

Branford School Age Child Care

*Planting seeds of knowledge that last a
lifetime*



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Dear Parent(s),

Welcome to the Branford Board of Education School Age Child Care Program. We look forward to the coming year with great expectations. Our goal is to provide the children with a safe, nurturing environment. We recognize that close collaboration and open communication with our parents is an important part of the program. Working together we can create a program that not only enhances the lives of our children but also gives them the tools to succeed. We will work with children to give them skills that will enable them to communicate effectively, get along with peers, resolve conflict, improve homework skills, and have fun. If we are successful in creating this environment, then we have succeeded in our mission.

We ask that you read this handbook completely, and if you have any questions about our program or policies do not hesitate to call the office at 203-481-5066.

Please feel free to share your comments, concerns, and ideas with me. Our office is open daily from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. We are located at 12 Melrose Avenue.

Sincerely,

Pamela DeMaio
Program Coordinator

Mission Statement

To provide working families with a safe nurturing environment for their children. A program that is developed around the interest of the children with a focus on learning the social/emotional skills needed for them to feel confident.

Branford School Age Child Care

12 Melrose Avenue
Phone #203-481-5066

Fax #203-481-7160

Office hours 7:30 am - 3:30 pm

Mary T Murphy Site
203-315-3563

John B. Sliney Site
203-315-3548

Mary Tisko Site
203-315-3555

Walsh Intermediate Site
203-481-0069 (currently not available)

Before school program begins at 7:00 am.
Students are dismissed to classrooms at the start of school.

After school begins when school is dismissed; this includes minimum days and ends at 6:00pm.

Per Connecticut General Statute Sec. 19a-77 we are required to disclose that our program is not licensed by the State Office of Early Childhood, as programs administered by public schools are exempt from licensure.

School Age Child Care Goals and Objectives

- To provide a quality child care program that is accessible to families needing the service, affordable, and available during times when school is out on a year round basis.
- To provide a quality experience, activities, guidance and supervision for the children in a safe, nurturing environment.
- To provide opportunities for the child to develop physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually.
- To allow children to play a central role in determining the activities and experiences in which they participate.
- To provide activities that offer opportunities for success for each child in the program.
- To provide an atmosphere in which children can learn to share and be a supportive member of a group.
- To help children make friends and get along with others.
- To work in partnership with parents toward common goals for each child.
- To provide qualified, experienced, caring staff with ongoing training and development.
- To provide ongoing program monitoring and appraisal.

Goals for Curriculum Development

We define curriculum as all the developmental experiences that are planned for the whole program. Our curriculum places the child at the center of the planning with attention to individual needs, interests, and developmental levels.

1. The environment is prepared for active exploration and interaction with other children, staff, and materials.
2. Weather permitting, daily outdoor activities are provided for the children.
3. A child's self identity and sense of completeness are promoted through attention, acceptance, and affection.
4. Childinitiated, teachersupported play is an essential component; the role of the staff is that of facilitator.
5. Learning activities, materials, and equipment are concrete, real and relevant to the lives of our children.
6. The planned, but flexible, curriculum provides creative and intellectual experiences.

Any suggestions, which you feel could strengthen our programs, are welcome at any time.

Parent Involvement

We believe strongly that parental involvement is a key ingredient in our program. We encourage parents to visit our program sites whenever possible. This will give you a chance to see how your child spends his or her time with other children and staff, and will assist us in meeting your needs.

In order to better understand each child, the staff welcomes any opportunity to talk with parents about their children. It is critical that the lines of communication stay open. If communication is frequent, together we can provide security and continuity for the children.

Parents and Grandparents are encouraged to share a special talent or hobby with their children. Donations of craft materials and used toys/games are always appreciated

Lines of Responsibility

We believe that open communication between parents and staff is essential in order for us to better serve the needs of you and your child, and that it is necessary to work together to provide a safe and secure environment for your children.

THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Administering the policies and programs of the Branford School Age Child Care programs.
- Recruiting, hiring and training of child care personnel.
- Coordinating, developing, implementing and supervising the child care programs and staff.
- All procedures and inquiries regarding registration, enrollment, collection of program fees, payment concerns, grievances, or any issue that a parent may wish to discuss.

THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Administering the policies and programs of the Branford School Age Child Care programs.
- Coordinating, developing, implementing and supervising the child care programs and staff.
- All procedures and inquiries regarding registration, enrollment, collection of program fees, payment concerns, grievances, or any issue that a parent may wish to discuss.

