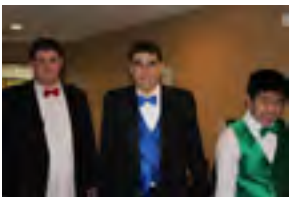




2016 - 2017

Student and Parent Handbook



Welcome

Dear Giant Steps Families,

Welcome to the 2016 - 2017 school year at Giant Steps! This school year promises to be an exciting year for students and staff alike and we are delighted that you are a part of our school family!

We are privileged to serve as the School Leadership Team (SLT) that guides the faculty and staff working directly with your child. The SLT is comprised of the Director of Elementary Services, Director of Secondary Services, Director of Transition and Adult Services, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and the Director of Policy and Compliance. Together, we are excited to provide the leadership necessary to move the organization forward while ensuring that your child receives exemplary academic and therapeutic services!

This document is an important resource for you. It contains valuable information about our school guidelines, policies, and procedures. Please take some time to read it and return the enclosed Acknowledgement Form with your child's registration packet. If you have any questions regarding the information contained in the handbook, please call us for assistance.

We strongly encourage you to get involved in your child's education. The partnership between home and school must have a firm foundation to ensure the success of our students. Becoming a member of our Parents Club, volunteering at the school, and attending school events are a great way to get to know your child's friends and their parents!

We are anticipating a school year full of excitement, adventure, relationship building, and a great deal of learning for students and staff members. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, please feel free to call, email, or stop by.

Truly,

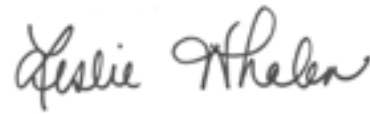


Becky Kaufman
Director of Elementary Services

Martin Koranda,
Director of Special Education and Secondary Services



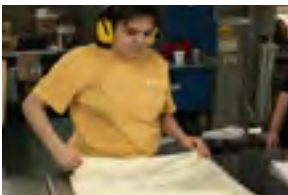
Lillian Peterson
Director of Transition and Adult Services



Leslie Whalen
Director of Policy and Compliance



Sherry Bochenek
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



2016 - 2017 School Calendar

AUGUST				
M	T	W	R	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER				
M	T	W	R	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER				
M	T	W	R	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

NOVEMBER				
M	T	W	R	F
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14	15	16	17	18
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28	29	30		

DECEMBER				
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19	20	21	22	23
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JANUARY				
M	T	W	R	F
2	3	4	5	6
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16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

FEBRUARY				
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13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28			

MARCH				
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27	28	29	30	31

APRIL				
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24	25	26	27	28

MAY				
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29	30	31		

JUNE				
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26	27	28	29	30

JULY				
M	T	W	R	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

AUGUST

- 15-19 Staff Orientation (no camp available)
- 18 Meet and Greet
- 22 **CLASSES BEGIN**

SEPTEMBER

- 5 **NO SCHOOL, Labor Day Holiday**
- 22 Picture Day

OCTOBER

- 10 **NO SCHOOL, Columbus Day Holiday**
- 11 Picture Re-take Day
- 24 Quarter End Day

NOVEMBER

- 2 Parent Teacher Conferences
- 21-25 **NO SCHOOL, Thanksgiving Break**

DECEMBER

- 23-30 **NO SCHOOL, Winter Break**

JANUARY

- 2-6 **NO SCHOOL, Winter Break**
- 16 **NO SCHOOL, Martin Luther King Day**
- 17 Quarter End Day

FEBRUARY

- 20 **NO SCHOOL, Presidents' Day**

MARCH

- 27-31 **NO SCHOOL, Spring Break**
- 21 Quarter End Day

APRIL

- 14-17 **NO SCHOOL, Spring Holiday**

MAY

- 29 **NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day**

JUNE

- 1 **CLASSES END, Early Dismissal** (Tentative Last Day)
- 2 Possible Emergency Closing Make-up Day
- 19 **CLASSES BEGIN** (Summer Session)

JULY

- 4 **NO SCHOOL, Independence Day**
- 28 **CLASSES END** (Summer Session)

Emergency closing make-up day order:
June 2, April 17, April 14, June 5

Student School Hours:

- Regular School Day 8:40 am - 2:40 pm
- Early Dismissal Day 8:40 am - 1:40 pm
- Summer School Day 8:40 am - 12:55 pm





-  Building Closed, NO SCHOOL (no camp offered)
-  Building Closed, NO SCHOOL (possible camp day)
-  Quarter End Date
-  Early Dismissal at 1:45 pm

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Quick Reference Guide

Giant Steps Illinois, Inc.
2500 Cabot Drive
Lisle, IL 60532
Phone Number: 630/864.3800
Fax Number: 630/864.3820

SCHOOL HOURS

Regular School Hours (M, T, R, F): 8:40 am - 2:40 pm
Early Dismissal Hours (Wednesdays): 8:40 am - 1:40 pm
Extended School Year Hours: 8:40 am - 12:55 pm

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Title	Name	Phone	Email Address
Executive Director	Dr. Sylvia Smith	630/864.3808	ssmith@mygiantsteps.org
Director of Elementary Services	Becky Kaufman	630/864.3822	bkaufman@mygiantsteps.org
Director of Special Education and Secondary Services	Martin Koranda	640/864.3863	mkoranda@mygiantsteps.org
Director of Transition Services	Lillian Peterson	630/864.3856	lpeterson@mygiantsteps.org
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Sherry Bochenek	630/864.3897	sbochenek@mygiantsteps.org
Director of Policy and Compliance	Leslie Whalen	630/864.3832	lwhalen@mygiantsteps.org
Nurse	Kari Hale	630/864.3875	khale@mygiantsteps.org

MISSION

Giant Steps is committed to providing individuals with autism spectrum disorders, and their families, superior educational and therapeutic services focused on improving the quality of daily life from early childhood through adulthood.

Basic Procedures & Information

ADMISSION

To be eligible for admission to Giant Steps, a child must be **5 years old and less than 22 years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year**. All students must have a primary eligibility for Special Education under the category of Autism. Giant Steps requires district supported placement, so a child must be identified by his or her home school district to be in need of outplacement at Giant Steps. Giant Steps is not involved in the decision making process regarding placement until a child has been enrolled in our program.

REGISTRATION

Each child must be registered with both his/her home school district and Giant Steps. Parents are responsible for paying any and all fees required by the district, regardless of whether or not the child is attending his/her home school. Parents/guardians must meet all district requirements regarding residency and all state medical requirements. All documentation must be submitted by October 15 or your child may be excluded from attending Giant Steps until all documentation has been completed.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Every student must have at least one (1) emergency contact listed on his/her registration form who may be contacted in the event of an emergency, illness, or if your child needs to be picked up from school.

ABSENCES

All absences from school must be authorized by the student's parent/guardian. Please notify Giant Steps as soon as you know that your child will be absent. You must notify the school by calling the absence line at **630/864.3800, extension 3**, no later than 8:00 am on the day of the absence. The following information must be shared:

- Student's name
- Student's classroom
- Date(s) of absence(s)
- Reason for absence(s)

If your child will be absent for more than one day, you are welcome to share all of the dates of the extended absence in one voicemail.

If your child takes a bus or taxi to school, it is your responsibility to notify the Transportation Company of the absence(s).

Student attendance is submitted to the district on a monthly basis. Districts are notified by Giant Steps immediately after a student has not attended for five consecutive school days.

STUDENT LEAVE

A student who leaves the program for any reason - other than medical - must request readmission to Giant Steps. A leave is defined as a student who does not attend school for eleven or more consecutive school days. A request for readmission shall be handled in the following manner:

- The District Representative submits a completed *Student Referral Packet* to the Admissions Team at Giant Steps;
- Giant Steps Admissions team members review the referral packet and other relevant documentation; if additional information is needed, a member of the Administrative team will contact the District Representative to request needed documentation
- The Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services will contact the District Representative to inform him/her of the decision regarding readmission.

There is no guarantee of return placement. The opening created by their absence in the summer will be offered to wait listed students who, once enrolled at Giant Steps, will have precedence for the subsequent school year.

