times, or will reopen before the public schools do, we use a telephone chain to notify faculty and parents/guardians. When a major storm threatens, school may close early; parents/guardians will be notified to pick up their children early. If there is an exception, the Conservatory Lab will phone your home with news of any emergency closings or dismissals. If in doubt, call the school.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

By law, the Conservatory Lab is required to provide special education services. The Conservatory Lab is an inclusion school, meaning that students with special needs will be educated within the classroom to the fullest extent possible. As necessary, students also receive pull-out services from other professionals who provide students with speech and language services, occupational therapy, math and literacy support, and counseling. The school's Special Education team, which includes special education teachers, special services providers, and the special education administrator meets regularly with classroom teachers, the Conservatory Lab Principal to discuss referrals and assess students' progress, and to discuss classroom modifications to meet the needs of special education students.

The Conservatory Lab Student Support Team (SST) meets weekly to develop plans to support individual students in their classrooms. Each family receives a guide to the SST process. SST Guides are available from either the school's administrative assistant or Annie Sevelius, Principal.

STUDENT RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Faculty members and administration hold all communication regarding students at the school in strictest confidence. We expect that parents/guardians will maintain the same level of confidentiality. Parents/guardians have access to their child's records, in accordance with state and federal educational records laws.

Transcript Requests require a request in writing and must be received at least one week in advance.

Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation for private school applications requires a three-week-in-advance written request. As per the standard Conservatory Lab confidentiality policy, all such recommendations will be mailed in a sealed envelope directly to the school and not to a parent.

TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL

In accordance with state law, tobacco and alcohol use are prohibited within the school building, on school grounds, and on school buses and field trips. This policy applies to all individuals, including parents/guardians and school personnel. The use of any tobacco or alcohol product by a student will be considered to be a major disciplinary infraction, and treated accordingly.

TRANSPORTATION

Our policy is that unless otherwise specified, your child will go home on his or her bus. It is your responsibility, not your child's, to communicate any change in transportation plans.

Students who live more than one mile from school qualify to ride a school bus, unless the student lives outside of Boston. School bus transportation is provided to Conservatory Lab by the Boston Public Schools Transportation Unit. Please direct questions about school bus transportation to the BPS Transportation Unit, at (617) 635-9520. Please let the school know of any changes that you make in your child's bus arrangements (e.g. new bus stop or different bus).

For the safety of all, proper conduct on school buses must be upheld. Students are under school care from the time they leave their homes in the morning until they return at day's end. Therefore, improper behavior on a BPS school bus will result in consequences imposed by the school, including temporary or permanent bus suspension. The following Bus Safety Rules must be adhered to by all, whether going to and from school, or traveling with a teacher on a field trip:

Bus Safety Rules

- **Obey the instructions of the bus driver, teacher or chaperone**
- **Remain seated at all times**
- **Keep hands and all objects inside the bus**
- **No loud arguing, provocative behavior or fighting**
- **Use an indoor voice and respectful language**
- **Respect property: no littering, defacing, stealing or spitting**

Any bus driver may refer a student to the school for improper conduct on their bus. Should a Bus Safety Rule be broken, the consequences are as follows:

- First offense – A written or telephone warning to the home, and possible additional consequences, such as loss of recess, etc., depending on the nature of the offense
- Second Offense – A phone call to parents/guardians, informing them of the bus incident and the number of days of bus suspension.
- Third Offense – A conference with parents/guardians, informing them of the bus incident and the number of days of bus suspension.
- Fourth Offense- Permanent removal from the bus.

Please note that in the event of a serious violation of the Bus Safety Rules, the Conservatory Lab reserves the right to suspend a child from the bus for a first or second offense. ***Children must attend school when suspended from the bus.*** Any absence as a result of a bus suspension is considered unexcused.

Students waiting to board buses in the morning should be at their assigned bus stops five minutes before the scheduled bus time. They need to wait until buses have come to a complete stop and put out a stop sign before approaching to get on.

Except in cases of extreme emergency, no student(s) will be allowed to ride a bus other than his/her regularly assigned bus. In such cases, the student may receive permission from the school office after a specific request from a parent/guardian. The school will then give the driver written permission and information about the appropriate stop.

No stops to pick up or discharge passengers will be made by any bus driver other than at officially designated places.