THE SITE SUPERVISOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Planning a balanced program of developmentally appropriate activities.
- Supervising the children enrolled in the program, ensuring their safety and well being.
- Maintaining accurate documentation of attendance for each child, and current forms and records on all children.
- Ensuring that parents know, and follow the schedule and procedures for dropoff and pick up of children.

PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Accurately completing all required forms for your child including any accommodations or restrictions and ensuring that these forms are kept current.
- Contact their site if children will be absent from the program.
- Payment of fees by the first of every month.
- Accompanying the children to the school and signing in when dropping off. Entering the site and signing out when picking up. (Subject to change)
- Establishing an alternate care plan for children in the event of illness, and an emergency backup plan for early dismissal due to inclement weather.
- Ensuring that an authorized adult will pick up children no later than 6:00 pm. Please notify the site if an emergency arises and you will be later than 6:00 pm! A late charge will be billed to your account (please refer to Financial Issues).
- Left Child Policy: If your child is not picked up by 6:00 pm, and the child care site is not notified, all telephone numbers on the emergency form will be called every fifteen minutes until someone is contacted. ***Please do not list your name as the emergency contact!*** If no contact is made by 6:30 pm, then the Branford Police Department will be contacted to come and pick up your child.
- Custody Disputes: If a child/family has a court order stating that a legal parent/guardian is restricted in picking up a child, or if there are conditional legal restrictions for a child, a copy of the court order is to be placed in the child's file. This is required by the State of Connecticut Department of Health Services.
- Informing the office and Site Supervisor of any change in contact information (i.e. change of: address, phone number, email address).

Policy Statement for Divorced/Separated Parents

It is the mission of Branford School Age Child Care to be a support to families and to promote positive development for children. We recognize that many families are in transition and have experienced separation and/or divorce. In order to provide the best possible care for your children, who are our main priority, we feel that it is vitally important that we be able to maintain good relations with all the significant adults in their lives.

The staff of Branford School Age Child Care is trained in and sensitive to the issues of divorce and separation. We ask that you make an appointment to meet privately with the Director and your child's Site Supervisor in order to discuss any matters of importance in relation to the divorce/separation and any other issues that may help us in the care of your children. We must be very clear in regard to the following:

- What is the custody arrangement?
- Which parent to contact first for general questions and in an emergency?
- Will there be a request for duplicate program information to be sent to both parents?
- Who is responsible for payments to SACC? **We no longer bill separately.**
- Who will or will not be authorized to pick up the children?
- What are the visitation schedules involved in the pick-up of the children at SACC?
- Who are the other significant adults in the child's life and their relationship to the children, especially if they are listed as an emergency contact.
- It will also be helpful to discuss the child's general feelings as you see it so that we may be appropriately responsive to your child when they are with us.

In an effort to minimize situations which may be uncomfortable for you, your children and our staff, we ask that parents refrain from talking about custody issues, visitation disputes and problems with, or talking negatively about the child's other parent in front of the child. Please note that we cannot deny a parent access to their child upon the word of the other parent unless we have a copy of a court order stating that this is the case. If there are concerns of which we need to be aware, please arrange to meet privately with the Site Supervisor and/or Director. Once again, it is the child's well being that is our main priority, and we need to be able to maintain good relations with both parents.

Branford School Age Child Care Program

Program Content

The School Age Child Care programs will meet the needs of each child in the program. The scheduling and pacing of each activity will be consistent with recognized principles of childhood education. These principles recognize that each child develops at his/her own unique rate within the needs of his/her age group. The curriculum is based on the interest of the child and the resources available to meet these needs. The children are encouraged to make activity choices, and each child will be encouraged to share his/her thoughts and feelings as an aid in emotional, social and language development.

Program Design

This is a **sample schedule**. Time, space and weather must be considered when planning the schedule. Staff must show flexibility in scheduling without compromising program goals.

BEFORE SCHOOL: A selection of low key activities will be provided. Children will arrive at different times and need to gradually become part of the group. Children are engaged in quiet games, free play, reading, relaxing with friends, or talking with staff. Time and space are provided for the children to eat breakfast and to do homework, if needed.

AFTER SCHOOL: This program strives to provide a "home away from home" for the child where they are allowed to play a central role in determining the activities and experience in which they participate.

After School activities include:

- **Snack Time:** Snacks are provided by the parent, but snack time is a time for informal group discussion and sharing information about the day's schedule.
- **Activity Time:** Outdoor games and play, arts and crafts, special interest clubs, etc., will be scheduled during this time.
- **Homework Time:** A quiet area will be provided (the school library when possible) for the children to complete homework.

