

Clarke Caregiver Handbook

2026-2027



**Clarke teaches children who are deaf
or hard of hearing to listen and talk.**

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clarkeschools.org

Melanie Austin, Program Director

August 2026

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear families:

We would like to welcome your family to ours and thank you for choosing Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech for your child's education! Clarke is the first and largest organization of its kind, offering a continuum of services for students and their families at home, our multiple locations and in mainstream classrooms.

Since our founding in 1867, we have prepared children to succeed in mainstream schools and the wider world, evolving to meet the needs of children and families today. Our goal is to prepare students with hearing loss to succeed in classrooms alongside their peers with typical hearing. You can learn more about Clarke's history here - <https://clarkeschools.org/about-us/history/>

This handbook provides you with our goals, expectations, policies and procedures. You have the right to inquire, receive and review all of Clarke Schools' policies and procedures by contacting me by email at maustin@clarkeschools.org. You have entrusted us to partner with you to provide the child in your life with the best possible education. As we embark upon a new school year working together as a team, may the spirit of cooperation, support, and encouragement lead to a wonderful and successful year at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Austin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Austin, MS, CCC-SLP
Director, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech MA in Canton

Clarke admits children who are deaf or hard of hearing, providing services to our families regardless of race, color, gender, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, or marital status.

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared as an informational guide regarding Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech (Clarke) policies and procedures. It is an important reference to save and refer to throughout the school year. You are requested to review and discuss its contents with your child, especially sections dealing with child/student responsibilities and behavioral expectations. The handbook was revised in response to suggestions from caregivers and staff while still meeting regulations of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) under which Clarke operates. Clarke is a state approved private school, which accepts students from public sources. As such, it retains autonomy over admission. It is important that caregivers read and understand the information in this handbook.

Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination

Clarke does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. Clarke Schools is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 not to discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. The Senior Human Resources Manager, 45 Round Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01060, telephone number 413.582.1155, has been designated as the employee responsible for coordinating Clarke efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 to Clarke Schools may be referred to Andrea Harkins or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, telephone number 800-421-3481.

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Statement of Purpose

At Clarke, we teach children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk.

Children served by Clarke use advanced technologies, including cochlear implants and hearing aids, to maximize their access to sound. We work with children and their families from infancy through their teen years. Our teachers of the deaf, audiologists, and speech-language pathologists have the background, training, and experience to prepare children academically and socially for a world of limitless possibilities. Clarke children listen and learn in the classroom, run, and laugh with their friends on the playground, and have lives filled with music, sports, family, and community. Many children who come to Clarke are ready to attend their neighborhood schools by completion of preschool or kindergarten. In addition to our work with children, we serve families and adults through a wide range of programs and services. With a comprehensive team of experts, in-person preschool locations along the East Coast, and an Early Intervention program that provides individualized parent coaching and infant–toddler group services, we strive to reach people with hearing loss at key life stages.

We believe that the home environment is the most influential factor in a young child's life. We strive to have teachers and families collaborate to ensure the safety, happiness and overall development of children enrolled at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

1. We have an open-door policy for caregivers and families and encourage families to visit at any time their child is at school. Caregivers are encouraged to spend time in the classrooms to participate or lead activities related to our classroom themes.
2. Clarke staff use various platforms to promote home/school communication, including home/school notebooks, blogs, etc. to collaborate with families and other caregivers to ensure ongoing communication across the child's daily environments. We are happy to arrange progress meetings and or phone calls with the child's teachers or the director at any time.
3. Families are encouraged to participate in caregiver-teacher conferences, guided observations, family fun nights, and caregiver workshops presented by Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

We believe that educational planning for children who are deaf or hard of hearing must consider the whole child, and not just the communication needs. Educational experiences should support learning across all developmental domains: cognitive development, social and emotional development, motor development and communication development. We believe that children learn best when curriculum is presented in theme-based units, including hands-on experience with the materials and high levels of teacher guidance and interaction.