Parents/guardians may ride the school bus with their child by obtaining a written permission slip from the office. This letter must be given to the bus driver. Parents/guardians are not allowed to step onto buses without this letter of authorization. Please contact Annie Sevelius, Principal, for a permission slip.

Children that do not attend the Conservatory Lab are not permitted on the bus and the school will require immediate pick up of this child should they ride the bus by a parent or guardian.

*Code of Conduct
&
Anti-Bullying
Plan*

Si usted necesita este documento en Español,
por favor llame al 617-254-8904, x100

Se você precisa desta mensagem traduzida,
por favor, ligue para 617-254-8904, r100

The Conservatory Lab Charter School Code of Conduct

“Part of our contract as a learning community is the expectation that children will act responsibly. We help them learn responsibility by offering daily practice on tasks integrated into the daily arrangements and design of our classroom. We expect and trust that children will tell the truth, do their jobs, take care of property, and treat each other with respect, fairness, and friendliness. A breach of that trust includes telling lies, acting or speaking in ways that show disregard for others’ rights or feelings, and acting in ways that show disregard for materials in the room.”

-from Ruth Sidney Charney’s *Teaching Children to Care*

The Conservatory Lab Charter School is a community of teachers and families who have come together for one purpose: to provide the best possible education to our children. Using the phrase “our children” promotes the idea that we all take ownership in teaching not only academics, but citizenship, responsibility, respect, kindness, and friendliness; and that by positively embracing our children at both school and home, they will have the tools necessary to make positive and powerful decisions that will affect the way they move and grow and give back to their communities throughout their lives.

The Conservatory Lab uses the best practices of Expeditionary Learning, El Sistema, and Responsive Classroom techniques in the school to teach, model, and practice positive behavior and deeper academic engagement. Our Guiding Principles at work in the classroom assert that:

- A strong social curriculum is as important as a strong academic curriculum
- How children learn is equally important to what they learn
- Social interaction promotes the greatest cognitive growth
- Daily classroom practice of Cooperation, Courage, Responsibility, Perseverance, Quality, and Joy (The Keys to Harmony) that leads to deep social and academic engagement
- Knowing our children is as important as knowing what we teach
- Knowing our children’s families is critical to knowing our children
- Adult cooperation in the school supports a healthy environment for all children and families

Classrooms, like businesses, hospitals, and playgrounds, *depend* on everyone working together in a positive and cooperative manner. In order to make the above Guiding Principles happen in our classroom, teachers provide constant opportunities for practice. We absolutely believe that all children are trustworthy, want to succeed, and have an endless capacity to learn and give and grow.

However, we understand that in practice, there will be mistakes, even failures. The Conservatory Lab strives to use the moments when a child makes a mistake as an opportunity to teach. We believe that teaching discipline- as citizens, scholars, and musicians - is as critical as teaching reading. Without discipline, most humans will not be able to engage fully in learning. So often children, and many adults, regard discipline as a punishment. The Conservatory Lab wishes to change this perception. By rethinking how we discipline children we realize that great possibilities for learning unfold before us. Discipline is, in fact, defined as “to teach,” thus we seek to turn moments of failure into teachable moments.

In our efforts to teach positive, life changing discipline, the Conservatory Lab staff will employ:

- Time-outs
- Buddy time-outs
- Logical consequences
- Loss of Privilege
- Reparations

Time-outs: a time-out is a non-punitive way for a child to take a break from the group or activity, calm down, practice self-control, and come back into the classroom fold with dignity and ready to begin learning again.

Buddy time-outs: most children will be able to use time-outs effectively and positively *most* of the time. But in each of us is the capacity to act out more and, therefore, need a greater break that the classroom time-out may provide. Each Conservatory Lab classroom has a buddy time-out room. If a child has difficulty taking a time out in his or her regular classroom, the teacher may ask that child to take a time-out in the buddy classroom. This will provide a greater distance from distraction, allow classroom learning to continue, and underscore the seriousness of the behavior. Again, a time-out is a chance to get it together, reflect, calm down, while maintaining dignity, and then re-enter the classroom to learn with a fresh attitude.

Logical consequences: children must learn that their behaviors, actions, and words make an impact, either positive or negative, on the people and natural world around them. When they make a positive impact on another person, the consequence can be a feeling of joy, the strengthening of a friendship, and an understanding of being of real value in the lives of others. The consequence of negative or hurtful behavior can be just as strong. Sometimes the consequences are natural (if you run across the street without looking you might get seriously injured by a car).