Branford Public Schools

Wraparound PK Services

Branford Public Schools, in partnership with the Branford Family Resource Center, is offering fee-based wraparound PK services to children enrolled in BPS elementary Pre-K.

- Fee-based wraparound services will be provided at Indian Neck School and will follow the Branford Public Schools School Year Calendar.
- Transportation will be provided.
- Students will attend for a full day of school (8:55 - 3:25) with an AM or PM session of Pre-Kindergarten and wraparound childcare for the rest of the day.
- Additional fee-based SACC services may be available from 7-8:55 and 3:25-5:30. Parents need to provide transportation if students take part in this aspect of the program.

Wraparound services will be billed monthly during the school year at the cost of \$500/month.

The AM or PM session of Pre-K will follow the Branford Public Schools curriculum for pre-kindergarten. The wraparound programming will provide a play-based environment that aligns with the BPS PK curricular philosophy of “follow the child.” The program will be staffed by School-Aged Childcare (SACC)

Families of children participating in this program will be expected to provide lunch and snacks daily for their child.

SACC Calendar

2023-2024

Aug. 30	- First day of 2023-2024 School/SACC
Sept. 4	- Labor Day - district closed/ NO SACC
Oct. 6 & 9	- Fall recess- NO SCHOOL/ NO SACC
Nov. 7	- Election Day -PD- NO SCHOOL/ NO SACC
Nov. 22-24	- Thanksgiving recess - district closed/ NO SACC
Dec. 25-29	- Winter recess - NO SCHOOL/NO SACC
Jan. 1	- New Year's Day - district closed/ NO SACC
Jan. 15	- Martin Luther King Day - district closed/NO SACC
Feb. 19	- Presidents' Day - district closed/NO SACC
Feb. 20	- February Recess - NO SCHOOL/NO SACC
Mar. 29	- PD - NO SCHOOL/NO SACC
Apr. 8-12	- Spring recess - NO SCHOOL/NO SACC
May 27	- Memorial Day - district closed/ NO SACC
Jun. 7	- Early release day - potential last day of school

**PD: professional development for teachers*

Discipline

For many people, discipline has negative connotations; some regard it as punishment. If we look at the source of the word "discipline", we find that it has a very positive meaning. To discipline means "to teach"; it is a learning experience. Discipline is a combination of support, encouragement, and limitation.

Children have to learn to take care of themselves and live in a world with other people. Through discipline, we teach self-control and responsibility.

A qualified, trained staff is knowledgeable about the needs of school age children and is effective in diminishing disruptive behavior. This can be accomplished by one of the following:

- Using preventative management techniques and encouraging self discipline.
- Stressing positive behaviors.
- Providing an enriching environment to diminish disruptive behavior.
- Offering a selection of interesting activities and giving choices.
- Facilitating the settlement of disputes versus intervening.
- Letting children experience the consequence of their actions.
- Children may be asked to take a short break from the group so that he or she may regain their self-control/composure.
- Developing house rules with the children.
- Establishing mutual respect.

Please note that the Board of Education Policies related to student discipline, including Policy 5114 (Removal/Suspension/Expulsion), are applicable to the SACC.

Write-up and Suspension Policy

In addition to the Board Policies concerning student discipline, which can be accessed on the Branford Board of Education website, the following rules apply to the SACC:

Any behavior that endangers others (i.e., hitting, kicking, and deliberate acts that cause children/staff harm) will result in an official writeup and possible suspension. **Illegal Substance: Any child found with alcohol, cigarettes, or illegal drugs will be automatically suspended or expelled from the SACC program.**

Disrespectful behavior, ignoring staff directives, constant interruption, talking back, being rude, or using inappropriate language will result in a write-up. If there are three incidents of such behavior the child will be suspended, and the Director notified.

Intentionally going to unauthorized areas of the facility or leaving the premises without permission, refusing to follow basic rules of safety (this includes running away from staff and running out of the room or playground, thereby putting all others at risk while the staff goes after that child) will result in a write-up and a meeting with the Director. ***If a child runs out of the program and goes off of the school property, the staff is not to go after them. The police will be called to intervene.***

If a child steals or defaces property/equipment, he/she will be required to repair or replace that item and the child will be written up and suspended.

If a child has been written up while on a field trip, that child will not be permitted to attend the next off site trip.

Any child bullying or threatening another child will be suspended immediately. These behaviors are not tolerated in the SACC program.