Basic Procedures & Information

ESY PARTICIPATION

All students are expected to attend Extended School Year if it is recommended by the IEP team. A variety of factors must be examined when considering if a student should receive ESY services. These factors include, but are not limited to: the degree of impairment, ability of child's parents to maintain child's level of skills, whether the service is extraordinary to the child's condition, and the child's rate of progress, retrospective data such as past regression and rates of recoupment of skills, as well as consideration of "emerging skills." Reliable sources of information for determining the presence of these factors may include: (1) progress on goals in consecutive IEPs; (2) progress reports maintained by teachers and others having direct contact with the student before and after interruptions in the educational program; (3) observations and opinions from teachers, parents and others; and (4) results of criterion referenced tests, assessments and other equivalent measures.

If a student is recommended for Extended School Year services but chooses not to attend, he/she is subject to the Student Leave Policy and must request readmission for the following school year.

CHANGE IN PLACEMENT

A student's placement at Giant Steps may be changed or terminated by the parent, home school district, or Giant Steps at any time. Giant Steps staff members are willing to work with parent/guardians and/or the school district to facilitate a transition to the student's new placement. Parents must sign an *Authorization for Release of Information* form to allow Giant Steps staff members to share documentation and information about the student with the future provider.

In the event that a student's placement is changed or terminated by Giant Steps, the parent/guardians will receive written notice whenever possible. The school district will be informed and an IEP meeting will be scheduled.

In accordance with the Illinois State Board of Education requirements, all student records will be returned to the home school district within 30 days of the termination of the placement.

HOME/HOSPITAL SERVICES

Home/hospital services are provided to a student when a licensed medical physician determines that the student will or is anticipated, due to a medical condition, to be out of school for a minimum of two consecutive weeks of school (10 days) or more or on an ongoing intermittent basis totaling 10 or more school days throughout the course of one school year. The goal of home/hospital instruction is to afford the student experiences equivalent to those afforded to other students at the same grade level and are designed to enable the student to return to the classroom.

If your child is found eligible for home/hospital services, the IEP team may revise the IEP, as necessary. The amount of instructional or related service time provided in the home/hospital shall be determined in relation to your child's educational, physical, and mental health needs. The amount of instructional time shall not be less than 5 hours per week unless the physician has certified in writing that the child should not receive as many as five hours in a school week. Services may be provided by telephone or other technological devices, however your child must receive a minimum of 2 hours per week of direct instructional services.

Giant Steps retains the right to terminate or change a student's placement immediately if a student presents significant issues of safety or threat to him/herself or others. In these situations, a Giant Steps staff member will immediately inform the parents and school district of its recommendation to initiate a temporary homebound placement until such time as a determination is made that the student no longer poses a threat to him/herself or others.

Basic Procedures & Information



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation between home and school is provided by the home school district or parent/guardian(s). Depending on the transportation company, students may arrive at school by bus, car, minivan, or sport utility vehicle. It is your responsibility to notify the transportation company in the event that your child will be absent from school or if transportation arrangements need to be changed. If you drop your child off in the morning and would like the transportation company to bring him/her home, you must call the transportation company to confirm your needs. If a vehicle does not arrive to pick up your child, you will be called to come get him/her from Giant Steps. If you will be picking your child up from school, you must call the transportation company to let them know that your child will not be on his/her regularly scheduled route. If your child wears a safety harness, it must be brought with your child or the transportation company will not be able to transport your child back home.

If you transport your child to school, you can drop off and pick up in the front of the building. Giant Steps staff will come outside or to the front doors to meet your child unless alternate arrangements have been made with your child's teacher and Program Coordinator. You may wait outside or in the school lobby to pick up your child.

In the event that you need to pick up your child early, please let the receptionist know your child's name and classroom when you arrive. You can wait in the lobby for your child to be brought out of the classroom or therapy. Please allow adequate time for your child to gather their items, use the bathroom (if needed), and walk to the front of the building. We are unable to accommodate the request for your child to be waiting for you in the lobby in order to ensure that your child doesn't miss out on instructional time. Please inform your child's teacher of any early dismissals or late arrivals as soon as possible.

If your child has difficulty boarding the bus at the end of the day, the bus is able to remain onsite until 3:10 pm on regular school days, 2:10 pm on early dismissal days, and 1:25 pm on summer school days. At that time, the bus will be sent to drive other students home, and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for picking up the student before 4:00 pm. Repeated failure to pick your child up by 4:00 pm can jeopardize your child's placement.

In the event of an accident while your child is being transported to or from school, the transportation company's emergency response policies and procedures will be followed. Parents/guardians will be notified by the transportation company or Giant Steps' staff regarding the accident. Should emergency medical services be required, the policies and procedures of the transportation company take precedence. Giant Steps is not responsible for any medical charges incurred as a result of the accident.

EMPLOYMENT

Parent/guardian/primary care givers of students and participants in any Giant Steps program cannot be employed by Giant Steps.

Basic Procedures & Information

UNIFORM GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In the event that you are dissatisfied or believe you have been wronged by the faculty or staff at Giant Steps, it is your right to utilize the Uniform Grievance Procedure. The Board of Directors shall annually designate one of its members to be the Board Grievance Officer who shall direct grievances that are not resolved by the Executive Director.

Earnest efforts shall be made to resolve grievances by informal communication between parents (and students where appropriate), teachers, staff members, and/or the appropriate administrators/supervisors.

If such a resolution is not reached, the Complainant may utilize the Uniform Grievance Procedure outlined below:

1. The grievance must be presented in writing to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is the subject of the complaint, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the Board Grievance Officer.
2. After the complaint is received, the Executive Director or Board Grievance Officer (as appropriate) shall schedule a conference with the Complainant and/or any necessary parties in order to investigate the grievance within ten (10) business days or as soon as practical thereafter.
3. The Executive Director or Board Grievance Officer (as appropriate) shall respond in writing within ten (10) business days after the conference or as practical thereafter.
4. If the grievance is not resolved by the Executive Director (or Board Grievance Officer in complaints involving the Executive Director), the Complainant shall submit the grievance in writing within ten (10) business days to the Board Grievance Officer.
5. After the grievance is received, the Board Grievance Officer will schedule a conference with the Complainant and/or any necessary parties in order to resolve the grievance within ten (10) business days or as soon as practical thereafter.
6. If the grievance is not resolved by the Board Grievance Officer, the Complainant shall submit the grievance in writing to the Executive Committee within ten (10) business days.
7. After the grievance is received, the Executive Committee will schedule a conference with the Complainant and/or any necessary parties in order to resolve the grievance within ten (10) business days or as soon as practical thereafter.
8. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.

Executive Director:

Dr. Sylvia Smith • 630/864.3808 • ssmith@mygiantsteps.org

Board Grievance Officer:

Judy Iantosca • judypepper_9@hotmail.com



Educational Programs & Services

ACADEMIC AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

Giant Steps provides highly individualized programming utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach inclusive of theoretical and instructional practices from Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Music Therapy, Speech Therapy, Social Work, and Behavior Analytic perspectives. Small classroom sizes, highly specialized staff, and small caseloads allow students to receive high quality, uniquely tailored programming guided by their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Programming is provided year round – an August through June traditional school calendar, followed by a six-week Extended School Year (ESY) session that students participate in as deemed necessary by the IEP team. For students aged fourteen and a half years or older, transition planning is incorporated into the IEP.

Students are assigned to classrooms based on multiple factors, including but not limited to age and grade level, interests, strengths, and types of support needed throughout his/her day. See below for a list of classroom names by program:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Names</u>	<u>Inspiration</u>
Elementary	A - H, Explorers 1 and 2	Alphabetical/Numeric
Junior High	Zion, Yosemite, Acadia, Olympic	National Parks
High School	Union, Noble, Oz, Palmer	Chicago Parks
Transition	Stevenson, Addams, Kennedy	Chicago Highways

CURRICULUM

Giant Steps' curriculum is designed to provide students with a variety of learning opportunities, placing an emphasis on equipping students with the academic and therapeutic skills needed to function as a contributing member of society. Students' curricular programming can vary based on individual strengths, interests, developmental level, and areas of needed skill development as specified in their IEP (Individualized Education Plan). All IEP goals are aligned with Illinois Learning Standards, incorporating the Common Core State Standards, as applicable, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education. In addition to skill-based curriculum aligned to IEP goals, a school-wide Curriculum Framework is utilized to ensure that students are systematically exposed to a variety of content topics while they are attending Giant Steps. Each year new content topics will be introduced.