Most of the time, a child needs to learn self-discipline and logical consequences in a part of that education. A logical consequence is most often a loss of privilege. For example, if a child does not use the classroom materials correctly, he may be asked to clean up his area and not participate in the activity that day (but he will have an opportunity to try again the next time). A second example is that after being asked to stop talking to a friend during instructional time, that she takes a time-out. And a third example is when child has shown repeatedly that they can not go to the bathroom quickly and cleanly, that the child waits until an adult can escort them to the bathroom for a few days.

Logical consequences are relevant, connect to the behavior, are short term, respectful, and allow for opportunities to learn and re-engage with the community after a specific time of teaching and learning.

Loss of Privilege: a privilege is a chance to learn what it takes to be a productive, kind, and full member of a community. A privilege can be a class job, the chance to take home a violin, or to sit where you like on the bus. When a child shows that they are not able to engage in a privilege correctly, then a loss of privilege is in order. Again, the loss of privilege is not meant to be punitive or degrading. Instead it is an opportunity for a child to work cooperatively with adults to learn what it takes to engage appropriately with a privilege, reflect on past behaviors, take a break from something they are struggling with and then try again.

Reparations: often, when mistakes are made, the best course of action is to fix it. If children spend time set aside for work on math projects talking, then they need to fix it by getting the work done during recess. If a child knocks over a tower a classmate is building with blocks, then it needs to be fixed with an apology and a rebuilding of the project. If a child spills her milk, then she needs to clean it. If a child knocks another child down, they need to provide help up and an apology. Reparations are fair and connect directly to the incident. Conversations about the incident try and get at the heart of why something happened and how to keep it from happening again.

Teachers in the Conservatory Lab classrooms commit to keeping the environment safe, clean, challenging and respectful. They provide daily opportunities to practice not only math, science, and reading, but kindness, listening, cooperative work, and time-outs. We believe that by setting high expectations and providing ample practice time in concert with knowing exactly what each child needs to be truly successful, that we are setting our children up for greatness. We also believe that families are a critical partner and welcome you into our classrooms to join in the learning, meet with teachers and administrators, share joys and concerns, and learn how we teach what we know.

Behavioral Expectations

Students at the Conservatory Lab are expected to conduct themselves as scholars and musicians. We expect students to not only be concerned with their own learning, but in the learning of others.

Students are expected to:

- arrive on time ready for school,
- walk in hallways,
- remain silent in hallways,
- follow directions the first time they are given,
- complete all homework assignments with integrity,
- care for their instruments and protect them from harm,
- care for their books, work, and other learning materials and protect them from harm,
- refrain from bullying and report bullying when witnessed,
- leave all snacks and sugary drinks at home- they are not permitted,
- and contribute positively to the full academic, musical, social life of the school.

Not upholding these behavioral expectations **will** result in a referral to the school principal, and a possible suspension and/or reparation.

Student Support at the Conservatory Lab

Social Work

The Conservatory Lab offers a guidance and advisory program led by Ms. Suzy Spresert, a social work program led by Mr. Craig Keefe. The Conservatory Lab will also host several social work interns each school year. Together, they will create and implement a number of social skills curriculums in the Conservatory Lab classrooms, from a *Welcome to Pre-K* to *5th Graders Moving On* curriculum. Mr. Keefe and the social work interns will also be running small groups and offering individual counseling during the school day. The school social workers will also intervene in disciplinary issues.

If we believe that your child would benefit from **one-on-one or small group services**, we will contact you to discuss our ideas and concerns. Also, if *you* believe that your child could benefit from some one-on-one time with a social worker, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Sevelius. We will not meet with your child, either one-on-one or in small group, without a pre-conference (either in person or by phone) and express, signed permission.

Student Support Team (SST)

The SST is a group of Conservatory Lab community members (school administration, specialists, and teachers) that meet weekly to consider the areas of strengths and concerns of individual children and, together, design strategies to support these particular children both academically and emotionally.

Your child's classroom teacher and other specialists, if necessary, will leave the meeting with a variety of accommodations and/or modifications to implement in the classroom in an effort to meet your child's specific academic or emotional needs.

If you would like more information about the SST process, please contact Annie Sevelius, Principal, for a *Families Guide to the SST*.