A mandatory meeting with the Director will be set up for any child who has received two written warnings. If a child receives three written warnings he/she will be suspended from the program the following day of school (if the next day is a Vacation Day, the child will not be able to attend), and a meeting with the Director will be scheduled before the child can return to the program. Upon returning to the program, the child will be on probation, during which time no more warnings will be given. Unacceptable behavior will be met with an automatic expulsion for the rest of the school year and possible loss of attending summer camp.

NOTICE OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Date of Occurrence: _____

Site Supervisor: _____

Student(s) Involved: _____

Brief description of the incident:

NOTICE # ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

Please note that if you receive two written notices you will need to set up a meeting with the SACC Director. If you receive a third written notice you will be suspended from the program for:

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 day(s).

Upon returning to SACC you will be on probation. If the behaviors put other children or staff at risk it will be an immediate suspension. The three notice rule will not apply.

Site Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Medication Administration

For the safety of all our students, SACC follows the Branford Board of Education Policy 5141.21 Administration of Medication. The full policy can be found on the Board's website. No medication should be brought to the school with the students. This includes all prescribed medicine and all common over the counter medication such as Robitussin, Tylenol, eye drops, antibiotic ointments, decongestants, etc. Students may carry their own medication only if given specific authorization by a parent, physician and the school nurse, in accordance with Board policy and state law.

If it is necessary for a student to take medication during the hours of the SACC, Board policy must be followed, which includes but is not limited to the following procedure:

- Both the child's physician and parent must complete a "Medical Authorization" form. You may get one from the doctor's office, school, or the SACC office.
- The medication must be brought to the school nurse and to the SACC supervisor by the parent, along with the completed authorization form. **The school nurse will not give SACC your child's medication, nor does SACC have access to the nurse's office after school hours. SACC must be given a separate supply (this includes inhalers and epi pens).**
- The medication must be in its original container labeled with :
 1. Medication name and strength
 2. Name of student and physician
 3. Date of prescription and directions. Sufficient supply for the time they are on the medication

Health and Safety

Please notify the staff of any medication, allergies, phobias or other medical problems that your children may have. Parents will be responsible for all information important to the protection of your children. It is essential that all emergency and work/cell phone numbers are kept up to date. Let the staff know of any changes in enrollment information as soon as they occur.

All children are required to hand in an updated Health Assessment Record (less than one calendar year old) with their application.

SACC students and staff will follow district COVID-19 district policies (see [here](#))

Face coverings are optional in our Branford Public School buildings, however **in BPS health offices, including school-based health clinics**, students and staff are required to wear a face covering as part of our locally established mitigation practices

Hand hygiene

Hand washing/sanitizing will be required throughout the day, including before and after meals and snacks and when returning from outdoor activities. When sharing of materials is required, students and staff will implement appropriate hand washing protocols before and after use.

Facilities

All water fountains will be shut off, and water will be made available to students at all BPS schools and programs in a way that maximizes health and safety

Cleaning of facilities will continue on a regular, daily schedule, including the cleaning and disinfection of restrooms.

The District will follow CT Department of Public Health guidance regarding ventilation systems.

ILLNESS:

Before your child is enrolled in our program, an emergency plan to provide alternate care in case of illness should be developed. **Our programs are not equipped to care for sick children.** The Department of Health does not allow children to remain at the program site if they show signs of a communicable disease. Our policy for caring for a sick child is consistent with that of the school. In the event that your child should become ill, we will call you to take your child home promptly (within one hour) or arrange for someone else to pick him/her up.

If your child is sent home from school by the nurse, due to illness, he/she cannot come to school on the same day to attend our program.

If a child did not attend school, he/she cannot attend the SACC program.

FAILURE TO PICK UP A SICK CHILD, AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED, MAY PUT YOUR CHILD CARE PRIVILEGE IN JEOPARDY.

LICE: If your child has been found to have lice, you will have to come and take the child home. The child can return after proper treatment (at least 24 hours) and after the school nurse has checked him/her. Please remember to wash their coats and clothing as part of this treatment.

INJURY AT THE PROGRAM SITE: If your child has a minor injury such as a scraped knee, etc., the staff will not call you unless you have requested to be called for any injury that occurs at the program. If your child has sustained a head injury, however minor, you will be called. You will be asked to sign an accident report when you pick your child up.

In case of an accident not requiring 911 emergency care, the staff will:

- Administer appropriate First Aid
- Notify the parent and request parental direction, if necessary
- Observe and monitor the child's activity
- If necessary for parent to pick up child, a staff member will remain with child until that occurs

SAFETY: Parents will be responsible for all information important to the protection of their children. Please keep staff informed accordingly.