1. We provide a comprehensive preschool and kindergarten program with an enriched language component. The children's educational needs are addressed in a structured, well-ordered, child-centered, process-oriented developmental curriculum designed to promote the acquisition of age-appropriate conceptual and problem-solving skills.
2. We provide age-appropriate activities and materials that encourage children to explore and build foundations for knowledge in Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and History and Social Sciences, Health Education and Arts.

3. Each child is provided with activities and instruction to promote acquisition of new skills based on their individual level of development.
4. Our typical class has four to nine students, providing a small student/teacher ratio which allows for ample individual instruction and attention in the classroom. Each child also receives 30 minutes of daily audition, speech, and language instruction outside of the classroom. These sessions may include a peer at times providing opportunities for peer-to-peer communication and practice around social routines and conversational skills.

Our team has extensive knowledge in child development, hearing loss, audiology, and speech and language development as it relates to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

1. We have a multi-disciplinary team of educational staff here at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech, including teachers of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and early childhood teachers. Our staff works collaboratively to ensure that all the children's needs are met.
2. All staff hold certification specific to their position and participate in ongoing professional development activities.

Objectives

1. To provide a strong academic base by (a) employing a staff that is certified, well-prepared, and up to date on current educational best practices for children who are deaf or hard of hearing; (b) continuously updating curriculum to meet educational needs and prepare students for a mainstream education; (c) increasing the literacy skills of all students.
2. To provide direct instruction on developing self-awareness and self-advocacy skills to promote confidence with their hearing loss by (a) improving their ability to explain their own hearing loss and equipment, (b) advocating for appropriate accommodations, (c) troubleshooting their own equipment in a variety of settings.
3. To promote the development of listening and spoken language skills throughout the school day by (a) attending daily audition, speech and language therapy sessions, (b) embedding focused auditory targets into academic curriculum.
4. To provide sound training in communication (speech, language, listening and social skills) by (a) providing adequate amplification devices; (b) providing acoustically sound classrooms; and (c) providing sufficient print and non-print materials to promote development of articulation, voice, language, pragmatic and social language skills.
5. To provide optimal access in all settings by maintaining the integrity of the hearing technology equipment and ensuring the environment is accessible for each child. Individual auditory, speech, and language services are also available for children in mainstream programs.
6. To analyze each child's ability to hear specific sounds, identifying auditory, articulation, and language concerns, and dedicating time to building the speech and language skills needed for success in a hearing world.

Program Goals

1. To provide a curriculum that meets each student's educational needs and prepares them for competition in mainstream educational settings and beyond.
2. To develop age-appropriate social skills, decision-making skills, and problem-solving skills.
3. To encourage and support opportunities which require the use of these skills in a variety of settings; and
4. To maximize time-on-task in small group settings with specialized technology in order to facilitate the development of speech, language and listening skills.

Additionally, each child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) with individualized goals and objectives. The goals and objectives for each child are based on his or her skills and abilities in the areas of auditory, speech, expressive language, receptive language, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, life skills, and social-emotional development.

General Information about Educational Programs

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech is a national nonprofit organization using a listening and spoken language approach with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Clarke's continuum of services includes a Birth to Age Three Program, Preschool/Early Childhood Program and Mainstream Services (Massachusetts and Philadelphia). Services are customized to fit various needs and ages.

Clarke Schools MA in Canton Daily Schedule

School year August, 2026-June, 2027:

Preschool (3-4 yr. old): Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Extended day (5+ yrs): Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Summer Session – July 6th-22nd, 2027:

All school: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m

July 6th-9th Monday through **Friday**

July 12-22nd Monday through Thursday



Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech Massachusetts in Canton 2026 - 2027 School Calendar