At the elementary level, the educational program focuses on basic academic skills, physical fitness, and social/emotional development. Students at the junior high school level receive core academic content through a more functional lens in combination with physical fitness and fine arts instruction. The high school program focuses on functional academics with an emphasis on independent living and pre-vocational skills. Instruction at all levels incorporates the use of technology into academic and therapeutic activities. Additionally, all students participate in Community Based Instruction for a portion of the week that varies between two and five hours depending on program area.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Giant Steps faculty and staff members utilize a variety of instructional materials, including textbooks, workbooks, audio-visual materials, and electronic materials. These materials are designed to provide high quality learning experiences for students, to enrich and support the curriculum, and provide background information to expose students to a variety of topics and experiences. Teachers and therapists are encouraged to use supplemental materials when doing so will enhance or otherwise illustrate the content being taught. The term "instructional material" means instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of its format, printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats (such as materials accessible through the internet). The term does not include formal assessments.

Parents/guardians may inspect, upon written request, any instructional materials used as part of your child's educational curriculum within a reasonable time period of the request. Requests to inspect instructional materials must be made to the Director of Curriculum and Assessment.

Educational Programs & Services

COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION

All students participate in Community Based Instruction (CBI) in order to develop the skills necessary to participate in their communities. The duration of CBI varies by program and is based on students' needs, skills, readiness to learn in an alternate environment, and their IEPs. In general, students in Elementary participate in CBI for 2 hours each week, in Junior High participate in CBI for 2-3 hours each week, and in High School and Transition participate for 2-4 hours each week. Students are transported to and from the community location and Giant Steps via contracted buses or vehicles, Giant Steps' minivans, or walk to nearby locations. All CBI is supervised by Giant Steps staff members and health and safety precautions are taken as appropriate.



At times, it may be necessary for your child to remain at Giant Steps and not attend CBI due to behavioral or other factors impacting his/her success in the community. If this is the case, you will be notified of the alternate activities completed by your child during that time on his/her daily communication note.

If your child has difficulty transitioning back to the van or bus, a parent/guardian may be called to pick him/her up so as not to delay the return of the group back to Giant Steps.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are offered to provide educational experiences and opportunities to extend learning to the larger community. Parent/guardian permission is required for all trips and is obtained in writing on designated *Field Trip Permission Forms*.

STAFFING

Each classroom is run by a Special Education Teacher, who is supported by a Senior/Lead Program Assistant, a number of Program Assistants (PAs), and the therapeutic team. The number of PAs assigned to a classroom varies based on student need. Staff to student support levels vary between 1:1 and 1:4, depending upon the environment, task/expectations, and student needs.

INDIVIDUALIZED SCHEDULES

Your child's schedule will be sent home at the beginning of the regular school year and Extended School Year sessions. Schedules may change throughout the year and you are welcome to request a copy of the current schedule to be sent home at any time. Specifics regarding what happens during the school day will be sent home on a daily basis through the Daily Communication Note.

LUNCH/SNACKS

Your child will eat lunch each day with his/her peers in a designated location. All student lunches must be sent from home as Giant Steps does not offer a free/reduced lunch or hot lunch program. You are welcome to send your child with a lunch and snack each day or send items in bulk on a weekly or monthly basis. Each kitchen is equipped with a refrigerator, freezer, cabinets for food storage, and microwaves. Please make sure that your child's lunch bag and all bulk foods are clearly labeled with their **first and last name**.

If your child follows a restricted diet or has diagnosed food allergies, be sure to indicate so in the registration packet. This will allow us to proactively accommodate your child's needs and ensure that precautionary measures are in place.

Educational Programs & Services



COMPUTER NETWORK ACCESS AND USE

Giant Steps' computer network is considered part of the educational curriculum. Access to it facilitates resource sharing, innovation, communication, and extends the educational lessons learned within the classroom by:

- providing access to educational resources and reference materials,
- reinforcing the specific subject matter taught,
- requiring the use of critical thinking skills,
- promoting tolerance for diverse views, and
- teaching socially appropriate forms of expression.

Technology is utilized for a variety of applications throughout the building. Students may use computers for:

- school-related assignments,
- accessing school-approved software,
- Internet research under the supervision of a staff member,
- Independent Internet research with parent/guardian permission, and/or
- leisure activities.

Giant Steps expects all students, parents/guardians, faculty, and staff to engage in safe and acceptable use of its computers, network, and the Internet. Giant Steps will not permit any use of the computer network which:

- disrupts the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school,
- threatens the integrity or efficient operation of the network,
- violates the rights of others,
- is socially inappropriate or inappropriate for a student's age or maturity level,
- is primarily intended as an immediate solicitation of funds,
- is illegal or for illegal purposes of any kind, or
- constitutes gross disobedience or misconduct.

Giant Steps may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to a student's account or profile on a social networking website. Giant Steps may, however, conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking website that violates a Giant Steps disciplinary rule or policy. During the course of the investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order to make a factual determination.

AUTHORIZATION FOR NETWORK ACCESS

All students, parents/guardians, faculty, staff, and home school district representatives must submit properly signed copies of the *Authorization for Electronic Network Access*. This document describes appropriate uses, ethics, and procedures that must be followed. Failure of any user to follow the procedures will result in the loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

INTERNET SAFETY

Giant Steps takes multiple precautions to restrict access to controversial and inappropriate materials on the Internet. Access is limited to students and staff who have submitted a signed *Authorization for Electronic Network Access* form. Internet safety is almost assured if users do not engage in unacceptable uses and follow approved procedures. Staff members monitor students while on Giant Steps technology to ensure that they are abiding by the rules. Every computer with Internet access has a filtering device that blocks content that may be harmful or inappropriate for students as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the School Leadership Team and/or the Executive Director.

Giant Steps is not responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or become unavailable when using the computer network, or for any information that is retrieved or transmitted via the Internet. In addition, Giant Steps will not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting

Educational Programs & Services

INTERNET SAFETY (continued)

from access to the Internet. Students and staff members have no expectation of privacy in any material that is stored, transmitted, or received via Giant Steps' electronic networks or technology. General rules for behavior and communications apply when using electronic networks. Electronic communications and downloaded materials, including files deleted from a user's account, may be monitored or read by school officials.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of student learning is an integral part of each student's educational program. Giant Steps uses a variety of formal and informal assessments to determine individual student progress and achievement, evaluate curriculum and instruction effectiveness, and guide the development of each student's educational program.

STATE STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT

Students are required to participate in standardized assessments to comply with local, state, and federal mandates. Standardized assessments are typically administered at Giant Steps by an ISBE licensed teacher. The following list outlines the standardized assessments that are administered:

- PARCC – Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers – administered to students in grades 3-8 (according to actual grade level) to measure achievement in English Language Arts and Math
- ISA – Illinois Science Assessment – administered to students in grades 5, 8, and once in high school to measure achievement in Science
- DLM-AA – Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternate Assessment – administered to students in grades 3-8 & 11 to measure achievement in English Language Arts, Math, and Science (grades 5 & 8); this assessment is an alternate assessment to PARCC
- ACCESS - administered to students identified as English Language Learners to measure social and academic proficiency in English

ANIMALS

Pets are not allowed in school. Animals may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes only and with the permission of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Such animals are to be kept in the classroom for the time necessary for their study only. Animals brought into the classroom must be adequately housed and cared for. Only the teachers or student(s) designated by the teacher shall be permitted to handle such animals. Animals in the classroom shall be treated in a humane manner at all times. If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, arrangements shall be made for their care.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals will be permitted in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. Parents/guardians who are interested in having a service animal attend school with their should should contact the Director of Elementary/Secondary/Transition and Adult Services.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Giant Steps issues quarterly progress reports to inform parents/guardians and home school districts of progress toward IEP goals. Student performance throughout the quarter is analyzed and summarized at the end of each quarter. Parents/guardians will receive a hard copy sent home in your child's backpack or via U.S. mail. Home school districts will receive a hard copy sent via U.S. Mail. Quarter End Dates for the 2016 - 2017 school year are:

- 1st Quarter - October 24, 2016
- 2nd Quarter - January 17, 2017
- 3rd Quarter - March 21, 2017
- 4th Quarter - June 1, 2017



Educational Programs & Services

OBSERVERS/INTERNS/STUDENT TEACHERS

Giant Steps prides itself on providing exemplary services to individuals and families impacted by autism. As an organization, we are committed to providing opportunities for educators and practitioners to observe, participate with, and lead sessions under the close supervision and guidance of Giant Steps staff members. Throughout the year, your child may have opportunities to interact with observers, interns, and student teachers as we uphold our commitment to educating others within our community.