Conservatory Lab Charter School Anti-Bullying Policy

The Conservatory Lab Charter School is committed to creating a safe, caring, and respectful learning environment and strictly enforces a prohibition against bullying of any of its students by anyone. Site-based initiatives developed collaboratively by personnel, school administration, families, and students seek to: (1) help students of all ages and abilities to stay safe, act with care and consideration, and believe in themselves; and (2) help adults respond effectively to student's reports and their own observations.

In Massachusetts, **Massachusetts General Law c. 71, § 37O** (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) defines bullying as:

“Bullying”, the severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of: (i) causing physical or **emotional harm to the other student** or damage to the other student's property; (ii) placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) **creating a hostile environment at school for the other student**; (iv) **infringing on the rights of the other student at school**; or (v) materially and **substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school**.

“Hostile environment” is defined by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O as a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education and create an abusive school environment.

Bullying behaviors can include, but are not limited to, intimidation such as name calling or threatening based on bias; social alienation such as shunning or spreading rumors; cyber-bullying; retaliation; or physical aggression such as assaults on a student or deliberate destruction of a student's property. Again, these acts create a hostile environment in which a student cannot learn to their greatest potential, and in some cases children miss school due to fear or social anxiety.

Biased-related bullying is based on an individual's race, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, national origin, socio-economic status, size, disability, and/or religion.

Bullying is typically a repeated and ongoing pattern of threatening behaviors over time. The Conservatory Lab believes that bullying can also be a one-time event when a significant incident is biased related.

The bullying of students occurring in the school is prohibited by law and will not be tolerated by The Conservatory Lab Charter School. For the purposes of this policy, the Conservatory Lab defines “school” as the classroom, the hallways, common areas, the recreation areas, any area in which field work occurs-including off school property, any school sanctioned event, and when travelling to and from school.

The Conservatory Lab believes that a failure to address bullying gives students and other community members the impression that it is permissible to engage in bullying behaviors. The Conservatory Lab takes allegations of bullying seriously and will respond promptly to complaints and allegations of bullying.

Reporting Bullying:

Faculty and Staff-

Any member of the Conservatory Lab faculty who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of bullying of any kind or becomes aware of retaliation against the student who reported information on bullying is

expected to report concerns immediately to the school administration. Faculty members who do not report incidents of bullying, or of suspected bullying, risk disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Anonymity-

The Conservatory Lab faculty **cannot** anonymously report incidents of bullying or retaliation. The Conservatory Lab families and students **can** anonymously report incidents of bullying or retaliation. The school, however, urges all faculty, families, and students not to make reports anonymously as they are hard to substantiate, but an anonymous report is better than none at all. The Conservatory Lab administration makes every effort to protect the identity of anyone reporting incidents of bullying. We cannot promise strict confidentiality as effective investigations depend on specific information gathered from specific people.

To submit an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation, please fill out the “Behavior Incident Report” (available electronically), fill it out, and leave it in the principals mailbox. Children are urged to leave anonymous letters either on a teacher’s desk, in the principal’s mailbox, or to report incidents to family members so that they may fill out the Behavior Incident Report for them.

Process-

Anyone who believes he/she has been harassed should implement the following procedures:

1. **Students**-Let the offending person or persons know that you want the behavior to stop. Say "no" firmly, looking directly and unapologetically at them to give a clear message about how you feel. If you are unable to confront the person(s) alone, take a friend along or write a letter. You may want the assistance of an adult (e.g. guidance counselor, administrator, and teacher) in preparing the letter as well as in presenting it.

Faculty-Let the offending person or persons know that you want the behavior to stop. Say “no” firmly, looking directly and unapologetically at them to give a clear message about the conduct.

Then report the incident to your supervisor.

Families-Let the offending person or persons know that you want the behavior to stop. Say "no" firmly, looking directly and unapologetically at them to give a clear message about the conduct. Then report the incident to a classroom teacher or school administrator.

2. If your objection does not cause the behavior to stop, keep a record of when, where, and how you have been harassed. Include witnesses, direct quotes, actions, evidence, and any written communication.
3. Promptly contact someone at the school about the situation —teacher, faculty member, social worker, or administrator.

A response from the Conservatory Lab Principal, Annie Sevelius, will be made in consultation with the person making the complaint; it will be made discreetly to protect the confidentiality of the information and the reputations of those involved. Retaliation in any form against any person who has filed a complaint relating to harassment is forbidden. If retaliation occurs, it could be cause for dismissal of staff, personnel, or student.