2026

As of 2.23.2026

2027

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

12 Student Days
12 Staff Days

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

3 Student Days
6 Staff Days

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

21 Student Days
21 Staff Days

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

20 Student Days
21 Staff Days

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

17 Student Days
18 Staff Days

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

17 Student Days
17 Staff Days

JULY	
6	Summer Session Begins (9 a.m.-1 p.m.)
Week 1: July 6 through July 9	
Week 2: July 13 through July 16	
Week 3: July 20 through July 23	
23	Last day of Summer Session-Graduation

AUGUST	
24-26	Professional Development Days (No Students)
27	First day of school (9 am - 1 pm)

SEPTEMBER	
7	Labor Day (School Closed)
9	Back to School Night (6 pm - 8 pm)
18	Grandparents/Special Person's Day

OCTOBER	
9	Professional Development Day (No Students)
12	Indigenous People's Day (School Closed)

NOVEMBER	
3	ALL CLARKE Professional Development (No Students)
11	Veteran's Day (School Closed)
17	Parent-Teacher Conferences (1 p.m. dismissal)
25	Early Release (1 p.m. dismissal)
26-27	Thanksgiving Holiday (School Closed)

DECEMBER	
23	Early Release (1 p.m. dismissal)
24-31	Holiday Recess (School Closed)

JANUARY	
1	New Year's Break Observed (School Closed)
15	Professional Development Day (No Students)
18	Martin Luther King Holiday (School Closed)

FEBRUARY	
15	President's Day Holiday (School Closed)
15-19	Winter Recess (School Closed)

MARCH	
19	Professional Development Day (No Students)
23	Parent-Teacher Conferences (1 p.m. dismissal)

APRIL	
19-23	Spring Recess (School Closed)

MAY	
14	Professional Development Day (No Students)
31	Memorial Day Holiday (School Closed)

JUNE	
15	Last Day of School (9am-1pm)
18	Juneteenth Holiday (School Closed)
23	Last Day of School with 5 Snow Days (9am-1pm)

Total Staff Days 200
Total Student Days (academic year) 180
Total Student Days (summer Session) 12

School Closed For All
Professional Development Day - No School for Students
Early Release Day
Special Event Day

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

18 Student Days
19 Staff Days

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

15 Student Days
15 Staff Days

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

22 Student Days
23 Staff Days

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

17 Student Days
17 Staff Days

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

19 Student Days
20 Staff Days

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

11 Student Days
11 Staff Days

Transportation

Transportation, Arrival and Departure

The safety of the children at Clarke is of the utmost concern. A Transportation Authorization Plan must therefore be on file with Clarke School. While children are in the care of our staff, they are carefully supervised, and it is important for caregivers to follow and enforce Clarke safety rules when dropping off or picking up your children. Therefore, we ask that during drop-off and pick up caregivers or other authorized adults closely supervise your children. Please do not allow children to run through the parking lot or to play around the cars and vans. While we encourage socialization between families, we respectfully ask that you arrange to do so off Clarke property and exit the parking lot to ensure the area remains as quiet and safe as possible.

Van Transportation

Van transportation is approved and coordinated by the student's school district if requested by a family. Clarke School requires that each driver present a valid driver's and 7D license. If Clarke Staff are concerned for your child's safety, your child will remain at school until an alternative arrangement can be made. In addition, the caregiver, van company and school district will be immediately notified in the event of an unsafe situation.

Children should arrive before the 9:00am start of school. The van should arrive 10 minutes prior to the child's designated dismissal time in the afternoon. If a van is late in the morning or afternoon, the caregiver should contact the van company and then update Clarke MA in Canton at 781.821.3499 or via email at ClarkeCanton@clarkeschools.org.

Once transportation is established, the following are the responsibilities of the caregiver:

- Contact the van company several days before school starts to confirm service
- Communicate any absence directly with the van company and Clarke MA in Canton at **ClarkeCanton@clarkeschools.org**.
- Securely buckle the child in the age and size appropriate car or booster seat in the morning
- Communicate any concerns regarding the transportation service to the school district's transportation coordinator and Clarke School.