All outside observers, interns, and student teachers must submit required documentation and may be subject to a background check prior to their participation in our setting. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Director of Policy and Compliance.

STUDENT RECORDS

Giant Steps maintains student records in accordance with the *Illinois School Student Records Act* and the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*. The records contain information that is deemed necessary to the education of the student and are of two types:

- The **Permanent Record** consists of basic identifying information concerning the student, his or her parents'/guardians' names and addresses, the student's academic transcript, unique identifier, attendance record, accident reports, health record, record of honors and awards received, information concerning participation in school sponsored activities, scores received on State assessments administered in grades 9-12, and a record of release of this information. ***The Permanent Record is maintained by the home school district.***
- The **Temporary Record** consists of all information not required to be kept in the student's permanent record. This includes a record of release of student temporary information, scores received on State assessments administered in grades K-8, a completed home language survey form, information regarding serious disciplinary infractions that resulted in expulsion, suspension, or the imposition of punishment or sanction, and information regarding any report related to the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, biometric information, health-related information, accident reports, and may also consist of family background information, intelligence test scores, aptitude test scores, reports of psychological evaluations, elementary and secondary achievement test results, participation in extracurricular activities, including any offices held in school-sponsored clubs or organizations, honors and awards received, teacher anecdotal records, other disciplinary information, special needs records, records associated with plans developed under section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and any verified reports or information from non-educational persons, agencies, or organizations of clear relevance to the education of the student. ***The Temporary Record is maintained by Giant Steps for the period of time during which the child is enrolled at Giant Steps.***

Parents, guardians, or designated parent representatives of a child under 18 years of age have the right to inspect and copy information in your child's school records. A student older than 18 years of age may inspect or copy information in his or her permanent school record. Such requests must be made according to the policies and procedures of your home school district.

Giant Steps prohibits the disclosure by any school employee of any student records except in accordance with the *Illinois School Student Records Act* and its implementing regulations.

Parents/guardians may challenge the accuracy, relevancy, or propriety of your child's school records. Individuals wishing to do so for the Temporary Record must submit written notice of the challenge to the Director of Services at Giant Steps. Individuals wishing to challenge the Permanent Record must do so according to the policies and procedures of the home school district.

The Director of Services is responsible for the maintenance, care, and security of a student's temporary records. All questions should be directed to the appropriate administrator.

Educational Programs & Services

STUDENT RECORDS (continued)

Upon disenrollment from Giant Steps, a student's Temporary Record is returned to the home school district. Any request for copies or dissemination of records is not the responsibility of Giant Steps and must be made to the home school district in accordance with their policies and procedures.

MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD

Giant Steps partners with a group of accomplished medical professionals with specific expertise and proven success serving individuals with autism spectrum disorders, known as the Medical Advisory Board. The function of the Medical Advisory Board is to offer professional consultation to staff members regarding students who are experiencing challenges that push the limits of the clinical experience and skill set of staff members. Additionally, the Medical Advisory Board provides consultation regarding organizational practices to improve collaboration with outside professionals. Board meetings take place twice a year, in October and March, where a maximum of two student cases are presented for consultation. Medical Advisory Board members serve as School Officials and are therefore held to the same confidentiality requirements as individuals employed by the organization.

Communication & Participation



ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Giant Steps firmly believes that a collaborative partnership between home and school is critical to student success. We welcome your involvement in your child's education and view you as active partners in the educational process. We encourage you to:

1. Ask questions and remain informed about your child's progress and the happenings throughout the school.
2. Maintain ongoing communication with your child's teacher and other staff members.
3. Provide input on school-related issues.
4. Join the Giant Steps Parents Club.
5. Volunteer your time, talents, or treasures to support Giant Steps' activities.

PRIMARY CONTACT

Communication between home and school takes place primarily with your child's classroom Teacher. The Teacher will be the staff member with whom you most frequently collaborate, provide information to, and share your successes and challenges. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's classroom Teacher. You are also welcome to contact the Director of Services with any questions or concerns.

DAILY COMMUNICATION

Parents/guardians will receive a daily communication note summarizing your child's activities throughout the day. You are encouraged to share information about your child's activities at home - before and after his/her school day. It is particularly helpful for staff members to know about changes in your child's condition related to temperament, sleep, diet, family events, new interests or dislikes, and/or physical concerns that may impact his/her school day or overall educational experience.

PHONE CALLS/EMAIL

Giant Steps staff members are not available by phone or email during hours of student attendance (8:40 am - 2:40 pm). During the school day, parents/guardians are welcome to contact the Receptionist or call the Teacher/Therapist's direct line to leave a voicemail. You can expect a response within twenty-four hours to answer questions or address concerns.

VISITORS

Parents/guardians are welcome to observe and participate in academic and therapeutic activities at school, provided their presence does not disrupt the educational program. To allow students and staff members to get to know each other and adjust to their daily routine, parents/guardians are not permitted to observe during the first four weeks after a student begins attending Giant Steps.

If you are interested in observing your child's class or therapy sessions, please contact your child's Teacher to schedule a mutually agreeable time. All visitors, including parents/guardians, are required to show a state-issued identification card or driver's license in order to gain access to the building. That identification is run through the Raptor system to ensure safety and security throughout the building. Each visitor will receive a badge that must be worn for the duration of the visit.

ALERT MESSAGES

Giant Steps subscribes to an automated messaging system to communicate important information to parents, guardians, and staff members within a very short period of time. The system allows Giant Steps to quickly inform parents and guardians by phone and email about any critical or emergency situations. To be sure all messages are received, **please be sure to submit current information in the registration packet and as changes occur throughout the year.**

Communication & Participation

CLOSINGS AND CANCELLATIONS

The Director of Policy and Compliance makes the decision to close school in the event of severe weather or other emergencies that threaten the safety of students, staff members, or school property. Information about school closings will be announced immediately after a decision is made. The best ways to find out if school will be in session are to:

- Wait for a phone call from the automated emergency alert system
- Visit the school website at www.mygiantsteps.org
- Check the Emergency Closing Center at www.emergencyclosings.com
- Watch/listen to Chicagoland news media



SEVERE TEMPERATURES

Giant Steps does not use a specific degree of temperature to determine whether school will be closed or programming modified. Several factors are taken into consideration including the actual temperature, wind levels and chill factors, other weather conditions such as snow, ice, and fog, whether the conditions of the roads will affect the Transportation Companies' ability to safely navigate routes, and whether buses can be consistently started and kept running. In the event that there is a severe weather condition impacting transportation and/or safety in the community, Community Based Instruction may be cancelled at the discretion of the Director of Policy and Compliance.

RECESS TEMPERATURE

Recess is held daily at lunchtime. Whenever possible, recess will be held outside. Indoor recess will be held during inclement weather (rain, snow storm, unusable playground equipment/surface) or when the wind chill is at or below 35 degrees. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather conditions.