Reporting-

To report an incident of bullying or retaliation the reporter must fill out a Report of Alleged Bullying Form and give it to the Conservatory Lab Principal, Annie Sevelius. The reporter’s name may not be left off of the form (Unless a reporter chooses to report anonymously), but the reporter will remain anonymous during the investigation to the greatest degree possible to allow for “anonymous” reporting.

Procedures for Responding to and Investigating Bullying-

Following receipt of a Report of Alleged Bullying Form the Principal will promptly conduct an investigation and complete a Bullying Investigation and Determination Form.

False Accusations-

Students making false claims of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be sent for a conference with the school administration after the first offense. A second false claim will result in a phone call to parents, counseling, and referral to social services. Repeat offenders will face suspension or possible expulsion at the discretion of the principal.

Reporting to proper authorities (police)-

The Conservatory Lab will contact law enforcement in cases where criminal charges may be pursued against an aggressor and file a police report. In some cases, the Conservatory Lab will file a 51A with the Department of Children and Families.

Consequences:

Where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the Conservatory Lab will act promptly to address and eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, which may range from a social plan created with the offenders educational team, the recommendation for behavioral therapies provided outside of the school, and/or disciplinary action where appropriate, up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or court involvement.

Consequences:

Should a thorough investigation support an allegation of bullying, the Conservatory Lab will enact the following minimum consequences:

- **First Offense** – An immediate phone call reporting incident and subsequent family meeting with administration, pick up from school, a two day suspension, and the implementation of the school re-entry plan.
- **Second Offense** – An immediate family meeting with teachers and school administration, pick up from school, a three day suspension, the implementation of the school re-entry plan (to include social service support). The Conservatory Lab reserves the right to file a police report and/or 51A at this point.
- **Third Offense** – The Conservatory Lab reserves the right to begin expulsion proceedings.

Identifying Target's Needs:

The Conservatory Lab understands that victims of bullying have a very specific set of needs. We also hold as a hallmark of our community the home-school connection. If a student is indeed identified as the target of bullying, the Conservatory Lab will contact the target child's family immediately to:

- discuss the incident, outline specific and immediate actions to prevent further incidents, and move to establish a safe return to the classroom;
- additionally, the school and family will collaboratively create a unique school safety and prevention program for that individual student, including, but not limited to, a lunch and recess safety plan, a transportation safety plan, a seating plan change, and change of schedule for the bully.

Bullying not only impacts physical safety, but impacts one's psychological safety, as well. The Conservatory Lab will:

- offer school social work support to the victim and appropriate family members; if need be, the school will help to facilitate therapy outside of school. The child's safety team will consist of their family, teachers, the school social worker, and will be facilitated by a school administrator.

School Re-Entry Plan for Offender:

If a student has received a consequence for bullying another student or students, that student will be re-entered into the community slowly to ensure the physical and emotional safety of others.*

Re-Entry Plan (Day 1):

1. Re-entering student will be escorted by an adult to bathrooms and during all transitions
2. Re-entering student will spend recess and lunch period discussing positive behaviors with school administrator.
3. Child will be picked up by family at 12 pm to discuss the re-entry.

Re-Entry Plan (Day 2) - *if necessary*:

1. Re-entering student will be escorted by an adult to bathrooms and during all transitions through day
2. Re-entering student will spend recess period discussing positive behaviors with school administrator.
3. School administrator will facilitate Apology of Action between re-entering student and offended child.
4. Administrator will contact the family of re-entering child with update on re-entry into community.

Re-entry Plan (Day 3) - *if necessary*:

1. Continued monitored transitions and bathroom breaks.
 2. Monitored lunch with teachers and peers.
 3. Launch of a social skills group with school social worker.
 4. Closely monitored recess.
 5. Administrator will contact the family of re-entering child with update on re-entry into community.
- If this is a second offense, a report to the Boston Police and/or Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be considered.

Bullying and retaliation are behaviors that often signify significant social and emotional distress in a child. The Conservatory Lab will:

- offer school social work support to the Offender and appropriate family members or will help to facilitate therapy outside of school. The child's safety team will consist of their family, teachers, the school social worker, and will be facilitated by a school administrator.

Bystander Bullying and Passive Bystanders:

Bullying situations usually involve more than the bully and the victim. They also involve bystanders-those who watch bullying happen or hear about it.