Caregiver/Caregiver Transport

- Children are expected to **be at Clarke by 9:00 am** so that they are able to capitalize upon the entirety of their school day
- Children are escorted in and out of school by Clarke staff.
- Caregiver/caregiver designee/van transport staff must stay with their child until a Clarke staff member greets you to escort your child.

- If late, the caregiver/caregiver designee/van transport staff must wait with their child outside until a Clarke staff member is available to check-in the child
- Caregiver/caregiver designee/van transport staff should arrive at Clarke 10 minutes prior to their child's dismissal time.
- Additional caregivers or family members who do not typically pick up a child must have written permission from primary caregivers to do so.
- Caregiver/caregiver designee/van transport staff should be prepared to show picture identification.

Curriculum

Preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary classroom activities are designed to enhance children's listening and speech and language abilities while supporting their pre-academic/academic, social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative skill development. Children engage in problem-solving, discovery, exploration, reasoning, and experiential activities in a joyful, nurturing environment. Classrooms are designed for the unique acoustic needs of children with hearing loss, and curriculum is aligned with state and national standards. Classes are led by experienced professionals. Classes are taught by master's-level teachers who are educated in the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) approach to intervention. All children receive daily individual auditory speech and language therapy with a speech-language pathologist or speech-language pathology assistant trained in auditory-verbal therapy and/or listening and spoken language.

- **Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks** - Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech MA in Canton campus works hard to ensure that its curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks issued pursuant to the Education Reform Act of 1993. The Creative Curriculum is used as a framework throughout the year, and all staff are provided with the Early Childhood Program Standards for Three-and Four-Year Olds and The Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. All our teachers, but specifically our kindergarten teachers, also use the kindergarten and first grade Curriculum Framework materials to assist them in planning for their students and to become familiar with what children will be expected to know and what curriculum goals will be in place in the receiving school. This is especially important as we prepare children to move out of our program and into their public schools. Our teachers and staff work closely with the public schools, sharing curriculum materials, ensuring that each student is exposed to the public school's curriculum materials, and communicating about progress and assessment data.
- **Individualized audition, speech, and language sessions:** In addition, thirty minutes of individualized work is provided daily to address: 1) those speech and language patterns which fail to develop during regular classroom work and 2) the development of error-patterns in danger of becoming habituated. Individual work includes the development of auditory, receptive/expressive language, and speech skills as indicated by results of the child's evaluation and as documented in the educational plan. Individual work supports topics being addressed in the child's classroom (e.g. pre-teaching/review of vocabulary, concepts embedded within the curriculum).
- **Self-help, daily living skills:** A major component of the curriculum addresses these areas by incorporating a core set of skill development into center play, story time and other supporting activities related to the classroom themes. Some of the basic skills addressed include:

- Buttoning, fastening, buckling, and tying
 - Pouring liquids and solids, cutting spreading foods during snack activities
 - Measuring, stirring during cooking activities
 - Acquisition of appropriate toileting behaviors including hand washing
 - Acquisition of appropriate tooth brushing skills
- **Social/emotional needs:** The social science curriculum is designed to help children explore the people, places, cultures, and communities in their world. The Pyramid Model framework is implemented with fidelity throughout all Clarke School classrooms. As a preschool and kindergarten program in which social emotional development is a major focus, the bulk of information provided within these curriculums is designed to promote self-esteem, self-confidence, and age appropriate social-emotional skills. Social concepts which are embedded throughout each students' day include but are not limited to: recognition and expression of feelings and emotions, working as a group, social problem solving, and perspective taking. Additional themes targeted throughout the year include families, communities, countries, travel and transportation, a variety of cultures (with emphasis on the cultural makeup of the class), occupations, seasons, celebrations, and holidays.
 - **Prevocational, vocational, career education:** This area is addressed through several thematic units including: our community and community helpers such as Firemen, Policemen, Doctors, Nurses, Dentists, Teachers, and Armed Services. The local Fire Department visits every school year during Fire Safety week, as does a Dentist during Dental Hygiene week. Each class also makes field trips where the students learn about careers in other areas.
 - **Pre-Reading and Writing:** Even the youngest classroom at Clarke MA in Canton is introduced to the concept that print has meaning. The Hegarty Program is used to promote literacy development, and print is used in the classrooms in many forms such as the children's printed names, calendar materials, written numerals, daily news, and printed vocabulary. Both in school and at home, the children share daily what is written in their home-school notebooks. Teacher and caregiver-prepared books are used to provide a context for sharing past experiences or preparing for upcoming events across environments. Children's literature plays a central role in creating a language rich environment, including picture books, poetry, rhymes, songs, newspapers, magazines, and teacher made materials, and are used as part of the curriculum.