GIANT STEPS PARENTS CLUB

Giant Steps Parents Club seeks to provide a meaningful and reciprocal relationship between home and school in a way that meets parents', families', and staff members' needs. The vision of Parents Club is to ***foster connections between families, staff, and students within the Giant Steps community by creating opportunities to promote school spirit, plan family-centered events, and enrich student programs.***

Parents Club Committees are an excellent way to get involved in your child's school! Any family member who is a high school graduate and is 18 years of age or older is encouraged to participate in Parents Club committees. For the upcoming school year, the following committees have already been formed:

- Welcoming
- Spirit Wear
- Staff Appreciation
- Trunk or Treat
- Fundraising

Additional committees will be formed throughout the school year to help support school efforts and events. Parents Club holds Parent Meet-up Coffees on a regular basis to provide an opportunity for parents to connect with one another, enjoy yummy treats, and share ideas, resources, and experiences. Parents Club also distributes a newsletter to help families stay connected and aware of happenings at Giant Steps. Parent volunteers are welcomed to help support the school on a regular or one-time basis.

While Parents Club does not have formal administrative authority and cannot determine school policy, Giant Steps welcome their suggestions and assistance. A Staff Liaison serves as a collaborative resource who provides information about school programs, resources, policies, problems, concerns, and emerging issues. Interested in getting involved or have a question? Email parentsclub@mygiantsteps.org.

Communication & Participation

DUAL MAILING

Copies of reports and school correspondence will be provided by USPS mail and/or email to the parent who does not have parenting time or has less parenting time, when requested in writing, unless a court order to the contrary is in effect. Parents with parenting time or those with more parenting time than the other parent will receive documentation via your child's backpack, email, and/or US mail.

PARENT CONCERNS

Giant Steps values open and direct communication with parents/guardians. You are encouraged to address any questions or concerns to the person most directly involved in the matter's resolution. When further conversation is deemed necessary, the customary "chain of command" should be followed. For example, if a specific concern arises within the classroom, it should first be discussed with the Teacher. If the outcome of that discussion is not satisfactory, it should be brought to the Program Coordinator. After speaking with the Teacher and Program Coordinator, if you believe that the problem has not been resolved, the Director of Services should be contacted. If, after speaking with all three program faculty, you believe that the problem continues to be unresolved, the Executive Director should be contacted.

INTERNET PUBLISHING GUIDELINES

Giant Steps believes that the Internet is an important means of communicating with the public and has established the organization's website as a window into the school and ancillary programs for students, families, faculty, staff, community members, and professional colleagues. Information posted on these sites is intended to inform stakeholders about Giant Steps goals and activities, accomplishments, programs and services, as well as to serve as an educational and instructional resource.

All materials published on the Giant Steps website and social media outlets (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) must have educational value and comply with State and Federal law as well as Giant Steps policies, administrative procedures, and guidelines. Before a student's name, photograph, grade level, or work can be published on any website or social media outlet, written authorization must be granted by the parent or guardian. These authorization forms are distributed at the time of registration each year and are kept in the student's temporary record. Parents/guardians may revoke their permission at any time by notifying the Director of Services.

For the purposes of student safety and privacy, Giant Steps will only identify the first name of students, unless otherwise authorized.

PUBLICITY PERMISSION

During the school year, students are occasionally photographed or videotaped for publicity. Photographs, videos, and other examples of a student's original work may be shared with local newspapers, used in various Giant Steps print publications, displayed in school or the community, or posted on the Giant Steps website. Videos and photographs may also be used in classrooms or at school-sponsored functions.

At the time of registration, parents/guardians are given a *Consent for Photography/Videography/Original Work* form which gives Giant Steps permission to use your child's name, image, or original work onsite or offsite for professional development, educational programming, training purposes, and/or promotional purposes for Giant Steps, including electronic media.

If parents/guardians do not consent to the use of photography, videography, or original work to be used for publicity, personally identifiable information, photography, videography, or work will not be included in publicly available media.

Photographs and videos may also be used internally for programming needs (i.e., to label their items, in social stories, etc.).



Communication & Participation

SOCIAL MEDIA

Giant Steps utilizes a variety of social media outlets in order to share information, inspiration, and foster connections. Check us out on Facebook (Giant Steps) and Twitter (@giantstepsIL)!

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Some personal information contained in a student's educational record is legally designated as public information and may be released at the discretion of the school unless a parent/guardian requests that information about his/her child not be released. This "Directory Information" includes:

- student name, address, and grade level
- student photographs
- parent/guardian names and addresses
- academic awards and honors received
- information relating to school -sponsored activities, organizations, and athletics
- period of attendance in the school.

The above information may be released to the general public by way of a school directory and/or student yearbook, unless a parent/guardian requests that it not be released in writing through the *Directory Information Form* included in the registration packet.

Health Services

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

As required by the Illinois Department of Public Health, **all children entering Kindergarten or First grade, Sixth grade, and Ninth grade and any student entering Giant Steps from outside of Illinois** must present proof of a current physical exam prior to admission. State law requires that these health examinations be performed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all of its branches, an advanced practice nurse who has a written collaborative agreement with a collaborating physician authorizing the advanced practice nurse to perform health examinations, or a physician assistant who has been delegated to perform health examinations by a supervising physician.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS



All students enrolled at Giant Steps must adhere to the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) immunization requirements in accordance with recommended schedules. Unless the student is homeless, **failure to comply with the ISBE immunization requirements by October 15 of the current school year may result in the student's exclusion from school until the required health forms are submitted to Giant Steps.** New students who are first-time registrants shall have 30 days following registration to comply with the health examination and immunization requirements. If a medical reason prevents a student from receiving a required immunization by October 15, the student must present - by October 15 - an immunization schedule and a statement of the medical reason(s) causing the delay. The schedule and statement of medical reason(s) must be signed by the licensed provider, advanced practice nurse, physician assistant, or local health department responsible for administering the immunizations.

Students eligible to remain in school beyond grade 12 must meet the immunization requirements of grade 12.

DENTAL EXAMINATIONS

Students entering Kindergarten, Second, and Sixth grades are required to have a current State of Illinois Proof of School Dental Examination Form on file. Proof of such an examination must be submitted by May 15 of each school year.

VISION EXAMINATIONS AND VISION SCREENINGS

An eye examination is required for **all students entering Kindergarten and for any student enrolling in school for the first time.** The examination must be completed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist and turned into the school no later than October 15 of the current school year. The eye exam must be completed within one year prior to the first day of the school year the student enters Kindergarten or enters school for the first time in Illinois. Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision examination by an eye doctor. Your child is not required to undergo a vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months.

EXAMINATION AND IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTION

A student may be exempted from the health, dental, or eye examinations, immunizations, vision screening, and/or hearing screenings based on religious grounds. The *Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form* must be submitted by October 15 of the current school year or the student may be excluded from school. The form must be completed by the student's parent/guardian and a licensed physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant. Parents may request a waiver of the eye exam and dental exam requirement for students who show an undue burden or lack of access to an optometrist or to a physician who performs eye examinations, or a dentist. The Illinois Department of Public Health waiver form is available at Giant Steps and must be submitted by May 15 of the applicable school year.



Health Services

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

It is your responsibility as parent/guardian to provide all necessary documentation regarding your child's health, immunization history, dental records, and birth certificate to both your public school district **and** to Giant Steps. A copy of your child's birth certificate must be submitted within 30 days of enrollment. Please note, students not fulfilling state-mandated physical examination and immunization requirements may be subject to exclusion from school starting October 15.

All health/medical forms can be found on the Giant Steps website. Please be sure to complete all documentation included in the Registration Packet.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Medication during school hours should be limited to what is absolutely essential for a child to remain in school. A physician's order is required for all medications administered during the school day, including over-the-counter medications. A signed *Medication Administration Form* must be on file for the current school year. All medication orders and Emergency Action Plans must be **renewed annually** at the start of the school year and must be submitted **1 week prior to the first day of school**.



Medication will not be administered without a physician's order for the current school year and a signed *Medication Authorization Form* on file. Medication may be administered by an individual other than the nurse. Designated licensed staff members are trained by the Giant Steps Nurse on an annual basis regarding medication administration protocols, procedures, documentation, and safety. These designated, licensed staff members administer daily medication(s) to students. The Giant Steps Nurse is responsible for verifying prescriptions, counting medication(s), scheduling all medication(s) based on physician order, and providing additional education and training to employees on an individual and group basis. Medication must be sent to school in a sealed envelope with the student's name and number of doses included. Parents/guardians or pharmacy should pre-cut any tablets in which the dose is 1/2 tablet. All medications are stored in a secure, locked cabinet or refrigerator.