Reminders

- Establish an emergency backup plan
- Provide written notification of a change of authorized adult to pick up your child. If there is joint custody, both parents need to sign a pick-up authorization sheet for this child and complete the form for divorced/separated parents.
- Provide a court order for custody disputes.
- Notify the SACC Supervisor or the SACC office if your child will not be attending the program on their assigned day.
- Any parent, legal guardian or individual authorized to pick up who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, will be asked to contact their emergency pickup person to drive the child home.

SACC Policy on Closings and Delays

If Branford Public Schools are closed, it is understood that the SACC programs are also closed.

School Canceled After the Children Have Arrived for the Regular School Day:

When school is canceled or released early due to weather or any other issues, then SACC is canceled. The children will be released from their classrooms to go home. They will not be released to SACC and our staff will not be on site. Please let the school know your early dismissal plans.

If schools dismiss early due to weather, the SACC program will not open.

Snow Days

There will be NO childcare provided on days when schools are closed due to snow or inclement weather. This decision is based on issues of safety.

School Delays

If school is delayed, the SACC Before School Programs will follow the school delay policy and delay an equal amount of time.

90 Minute Delay: SACC program will begin at 8:30

2 Hour Delay: SACC will begin at 9:00am

SACC will follow the BPS school calendar for holiday and school closings

Financial Issues

Upon registration, there is a nonrefundable, non transferable registration fee of \$50 for one child, \$75 for 2 or more children. We accept check or money orders ONLY made out to SACC. CASH payments are NOT accepted. All payments must be mailed to or dropped off to the office. 12 Melrose Ave, Branford, Ct. (Payments will not be accepted at the sites)

Monthly tuition is due on the first of each month. A late payment fee of \$30.00 will be charged to your account if payment is not received by the 10th of the month. If your account falls behind in payment, your child will be subject to suspension from the program until the fees are paid.

You will be given 24 hours' notice of a possible suspension, and if your child is suspended, he/she will not be allowed to return to the program for 24 hours after payment has cleared. **All past due payments must be made in the form of a Money Order.**

Tuition fees are due regardless of attendance. There is a 2, 3, 4* and a 5 day option for both the morning and afternoon programs. *Be aware the 2, 3 and 4 day option must remain consistent in order to ensure appropriate staffing. **There will be NO rotating schedules.**

Should there be any change in your program or withdrawal, two weeks' notice must be given. All changes go into effect the 1st of the following month. If notice is not received, full tuition is expected. Any credit left on account will be used for future programming. No refunds will be given. If your account falls behind you will be given 24 hours notice of suspension and cannot return until the past due balance is paid in full. Once payment is cleared, you will be given a return date.

A late pickup fee of \$10 will be charged for the first 5 minutes, and will be charged to your account. An additional \$1 fee will be charged every minute after that. At 6:30 pm the Branford Police Department will be called if no contact has been made. Habitual late pick up (3 or more) will result in your child's dismissal from the program.

Fees for your child care services may qualify you for a tax credit (the "Child Care Tax Credit"). Please reach out to your tax preparer for that information. For tax purposes, our EIN # is 06-0974500.

If we receive your check back from the bank citing insufficient funds, and it happens more than once, we will no longer be able to accept personal checks from you. Money Orders would be the only form of payment allowed. There is a \$35.00 fee for every returned check.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Family Discount: We offer a discount of 10% off to Military families, District employees as well as the second/third child enrolled in our program.

Emergency/Unplanned Program Closure

On occasion we may need to close due to circumstances outside of our control (i.e. natural emergencies, staff shortage etc), and without much warning. During these situations we will initiate an emergency protocol that will impact tuition. For the first 2 weeks of closing, families will be charged full tuition; if SACC must close for 2 weeks or more, a reassessment of tuition billing will be conducted at that time.

Drop In Policy

We are no longer able to accommodate registration for a drop in option only. Drop in service is only available to families who attend on a consistent basis. **Example: A child that attends the Before School Program needs to come to the After School Program.** For the day(s) your child is not enrolled, but care is needed, the fee for the Before School program is \$30 per drop-in. After School is \$40 per drop-in. Please contact your site supervisor at least 24 hours in advance to see if there is space available on the day you are interested in. No child will be allowed to attend unless approval is given. **Drop ins are not guaranteed.** .

This availability changes every year and in every program. We will try to accommodate the request but we cannot guarantee the space. In order to find out more about availability you will need to contact your site supervisor at least 24 hours in advance to request care. No child will be able to attend unless approval is granted. DROP INS are not guaranteed. We must keep within our staff to child ratio.