The Conservatory Lab defines bystander bullying as instigating (prodding the bully to begin), encouraging (laughing, cheering, or making comments that further stimulate the bully), and joining in on the bullying once it has begun.

Most bystanders passively accept bullying by watching and doing nothing. Often without realizing it, these bystanders also contribute to the problem. Passive bystanders provide the audience a bully craves and the silent acceptance that allows bullies to continue their hurtful behavior.

Restitution:

If property is damaged, lost, or stolen, it is understood that the parents of the student responsible for the damage will make every effort to pay for or replace the broken item(s).

Protection for All Students:

Victim-

Victims of bullying include girls and boys of all ages, sizes, and backgrounds. Every child's individuality should be appreciated for the value it brings to the group, rather than suppressed to reduce the risk of

victimization. The Conservatory strives to protect all children from bullying and to create a learning environment in which bullying is unthinkable. The Conservatory Lab commits its time and resources to provide physical, social, and emotional support for those targeted by bullies, including social work, consequences for bullies, parent support, and teacher education. If a child reports that he or she is being bullied, that child has a right to remain anonymous during the investigation process and beyond. Additionally, the Conservatory Lab does not discriminate based on an individual's race, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, national origin, socio-economic status, and/or religion. All staff understands these principles as a core cultural belief and fundamental human right upon hiring.

Reporters-

The Conservatory strives to protect all children from bullying and to create a learning environment in which bullying is unthinkable. That said, the staff and administration at the Conservatory Lab makes every effort to protect anyone reporting bullying, providing information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses bullying, or has reliable information about an act of bullying. Anyone who reports bullying may remain anonymous: however, anonymous reports of bullying will not be investigated.

Special Education and 504 Plans-

Students with an IEP or a 504 plan are protected by certain rights when it comes to disciplinary action. However, all students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Plan and work proactively in the community. The Conservatory Lab will consider the individual student, their needs, and their particular plan when making decisions about disciplinary actions.

Staff Development:

Conservatory Lab teachers and staff receive an **Eyes On Bullying** toolkit and the readings and podcasts from this toolkit and other resources (for example, Quit It! by Froschl, Sprung, and Mullin-Rindler; Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature by William Kreidler; No Kidding About Bullying by Naomi Drew; and Bully Free Classroom by Allan Beane) are a part of the yearly cycle of professional development that begins each year before children enter the building. The school administrator ensures that trainings and readings are relevant, high-quality, and that strategies to reduce and spot bullying are implemented consistently in all classrooms. Through professional development, teachers are trained in specific bullying prevention approaches, including:

- strategies for interventions to stop bullying,
- information about the complex power dynamics that can take place between an aggressor, target, and witness to bullying,
- information on students who are at risk for bullying,
- information on cyber-bullying, and
- information on internet safety issue and cyber-bullying.

These approaches emphasize:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Teachers will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, including anonymous reporting procedures.

Additionally, each year the Conservatory Lab 5th graders will be offered the **Kim Marshall Sex Education Course**. This curriculum offers a Self-Care component which includes lessons on Sexual Harassment, Seduction, Sexual Abuse, Sexual Bullying, and Rape.

Community Development:

The Conservatory Lab will host two Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings each year, one in the fall and the other in the spring, to address the subject of school bullying. During these meetings the PAC, in collaboration with school administration, will train families how to implement the school's anti-bullying curriculum at home, how to spot and discuss the dynamics of bullying, and online safety and ways to spot and prevent cyber-bullying.

Each year the Conservatory Lab will survey students, families, and staff to determine the ever changing nature of school culture and to determine the level and type of bullying occurring in the school and the schools effectiveness in addressing incidents of bullying.

For more information on Massachusetts State Law, please visit <http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section370> or request the full Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Law document from School Administration.

Creation and Implementation:

1. The Conservatory Lab Charter School Anti-Bullying Plan was created by the school administration, Diana Lam, Head of School, and Annie Sevelius, Principal.
2. On December 15th, 2010, the plan and its need in the community were presented at the school's PAC meeting to parents and our Special Education Administrator and ELL Specialist.
3. On December 17th, 2010, the plan went to the entire family community via email for public comment.
4. On December 20th, 2010, the 3rd-5th graders took a survey to discover the impact of bullying on the community and their learning.