New orders are required immediately for any changes to dose/administration time. If your child takes more than one medication during the school day, you will need to submit a *Medication Administration Form* for **each** medication. *Medication Authorization Forms* and *Emergency Action Plans* are available in the Parents Corner of the Giant Steps website or in hard copy upon written request to the Nurse.

The initial dose of a new medication must be given at home. Medication must be sent to school in the original pharmacy bottle. The label must include your child's name, the name of the medication, correct dosage, and current date. Over-the-counter medications must be sent in the original packaging. Expired medication will not be administered.

Medication bottles will be sent home for refill when empty. Medication will remain at school for the duration of the school year, including breaks. All medication will be sent home at the end of the Extended School Year session. Medication will be sent home if a refill is needed, the medication has been discontinued, and/or prior arrangements have been made by notifying the classroom teacher and school nurse **one week in advance**.

A student may self-carry and self-administer an inhaler or nebulizer prescribed for asthma. A student may also self-carry and self-administer an epinephrine auto-injector. A current *Medication Administration Form* must be on file in order for the student to self-administer any medications.

Parents and guardians must acknowledge that Giant Steps, along with its employees and agents, including the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse providing standing protocol or a prescription for school epinephrine auto-injectors incurs no liability, or professional discipline, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the student's self-administration of asthma medication or epinephrine auto-injector regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice

Health Services

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION (continued)

nurse. Parents and guardians must forever free indemnify, excuse, and hold harmless Giant Steps, along with its employees, agents, heirs, and assigns, against any claims (except a claim based upon willful and wanton conduct), including claims for professional discipline, as a result of any injury or other claim arising from the administration of asthma medication or of an epinephrine auto-injector regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse.

NON-FDA SANCTIONED MEDICATIONS

Requests or orders for the use of non-FDA sanctioned medications, including but not limited to, herbal remedies, dietary supplements, naturopathic or holistic medicines, essential oils, and natural products are not honored at Giant Steps. The lack of safety information available for these medications limits their appropriate use at school. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) stresses that because herbal products and dietary supplements are not regulated, there are concerns about purity and potency of the products. Product quality is influenced by many factors, including which portion of the plant is used (e.g., root, stem, leaves, flowers), the time of harvest (i.e., young versus old plants), the handling of the product, and proper identification.

Giant Steps does not permit the administration of non-FDA sanctioned medications or off-label products or uses, regardless of whether or not a prescription has been obtained by the parent/guardian. In the event that this situation arises, the Giant Steps nurse will notify the parent/guardian and the health care provider that such medications/products must be administered at home. A notation will also be made in the student's health record documenting the communication.

HOSPITALIZATION/SIGNIFICANT INJURY

In the event that your child is hospitalized or sustains an injury that requires medical attention, a doctor's note stating that they are cleared to return to school is required. If an injury occurs that restricts your child's mobility or requires the school to provide additional modifications and/or accommodations, the Giant Steps Nurse is to be contacted immediately along with the respective Director to determine if additional paperwork is needed. Once the paperwork is received, a conversation may be required to determine whether we can accommodate needed modifications in our setting and/or if additional supports are required.

In the event that a student is hospitalized, please notify the Giant Steps Nurse as soon as possible. If the student receives treatment by a physician for anything other than a routine check-up (e.g., emergency room visit), please notify the Nurse. A physician's note may be required for prolonged absences or when a student's medical condition warrants further investigation.

ALLERGIES AND ANAPHYLAXIS

If your child has been diagnosed with a life-threatening allergy, he/she requires a current *Allergy & Anaphylaxis Plan* to be on file. Allergy & Anaphylaxis plans are generated by your child's physician and are valid for the current school year, including the Extended School Year session. While it is not possible to completely eliminate risks of exposure to allergens when a student is at school, Giant Steps is an allergy aware school that educates staff members regarding best practices in order to reduce the likelihood of exposure.

If your child has an Allergy & Anaphylaxis Plan, his/her classroom staff will receive training specific to his/her needs in order to ensure efficient implementation of the plan and administration of any emergency medications.

If a dose of epinephrine is administered at school, Emergency Medical Services will be contacted and the child must be transported to the hospital. Parents/guardians are responsible for replacing the medication and submitting any changes to the Allergy & Anaphylaxis Plan to the nurse upon the student's return to school.

Health Services

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency, Giant Steps will secure emergency medical services for your child. Parents/guardians are responsible for any and all charges incurred as a result of the medical emergency.

ILLNESSES

Our goal is to reduce the spread of germs and ensure the health of all staff and students. In order to promote a healthy learning environment, please consider keeping your child home if he/she has an illness or symptoms that prevent participating comfortably in normal school activities (e.g., severe cough and cold symptoms). In accordance with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines, a child should be excluded from school if he/she has symptoms that:

- Prevent the child from participating comfortably in normal school activities,
- Result in a need for care that is greater than staff members can provide without compromising the health and safety of others, and/or
- Pose a risk of the spread of illness to others



Please keep your child home if they have any of the following:

Diarrhea		
Stay home if	Can go to school if	May Return:
Watery stool with frequency of 2 or more above what is normal for that child, or Chronic diarrhea is accompanied by other symptoms	Child has a documented history of chronic diarrhea 24 hours after last episode of diarrhea	24 hours after last episode
Fever >100.4		
Stay home if	Can go to school if	May Return:
Accompanied by other signs or symptoms of an illness, such as irritability, persistent crying, excessive fatigue, lack of participation, atypical behavior(s), etc.	Not accompanied by other signs or symptoms of illness	When fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
Strep Throat		
Stay home if	Can go to school if	May Return:
Any symptoms of strep throat are present	May not attend school until evaluated by Health Care Professional and on the appropriate medication for 24 hours	After completing 24 hours of antibiotic treatment, and Fever has resolved
Vomiting		
Stay home if	Can go to school if	May Return:
2 or more episodes in 24 hours with no known cause, or If accompanied by other symptoms (e.g., fever, sore throat, etc.)	Known cause of vomiting (e.g., ate too much, physical activity immediately prior, self-induced, response to stimuli, etc.)	Symptom free for 24 hours, and Is eating and drinking normally

Health Services

ILLNESSES (continued)

Please keep your child home if they have any of the following:

Signs of Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)		
Stay home if	Can go to school if	May Return:
Shows signs of pinkeye (e.g., red or irritated swollen eyelids, pink or red color, itchy, painful eyes, crusted shut in the morning, with green or yellow discharge, etc.)	May not attend school until evaluated by Health Care Professional and on the appropriate medication for 24 hours	When cleared by health care professional/physician
Rash		
Stay home if	Can go to school if	May Return:
An undiagnosed rash that meets any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is oozing or open • Has bruising not associated with injury • Rapidly spreading • Appears to cause discomfort, and/or • Is accompanied by fever 	Documented skin condition (e.g., eczema)	When cleared by health care professional/physician
Impetigo		
Stay home if	Can go to school if	May Return:
Any symptoms of impetigo are present	May not attend school until evaluated by Health Care Professional and on the appropriate medication for 24 hours	After starting appropriate treatment. Draining lesions must be covered
Lice		
Can go to school if		May Return:
Children found to have evidence of lice during the school day will be notified by phone. The child must receive appropriate treatment before returning the next day.		After appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice.

If your child presents other illness symptoms not mentioned above, parents are encouraged to contact a licensed Health Care Professional. Students reporting or demonstrating signs of severe or persistent pain should be evaluated by a licensed Health Care Professional.

It is important that parents adhere to these guidelines so that together we can ensure a healthy learning environment for all of our students and staff. If you have a questions about whether or not your student should attend school, please contact the Director of your child's program.

If a student demonstrates any of the symptoms indicated for exclusion while at school, the parent/guardian will be notified to pick up his/her child.

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

SCHOOL SAFETY

Giant Steps believes that schools should be safe places for children whether they are learning in our classrooms, being transported, or participating in after school/extracurricular activities. Giant Steps has a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan that contains specific responses to be followed in a wide variety of situations. This plan is reviewed annually with our administrative team and representatives from law enforcement, the fire department, and emergency management services. Giant Steps has a crisis team that is responsible for implementing the plan.