We do realize that there are times of emergency and we will do our best to accommodate you. Thank you for your understanding as we work collaboratively to support the needs of our students.

Drop in Rates:

- Before School = \$30 per day/per child
- After School = \$40 per day/per child

SACC MONTHLY FEES

PRE K WRAP AROUND MONTHLY FEES - \$500

SACC MONTHLY FEES

(*2,3 & 4 day per week options must remain consistent to ensure appropriate staffing, NO ROTATING SCHEDULES WILL BE PERMITTED)

Days Per Week	Before School	After School	Both Programs
5	\$258	\$306	\$508
4*	\$232	\$295	\$474
3*	\$194	\$252	\$402
2*	\$155	\$210	\$330

10% Discount applied for Military Families (with valid Military ID) District employees and second/third child enrolled.

Drop-in pricing is \$30.00 Before School, \$40.00 After School.(Drop-in service is only available to families who attend on a consistent basis.) We are no longer able to accommodate sporadic or intermittent attendance. Thank you for your understanding as we work collaboratively to support the needs of our students)

Drop in Rates:

- Before School = \$30 per day
- After School = \$40 per day

Billing:

Payments will not be accepted at the school sites. Payments must be in the form of a check or money order **made out to SACC**, NO cash will be accepted. Payments can be mailed or dropped off directly to the main office at 12 Melrose Ave, Branford.

Please note, payments are due the 1st of every month regardless of date invoiced. Any payment received after the 10th of the month will be charged a \$30 late fee.

You must provide at least 2 weeks written notice to change or withdraw from our program, otherwise you will be charged for that month. All changes go into effect the 1st of the following month. Separated/Divorced Parent - We do not do separate billing.

We are unable to issue any refunds.

Annual registration fee - \$50/individual, \$75/family (non refundable)

There will be a 10% given to all district employees and active military families.

Late PickUp: \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes, with \$1.00 per minute thereafter.

Late Tuition: \$30.00 late fee

Returned check fee \$35

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY – NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Branford Board of Education that students shall be provided an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the activities, programs, and courses of study offered by the school district without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, alienage or any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, pursuant to Title IX and relevant state law, no individual shall, on the basis of sex (which includes marital status, parenthood, and pregnancy), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

The Branford Board of Education complies with all laws pertaining to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and applicable state and federal regulations.

Any student or other individual who feels he or she has been denied an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the activities, programs or courses of study offered by the school district in violation of this policy should immediately bring his or her complaint to the attention of a Guidance Counselor, Assistant Principal, Building Principal, school-based Title IX Coordinator or the district's Title IX/Human Rights Coordinator. Any staff member or administrator who receives a complaint should bring the matter to the immediate attention of the district's Title IX/Human Rights Coordinator. If the Title IX/Human Rights Coordinator is the subject of the complaint, it should be brought to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools.

The following individual is the Title IX/Human Rights Coordinator and has been designated to handle inquiries and receive complaints regarding the district's non-discrimination policies: Ms. Connie Turkington, Manager of Human Resources, Branford Board of Education, 185 Damascus Rd, Branford, CT 06405, (203) 488-7276.

BRANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN

DEFINITIONS:

“Bullying” is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student in the same school district that: (A) Causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damage to the student’s property, (B) places the student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, (C) creates a hostile environment at school for such student (a hostile environment is a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to alter the conditions of the school climate), (D) infringes on the rights of the student at school, or (E) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. This definition of “bullying” includes, but is not limited to, written, verbal, or electronic communications, or physical acts or gestures that are based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

“Cyberbullying” - Any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices, or any electronic communications. In order for it to be identified as “cyberbullying” requiring school/program intervention, the students involved must attend school in the same district.

“School Climate” - The quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

“School Employee” - A teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle, or high school; or any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to, or on behalf of students, enrolled in a public elementary, middle, or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

“Off Campus Bullying” - The new law explicitly requires school districts to prohibit bullying which occurs outside of the school setting if such bullying 1) creates a hostile school environment for the victim; 2) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or 3) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Harassment” – Any physical or verbal hostility toward someone with legally protected status. Such status pertains to race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, disability (Including past or present history of mental disability), physical disability, learning disability, mental retardation, genetic information, prior criminal conviction, or other lawfully protected status. Such hostility can be severe, persistent, or pervasive.

As of November 2011, Branford Public Schools has appointed a safe school climate coordinator.