Other Disciplinary Infractions

From time to time in the elementary school setting, children struggle to behave appropriately in classrooms, on the bus, at recess, in the school at large, or during field work. Again, we recognize that learning appropriate school behavior is a committed partnership between teacher, students, and home.

However, during situations of minor or major disciplinary concerns, the Conservatory Lab will take appropriate steps to insure the safety of each and every adult and child in the school.

Bus Behavior Infractions

For the safety of all, proper conduct on school buses must be upheld. Students are under school care from the time they leave their homes in the morning until they return at day's end. Therefore, improper behavior on a BPS school bus will result in consequences imposed by the school. The following Bus Safety Rules must be adhered to by all, whether going to and from school, or traveling with a teacher on a field trip.

Any bus driver may refer a student to the school for improper conduct on their bus. Examples of improper bus conduct include:

- Bullying
- Failure to obey the instructions of the bus driver, teacher, or chaperone

- Does not remain seated
- Fails to keep hand and all objects inside the bus
- Loud arguing, provocative behavior, or fighting
- Uses an unusually loud voice and /or disrespectful language
- Littering, defacing stealing, or spitting

Should a Bus Safety Rule be broken, the consequences are as follows:

- First offense – A *written or telephone warning* to the home, and possible additional consequences, such as loss of recess, assigned bus seat, apology to the driver, etc., depending on the nature of the offense
- Second Offense – A *phone call* to parents/guardians informing them of the bus incident and the number of days of bus suspension.
- Third Offense – A *conference* with parents/guardians informing them of the bus incident and the number of days of bus suspension.
- Fourth Offense- Permanent removal from the bus.

Please note that in the event of a serious violation of the Bus Safety Rules, the Conservatory Lab reserves the right to suspend from the bus for a first or second offense. ***Children MUST attend school when suspended from the bus.*** Any absences in the event of bus suspension is considered unexcused.

Minor and Major Disciplinary Infractions

Minor infractions to expected student behaviors and to any additional rules developed in the classroom are defined as those infractions that are addressed by the teacher or staff person responsible for the student when the infraction occurs. Examples of logical consequences for minor infractions are: opportunity for a break in a buddy classroom, behavior reflection activities, loss of recess or other privileges, time out, being required to make amends and or apologize, and notification to a parent or guardian.

It would be impossible to compose an exhaustive list of all such infractions, but examples include:

- Bullying
- Teasing
- Not following the teacher’s instructions
- Behavior that is disrespectful to others
- Littering
- Minor disruption of the learning environment

Major disciplinary infractions are those problems that must be addressed by the Administration. A major infraction might consist of several minor incidents or one serious incident of violent or illegal behavior (any unsafe, violent, or uncontrollable behavior, using any object as a weapon, fighting, stealing, possession of a weapon, harassment, or illegal substance, etc.).

Again, it would be impossible to describe every possible disciplinary infraction. There are, however, two general categories of major disciplinary infractions.

1. The first includes violations of school rules or the law that are judged to be disruptive to the classroom learning and are dangerous and/or destructive. Examples of major disciplinary infractions include:
 - Acts or threats of serious physical violence against teachers or other students
 - Stealing
 - Destruction of school or other people’s property
 - Obscene language
 - Fighting
 - Bullying and harassment (physical, verbal, sexual)

2. The second type occurs when a student has engaged in multiple incidents of minor infractions, and has failed to complete a disciplinary assignment, or has been otherwise unresponsive to the usual forms of corrective action described in the previous section.

When minor or major discipline issues arise with your child, the Conservatory Lab teaching community feels very strongly that children should learn from the experience. In every instance, the student loses a privilege, fixes what was broken, and/or makes restitution for the infraction, in the same manner as described in the previous section. There are opportunities for a school administrator to become involved, too. If this is the case, the appropriate Administrator will make every effort to communicate with families. Through this communication, parents become part of the teaching circle as well.