To protect the safety of students and staff, the following procedures are in effect at Giant Steps:

1. All exterior doors will be locked during the school day.
2. All parents, visitors, and volunteers must check in at the front desk prior to gaining access to other areas of the building.
3. All visitors are required to present a state-issued identification card or driver's license that will be scanned through our security software.
4. All visitors are required to wear identification badges while in the school. Badges will be given to you by the receptionist.
5. Parents/guardians who are picking up students at times other than normal dismissal must enter the building and sign the student out before he/she will be released.
6. Any individual who is picking up a student may be requested to present a state-issued identification card or driver's license prior to a student being released.

To help us implement our Emergency Operations Plan successfully and to keep students as safe as possible, the cooperation of parents/guardians is of the utmost importance. In the event of a lockdown, evacuation, or other critical event, please **DO NOT COME TO THE SCHOOL**. Emergency responders and school staff are well trained to manage these situations and extra vehicular traffic and additional people can impede response time. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately about any emergency through email and/or voicemail messages sent via Giant Steps' automated messaging system. **Please make sure your contact information is current.** Updates to the status of the emergency and/or any reunification procedures will also be provided in this manner. Information will also be posted on the Giant Steps website.

SAFETY DRILLS

As mandated by the Illinois School Code, Giant Steps conducts a number of emergency drills to prepare for emergency situations. These include a minimum of three fire drills, one tornado or other severe weather drill, and one lockdown drill with the participation of a local law enforcement agency.

SEVERE WEATHER AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Giant Steps will promptly implement the appropriate safety procedures for any emergency that occurs during the school day. In the event that a tornado warning occurs at dismissal time, students will be kept in the building until conditions approve or an all-clear signal is given. In the event of impending severe weather conditions, such as an approaching snowstorm, students will be dismissed at the regular time. Given the large geographic area served by Giant Steps, we are unable to ensure that all transportation companies would be available to accommodate an early dismissal due to weather. Please use your discretion when sending your child to school if he/she has a long drive to/from school.



EXPOSURE TO MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Given the nature of our student population, your child may be exposed to peers who engage in maladaptive behaviors. Giant Steps staff members are trained to proactively and reactively respond to student behavior, but are not able to anticipate every situation and therefore there is a risk that your child may come into physical contact with another child during times of distress or dysregulation. Should that happen, you will be notified and any injuries will be treated according to Giant Steps policies and procedures.

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Students are expected to dress in a manner that contributes to a positive learning environment. Articles of clothing that could be construed as promoting illegal, immoral, or obscene acts, including but not limited to, those depicting or referring to tobacco, alcohol, illegal substances, sexuality, vulgarity, indecency, gangs, or jewelry that could potentially be used as a weapon or used to inflict injury are strictly prohibited. Giant Steps reserves the right to require students to change their clothing as well as confiscate and retain inappropriate clothing until a parent/guardian is able to pick up any of these items, if they are deemed offensive or could be used to endanger the student or others. The Executive Director is the final authority for judging the appropriateness of a student's appearance.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Giant Steps is not responsible for students' personal items of any kind that may become lost, missing, or broken. Please use discretion when sending items to school with your child.

EXTRA CLOTHING

All students must have an extra set of clothing that is clearly labeled with his/her name and seasonably appropriate. Please be sure to send socks, underwear, shirts, pants, and shoes. If your child wears pull-ups or diapers, please send an appropriate supply including wipes. Wipes are not supplied by the school.

VIDEOTAPING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Giant Steps permits the use of video cameras in the public areas of the building, grounds, and other property by Giant Steps' staff to ensure the health and safety of all Giant Steps' students and staff, including but not limited to hallways, classrooms, and other instructional areas. Video cameras will not be placed in restrooms, changing rooms, or any other location prohibited by law. Videotapes shall not include an audio component. Students may be disciplined based in whole or part on videotape evidence of misconduct.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Giant Steps is committed to providing students with opportunities to learn critical problem solving skills, especially during the most challenging moments. Given the nature of our student population, universal discipline procedures are not a component of our programming.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

When behavioral interventions are used with students, they will be used in consideration of the students' physical freedom and social interaction, as well as in a manner that respects human dignity and personal privacy while ensuring the students' right to placement in the least restrictive educational environment. If Giant Steps reports to a law enforcement agency a crime committed by a student, Giant Steps will only release the student's records to law enforcement as permitted by state and federal law.

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

PHYSICAL MANAGEMENT AND SECLUSION

Giant Steps bears the responsibility of protecting the safety, health, and welfare of the students, staff, and property of the organization as well as maintaining a safe learning environment. Therefore, it may be necessary at times to physically manage or remove a student into an isolated area when the student's conduct affects the well-being of the school. The criteria for use of seclusion/isolated time out and/or physical management is a student/participant displaying continuous physical aggression, continuous self-injury and/or continuous high magnitude disruption. Such techniques are used to the extent that is necessary to preserve a safe learning environment and to preserve the safety of the students, staff, and/or others in the environment. Neither seclusion/isolated time out nor physical management procedures shall be used as a form of punishment.

Giant Steps utilizes the Professional Crisis Management (PCM) system to proactively and reactively manage student behavior. PCM utilizes strategies based on scientifically verified principles, addresses a wide range of behaviors, and limits its application to individuals with special needs. PCM provides staff with a continuum of physical procedures and techniques that can be used to intervene in a crisis situation. All of the procedures have been designed to maintain human dignity and to avoid awkward positioning and physical pain. The crisis prevention component of PCM teaches a variety of nonphysical and verbal strategies for the prevention of crisis situations. Based on a teaching and learning model, it integrates smoothly and complements the intervention strategies currently utilized at Giant Steps.

If the physical component of PCM is used to maintain safety, a PCM documentation form is completed and the incident is kept on record. Parents are notified by a phone call or note from the classroom teacher or therapist involved in the incident requiring PCM. Additional data pertaining to the incident may be kept in the classroom data binder. Patterns in behavior are examined and proactive behavior management strategies are consistently implemented throughout each classroom and therapy session. Some examples of proactive strategies commonly used at Giant Steps include programming and treatment modifications, reward systems, sensory diets, limit setting, environmental changes, etc.

Giant Steps staff are not permitted to lift students/participants from a lying or seated position on the ground into a standing position (with the only exception being in a situation of imminent danger) in order to maintain safety for staff and students, as well as to maintain the integrity of the use of physical management by using it during crisis situations only.

SEARCHES

To maintain order and security in the school, Giant Steps officials have the right to conduct reasonable search of school property and equipment, as well as of students and their personal effects. Searches can include lockers, desks, and parking lots, as well as personal effects left there by a student, without notice to or the consent of the student.

Where deemed necessary, the Executive Director may request the assistance of law enforcement officials to conduct inspections and searches of lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment for illegal drugs, weapons, or other illegal or dangerous substances or materials, including searches conducted through the use of specially trained dogs.

School authorities may search a student and/or the student's personal effects in the student's possession (such as purses, wallets, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc.) when there is a reasonable ground for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the school's student conduct rules. The search itself must be conducted in a manner that is reasonably related to its objectives and not excessively intrusive in light of the student's age, sex, and the nature of the incident.

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

BULLYING

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and Giant Steps' policy. A student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate are diminished by bullying and other aggressive behaviors. Such conduct interferes with a student's educational environment, safety, and academic performance. Preventing students from engaging in these aggressive and disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are a priority at Giant Steps.

Students are expected to act respectfully toward their peers and to avoid bullying and aggressive behaviors in their interactions with other students. Giant Steps prohibits and will not tolerate aggressive student behavior, including bullying conduct of any type or on any basis, as defined below. Further, Giant Steps will protect students against retaliation for reporting incidents of aggressive behavior and bullying, and will take disciplinary action against any student who participates in such conduct.

Bullying is prohibited on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic.