The coordinator's duties include:

- Monitoring and implementing the safe school climate plan;
- Collaborating with the safe school climate specialists on matters pertaining to bullying;
- Providing data to the superintendent, district, and CSDE regarding bullying;
- Meeting at least twice annually with the safe school climate specialists to make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's safe school climate plan.

Each school in the district has designated a safe school climate specialist. This specialist will be the program administrator or a designee of the administrator.

The specialist's duties include:

- Investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying in accordance with the district's safe school climate plan;
- Collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying, and responding to reports of bullying in the school.
- Chair the Safe School Climate Committee at their school.
- Each school will establish a committee (or designate an existing committee) no later than July 1, 2012 that is responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues related to bullying in school, school related activities, on transportation vehicles to and from school sponsored activities.
- Each school specialist must appoint at least one parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the school to the committee. It is recommended that the Safe School Climate Specialist is the chair of the committee.

The responsibilities of the Safe School Climate Committee are to:

- Review data from bullying investigations;
- Identify and address patterns of student bullying;
- Review and amend school practices related to bullying;
- Review and make recommendations to the district's Safe School Climate Coordinator regarding the districts safe school climate plan;
- Educate all school community members (students, school employees, parents/guardians) on issues related to bullying;
- Collaborate with the district's Safe School Climate Coordinator in the collection of data (allegations and verified acts of bullying; school climate assessment results);
- Perform other duties determined by the principal/program administrator related to the identification, prevention and response to school bullying;
- Any parent/guardian serving on this committee may not have full access to information that would compromise the confidentiality of any individual student(s).

Professional Development

Branford Public School district will minimally provide annual in-service training program to all school employees that must include information addressing the prevention of, identification of, and response to bullying, and the prevention of and response to youth suicide. This professional development will be determined by the Safe School Climate Specialists and the Safe School Climate District Committee. It may also include:

- Classroom management;
- Positive youth development;
- Positive relationship building;
- Managing the cyber-arena;
- Conflict resolution;
- Cultural and gender diversity training;
- Violence prevention.

Assessment

Each school will on or after July 1, 2012 and at least biannually thereafter, complete a school climate assessment, and submit the assessment to the CSDE. While required biannually, it is recommended that the assessment is completed annually if prior survey data or bullying data supports a need for improvement. Each program within a unit will contribute data for the unit assessment. The assessment should align with the National School Climate Standards that provide a comprehensive and standards-based approach to overall school climate. Safe School Climate Committee will utilize the school climate assessment instruments developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The Safe School Climate Plan will be monitored using the assessment data from these school climate assessment instruments December 2011, a baseline assessment was given to all students in grades 3-12, staff members and parents.

The Essential Requirements of the Safe School Climate Plan

The safe school climate plan must:

- Be approved by the Safe School Climate Committee and the Branford Board of Education and submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education no later than January 1, 2012.
- The plan will be available on the Branford Public School website, and on each individual school's website;
- Be included in each program's publication of rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools, and in all student handbooks;
- Require each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the plan at the beginning of each school year;
- Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports, or assists in the investigation of, an act of bullying;
- Prohibit bullying on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school grounds; or school bus stop, school bus; through the use of an electronic device or electronic mobile device owned, leased, or used by the district.
- Prohibit Bullying Outside of the School Setting if bullying creates a hostile environment for the victim infringes on the rights of the victim in school substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school

Reporting Requirements

- Enable students to report acts of bullying to any school employee;
- Provide student mechanisms to anonymously report bullying to any school employee (i.e. Bullying Box);
- Require students and their parents be annually notified of the process for reporting acts of bullying;
- Parents are encouraged to call school employees or school/program administrators if they feel bullying has occurred and will be asked to submit a written request to initiate an investigation;
- School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying must immediately contact the Safe School Climate Specialist not later than one school day and must then submit a written report not later than two school days after making their oral report;
- Safe School Climate Specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying promptly after the receipt of the written report;
- Safe School Climate Specialist must review all anonymous reports provided that no discipline or action be issued solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- School/program administrators or designee must notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when they believe any act of bullying constitutes criminal conduct;
- Program administrator or designee (e.g. Safe School Climate Specialist) will notify parents/guardians of any student who commits any verified acts of bullying and parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than 48 hours after the completion of the investigation;
- Program administrator or designee (e.g. Safe School Climate Specialist) will invite the parents/guardians of the perpetrator and victim of the bullying to separate meetings to communicate the measures being taken to ensure the student's safety and prevent further acts of bullying;
- Each school will document and maintain records related to reports and investigation of bullying using designated log and maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying using designated log (see appendix);
- Verified acts of bullying log must be available to the public in main offices and submitted to the CSDE annually;

Intervention Measures:

The swift and consistent actions of the staff and administrators will contribute to building a social climate in which students feel that they can trust that all adults are involved in their safety. Therefore, consistent steps of intervention must be taken upon awareness of an incident, or continued threatening situation.