When and if a request is made for a parent to pick a child up from school, the parent must comply immediately to the request. *If a parent does not comply, the Conservatory Lab may have no other choice but to bring the child to the family.*

Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension for Major Disciplinary Infractions

After speaking with the teacher and the student, the Administrator in charge may decide, at his/her discretion, and because of the student's age, disability status, or other extenuating circumstances, to treat the incident as a minor disciplinary infraction and send the student back to class (see above). There may be times, however, that the student will be suspended immediately for at least the rest of the school day. The Administrator will call the parent/guardian to arrange for immediate pick-up of the student. The student will complete his/her schoolwork in the office until picked up. Before leaving the school building, the parent/guardian and the student will meet with an Administrator to discuss the reason for the suspension. If circumstances dictate (i.e. the Administrator determines that it is in the best interests of the child to remain in school) the suspension may be an in-school suspension. However, **when and if a request is made for a parent to pick a child up from school, the parent must comply immediately to the request.** *If a parent does not comply, the Conservatory Lab may have no other choice but to bring the child to the family.*

If the Administrator, in consultation with the student's teacher, judge the infraction to warrant a suspension of longer than the rest of the day, the parent/guardian will be so informed, in writing and by phone. Suspensions may be in or out of school, as judged by the totality of the circumstances. A decision to suspend a student for a longer period will be based on the totality of the circumstances, including the student's age and special needs, if any, the severity of the incident, and the student's past record. Suspensions will not exceed ten days.

Expulsions for Major Disciplinary Infractions

Expulsions are rare at the elementary school level, but do occur. The Conservatory Lab will examine each possible expulsion very carefully to determine the appropriate course of action. The Conservatory Lab teachers and administrators have the final word on expulsion; however, parents are expected to participate fully in the conversation. A few possible reasons that a student may be subject to expulsion from the Conservatory Lab are if the child is found to be in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance, or if she or he assaults any school staff member.

The Use of Restraint on Children

The use of restraint on a child should not be undertaken lightly and under no circumstances should anyone not trained in proper restraint techniques attempt to restrain a child. *If a child needs restraining and no trained restrainer is present, this should not prevent the restraint from occurring. The force of restraint must then be reasonable and protective of everyone involved.*

Only use restraint when:

- Nonverbal intervention is not effective
- The students behavior threatens himself or others seriously and physically
- Another school community member needs immediate protection from imminent serious harm.

Restraint cannot be used as:

- Punishment
- In response to destruction of property or refusal to follow direction or a rule
- In response to a verbal threat.

When a restraint occurs, the Conservatory Lab social worker or administration will make every effort to contact families to discuss the incident.

Discipline of Students With Disabilities and 504 Accommodations

Students with an IEP or a 504 plan are protected by certain rights when it comes to disciplinary action. However, all students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and work proactively in the community. The Conservatory Lab will consider the individual student, their needs, and their particular plan when making decisions about disciplinary actions.

When behavioral issues arise, the Conservatory Lab administration will make every effort to contact families to discuss the incident.

Suspected Discrimination or Civil Rights Violation

If a student, parent, teacher, administrator, or other staff member believes that s/he has been the victim of or has witnessed another person being treated differently or being subjected to harassing conduct on the basis of race, religion, national origin, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

To begin, community members witnessing abuses of individual civil rights are expected to take immediate action to interrupt the behavior. Then complaint of possible civil rights violations should be directed to the appropriate Conservatory Lab School Principal, in his or her capacity as Civil Rights Administrator. Families or students, who, for any reason, do not feel comfortable approaching the appropriate Principal with such a complaint, should speak to the Head of School about their concern. This person should, in turn, report the situation to the Civil Rights Administrator for investigation.

For more information, please see the Conservatory Lab Civil Rights Complaint Policy and Procedure, available upon request from the school office.

Suspected Student Abuse/Neglect

Teachers and School Administrators are mandated reporters of suspected student abuse or neglect. A reportable condition occurs when a teacher sees marks or signs on a student (i.e. bruises, burn marks, broken bones), or the student discloses abuse or neglect. The Administrator, in consultation with teacher(s), and the nurse, if appropriate, will make a decision as to whether a 51A report should be filed with the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Disciplinary or Psychiatric Emergency

Rarely, a child may have a disciplinary or psychiatric emergency. Please be assured that the Conservatory Lab during moments of crisis takes the well being of all children seriously and works towards a safe resolution for all children and adults in the community.

The Administrator will review the incident with the social worker, nurse, and teacher and assess safety risk. If the student is determined to be a risk to the safety of himself/herself or others, arrangements will

be made for immediate pick up of the student by parent/guardian. The Conservatory Lab social worker will work closely with the families, making supportive recommendations for next steps.

For more information on **Mass. General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H, Discipline of Students with Disabilities and 504 Accommodations**, and **The Use of Restraint on Children** please contact Annie Sevelius, Principal, for a copy of the CLCS Behavior Response Protocol.