Bullying is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity,
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, or school-sanctioned events or activities,
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment,
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of the School. This paragraph (item #4) applies only when a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred; it does not require staff members to monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

For the purposes of this policy and as defined under the Illinois School Code, the terms used mean the following:

Bullying includes cyber-bullying and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

BULLYING (continued)

Aggressive conduct toward other students that is not severe or pervasive shall not be deemed as bullying, but may constitute an offense leading to discipline under Giant Steps' Discipline Procedures of any student who engages in such behavior. Students who engage in bullying conduct also shall be disciplined under Giant Steps' Discipline Procedures.

Cyber-bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Restorative measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that: (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety, (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.

School personnel means persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in the school, including without limitation school administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school resource officers, and security guards.

Reporting

Students, school staff, and parents/guardians who witness bullying or who have information about actual or threatened bullying shall immediately report it to the Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or any Giant Steps' employee. A report may be made orally or in writing. Anonymous reports also are accepted. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Director of Elementary Services:

Becky Kaufman • 630/864.3822 • bkaufman@mygiantsteps.org

Director of Special Education and Secondary Services:

Martin Koranda • 630/864.3863 • mkoranda@mygiantsteps.org

Director of Transition and Adult Services:

Lillian Peterson • 630/864.3856 • lpeterson@mygiantsteps.org

Director of Policy and Compliance:

Leslie Whalen • 630/864.3832 • lwhalen@mygiantsteps.org

Executive Director:

Dr. Sylvia Smith • 630/864.3808 • ssmith@mygiantsteps.org

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

BULLYING (continued)

Investigating

The Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee shall promptly investigate and address reports of bullying. All reasonable efforts will be made to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of bullying was received.

As part of the investigation, the Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee shall:

1. Take into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
2. Involve appropriate school support personnel and other school staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
3. Notify the Executive Director or designee of the reported incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
4. Investigate whether a reported incident of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction.

Notification

Consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, the Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee shall promptly inform parents/guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discuss, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, other interventions, and restorative measures.

In addition, the Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee shall, consistent with Federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, provide parents/guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Interventions and/or Consequences

When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee immediately shall impose the appropriate consequence under this policy and Giant Steps' Discipline Procedures. The Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee shall use interventions to address bullying, which may include, but are not limited to school social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, and community-based services. Additionally, the Director of Elementary, Secondary, or Transition and Adult Services or designee shall provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

Any form of reprisal or retaliation directed against any person who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation about actual or threatened bullying is prohibited. Any such act by a student will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this policy and the Giant Steps' Discipline Procedure.

A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information about actual or threatened bullying, even if the school's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing false information will be met with disciplinary consequences and appropriate remedial actions consistent with this policy and the Giant Steps' Discipline Procedure.

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

BULLYING (continued)

Distribution and Review

This policy shall be included in the student handbook, and, where applicable, posted where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are currently posted. This policy also shall be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

The School shall review and re-evaluate this policy and make necessary and appropriate revisions every two (2) years.

The Director of Policy and Procedures or designee shall assist with the evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:

1. The frequency of victimization;
2. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
3. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
4. The types of bullying utilized; and
5. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may include the use of relevant data and information that the school already collects for other purposes.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment of students is prohibited. Any person, a Giant Steps employee or agent, or student, engages in sexual harassment whenever he or she makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and/or engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

- denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment, or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status, or
- has the purpose or effect of:
 1. substantially interfering with a student's educational environment,
 2. creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment,
 3. depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment, or
 4. making submission to or rejection of such conduct the bases for academic decisions affecting a student.

The terms "intimidating," "hostile," and "offensive" include conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include crude jokes or pictures, touching, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, and spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities.

Student Safety, Behavior, and Discipline

REPORTING OF FIREARM, DRUG, AND OTHER INCIDENTS

School staff members must immediately notify the Executive Director if he/she (1) observes any person in possession of a firearm on or around school grounds, unless it would endanger the students under his/her supervision, (2) observes or has reason to suspect that any person on school grounds is or was involved in a drug-related incident, or (3) observes a battery committed against any staff member. The Executive Director or designee will then immediately notify the local law enforcement agency, State Police, and any parent/guardian of student(s) involved in the incident. "School grounds" includes modes of transportation to school activities and any public way within 1000 feet of the school, as well as the property itself.

Any incident of manufacture, delivery, or possession with the intent to deliver a controlled substance or look-alike occurring in the school, on school property, on a public way within 1000 feet of the school, or in a vehicle used to transport students must be reported to law enforcement by the Executive Director or designee within 48 hours of its occurrence.

In accordance with Illinois State law, when a student or other person 14 years of age or older is determined to pose a clear and present danger to themselves or to others, a report will be made to the Illinois State Police. Clear and present danger is defined as communicating a serious threat of or demonstrating threatening physical or verbal behavior, such as violent, suicidal, or assaultive threats, actions, or other behaviors as determined by a school administrator or law enforcement official (PA 98-0063, 430 ILCS 65/6-103.3).

Notifications

ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILD REPORTING

Any Giant Steps employee who suspects or receives knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child, or for a student aged 18 through 21, an abused or neglected individual with a disability must immediately report such a case to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services on its Child Abuse Hotline (800.25.ABUSE or 217/524.2606). The employee must also promptly notify his/her supervisor and the Director of Services who will notify the Executive Director. If the case involves an employee, the School Leadership Team will collaborate with the necessary authorities in order to investigate and address the report in a timely fashion. If a DCFS report is made by a Giant Steps employee or agent, Giant Steps is not obligated to inform the family that a report was made.

ADVERTISING AND DISTRIBUTING MATERIALS IN SCHOOLS

No advertising material or literature may be posted or distributed at Giant Steps that would (1) disrupt the educational process, (2) violate the rights or invade the privacy of others, (3) infringe on a trademark or copyright, or (4) be defamatory, obscene, vulgar, or indecent. Community, educational, charitable, recreational or similar groups may advertise events pertinent to students' interests or involvement with approval from the Executive Director. All material and literature must have the sponsoring organization's name prominently displayed. No one may advertise or promote its interests by using the names or pictures of the school, staff members, or students unless authorized to do so. Material from candidates and political parties will not be accepted for posting or distribution except when used as part of the curriculum.

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Giant Steps supports the use of school facilities by staff, nonprofit, and for-profit groups for uses consistent with the public interest when such use does not interfere with (1) any school function, (2) the safety of students and staff, or (3) affect the property or liability of the organization. Giant Steps has established use guidelines and rental fees for use of the facilities. All requests must be completed on the appropriate form and submitted to the Executive Director for approval. Giant Steps sponsored activities and events take precedence over all other requests for use. Persons on school premises must abide by the organization's conduct rules at all times.

OFFENDER NOTIFICATION

State law prohibits a child sex offender from being present on school property or loitering within 500 feet of school property when persons under the age of 18 are present, unless the offender is:

1. A parent/guardian of a student attending the school and the parent/guardian is
 - (a) attending a conference at the school with school personnel to discuss the progress of his/her child academically or socially,
 - (b) participating in child review conferences in which evaluation and placement decisions may be made with respect to his/her child's special education services, or
 - (c) attending conferences to discuss other student issues concerning his/her child such as retention and promotion and notifies the Executive Director of his/her presence at the school; or
2. Has permission to be present from the Executive Director or Executive Director's designee. If permission is granted, the Executive Director or designee shall provide the details of the offender's upcoming visit to the School Leadership Team.

In all cases, the Executive Director, or designee who is a certified employee, shall supervise a child sex offender whenever the offender is in a child's vicinity. If a child sex offender violates this policy, school officials shall immediately contact law enforcement. Any questions regarding youth offenders in the community should be directed to a local law enforcement agency. Further information regarding sex offenders is available pursuant to the Illinois Sex Offender Community Notification Law.

Notifications

ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES

Giant Steps is committed to effective energy use, conservation, and efficiency. The Facilities Team consistently evaluates needs, resources, consumption, and associated costs in order to best meet the needs of our school in an environmentally conscious manner.

FIREARMS

In accordance with the Firearms Concealed Carry Act [430 ILCS 66/65], a licensee may not knowingly carry a concealed firearm on or into any building, property, and/or parking area under the control of a public or private elementary or secondary school.

This Handbook reflects policies as of the date of printing. Updated policies may modify some of the information and such changes will be effective on the date of adoption without providing notice.

Notes