Steps for intervention may include the following:

- Intervene immediately to stop the bullying behavior;
- Talk to the student who engaged in the bullying behavior and the student who was victim of this behavior separately. If there are several students who engage in bullying behavior, separate them also;
- Inform the student who engaged in the bullying behavior and the student who was victim of this behavior of the unacceptable nature of the behavior and the consequences imposed through the school discipline plan;
- Inform the parents of both the student who engaged in the bullying behavior and the student who was victim of this behavior, invite them to at least one meeting to discuss the matter, and construct a plan of action to prevent reoccurrence;
- If peer mediation is deemed appropriate, give special consideration to the intimidating nature of this situation and preserve a balance of power;

- If students are frequent victims, involve this student in social skills groups, or assertiveness skills development sessions;
- Monitor the behavior of the student who engaged in the bullying behavior and the student who was victim of this behavior and the victim regularly as intimidation may continue unseen;
- If the bullying circumstances do not change, despite concerted efforts by school staff, consider options such as, change in class assignment, rearrangement of transportation, etc...as a consequence, he/she, not the victim, may be removed from the class or situation;
- Develop on a case-by-case basis interventions for students who repeatedly bully or are bullied repeatedly, such as counseling or discipline.

Prevention Measures:

In order to perpetuate a safe social climate free of bullying, Branford Public Schools will:

- Adopt and Implement a District program focusing on positive restorative practices , Safer, Saner schools intervention program prek-12 and supports; this program will enhance Responsive classrooms as well as advisory programs
- Implement procedures to confront bullying in any form;
- Listen to all parties involved in incidents;
- Investigate as fully as possible all written and anonymous reports;
- Treat all verified acts of bullying that are similar in nature and severity in a consistent fashion;
- Inform parents of both the perpetrators and the victims, of bullying incidents and invite them to at least one meeting, if necessary;
- Promote via grade appropriate bullying prevention curricula the use of a range of teaching and learning styles and strategies that challenge bullying behavior and promote a safe school climate;
- Promote open management styles that facilitate communication and consultation throughout each school setting;
- Maintain an accurate log of verified bullying acts (see appendix);
- Provide annual training in bullying and safe school climates as well as prevention of and response to youth suicide;
- Require Beginning Teachers involved in the TEAM Program to include training regarding the prevention and identification of, and response to, school bullying as well as youth suicide in their Classroom Management and Climate module;
- Promote the use of interventions that are least intrusive and most effective.
- Hold regular discussions about bullying with administration, staff, students, and parents;
- Develop an anonymous method of student reporting of incidents;
- Support victims of bullying by means of individual and peer counseling;
- Initiate efforts to change the behavior of those students who have engaged in bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, reinforcement and sanctions, where appropriate;
- Utilize resources from the CSDE that have been created as part of their state-wide Safe School Climate Resource Network;
- Annually submit a letter to all parents about bullying and reporting procedures (see appendix);
- Designate a week in October where each school will conduct safe school climate awareness activities.

A perceived act of bullying is witnessed or reported to any staff member

Notify the Safe School Climate Specialist

Orally within 1 day

Submit a written report (Form 1) within 2 school days.

Upon receipt of written report, the Safe School Specialist will...

Investigate the report of alleged bullying (complete Forms 1A, 1B, 2) within 2 school days of receiving the written report.

If an act of bullying is verified, the Safe School Specialist will...

Contact the parents of the victim and the perpetrator

Invite parents to separate meetings

Enter information into bullying log

Branford School Age Child Care Program

Important Numbers

SACC Main Office #203-481-5066

Site Numbers:

- Murphy #203-315-3563
- Sliney #203-315-3548
- Tisko #203-315-3555

Bus Company #203-488-6186

Please let us know of any change in your child's schedule immediately!

In order for any changes to take place, a note from the parent/guardian must be given to the teacher, the school, and a phone call made to your child's site.

If a child is scheduled to attend our program and tells us that they are supposed to go home on the bus, they will not be allowed to go unless we have received a note from the parent/guardian stating the change. If a child goes home and we were not informed of the change, we will treat the situation as we would with a lost child.