Auditory, Speech, and Language Embedded into the Curriculum and Instruction

Students receive intervention and education from master's degree level teachers of the deaf and ASHA and State Board certified speech-language pathologists. The staff are supervised by professionals who are Listening and Spoken Language Specialists, Certified Auditory-Verbal Educators or Therapists (LSLS Cert. AVEd/AVT) and who also provide direct service to children as part of their daily responsibilities. All professionals work to foster development of age-appropriate listening, vocabulary, language, and social communication skills. All interactions promote the basic goals of early childhood education and include structuring the environment to provide opportunities to aid in each child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Auditory, speech, and language development and strategies are embedded into the curriculum and instruction in addition to being targeted during individual speech and language therapy sessions. Each student at Clarke Schools MA in Canton receives 30 minutes per day of individual auditory, speech, and language therapy.

Treatment goals are based upon the individual needs of each student as based on assessment results, data collection, and progress monitoring. As previously indicated, treatment activities will align with the curriculum theme being presented within the child's classroom. Collaboration between therapists and teachers will take place regularly to promote carryover between therapy and classroom environments.

Audiology

Clarke recognizes that children who are deaf or hard of hearing need appropriate hearing technology to maximize the use of residual hearing. Clarke audiologists are licensed and certified health care professionals who have training, expertise, and knowledge about state-of-the-art amplification devices for children/students. Our audiologists work to ensure that each student's hearing technology works optimally. In addition, our audiology teams follow recognized protocols for audiological assessments.

Clarke offers audiological services and support for our birth-through-high-school-age population including:

- Audiology consultation for young children, as well as students in the mainstream
- Screening and assessment at some locations
- Full-service audiological care for adults *at some locations* (hearing aid testing and selection)
- Recommendations for local resources

Teachers and SLPs perform sound checks daily in the classroom and in individual therapy. Caregivers send spare batteries in their child's backpack. HAT (Hearing Assistive Technology) and compatible equipment (e.g., receivers) are provided by the family. Clarke uses the Roger Sound Field System in each classroom. Private audiologists provide loaner equipment if needed and respond quickly to requests to help with equipment issues through email or text message. The audiologists consult with the Clarke program regarding children on their caseload with their child's teacher and/or SLP. Some offer complimentary services on site. Examples of services include participation in caregiver meetings, staffing for a particular child, earmolds, impressions and mapping services if warranted on a case-by-case basis.

Spare Parts and Batteries for Cochlear Implants and Hearing Aids:

In preschool, caregivers are responsible for providing this equipment to Clarke to assure a child always has full auditory access.

- Children should wear their hearing aids or cochlear implants during all waking hours. Research shows that children need to wear their technology (hearing aids, BAHA, cochlear implants, etc.) at least 10 hours per day to develop age-appropriate listening skills (caregivers are encouraged to discuss wear time with their child's audiologist).
- Please send a supply of these replacement parts and batteries to be left at school.
- Please call or email Clarke in the morning if a child's hearing aid or implant processor did not work prior to the child getting on the bus/arriving at school.

- Caregivers must notify their child's primary audiologist or implant center when replacement parts are needed. Please have at least one spare for each external component of a child's implant and a three-month battery supply at home.
- If your child is sent to school without their hearing aids or cochlear implants, caregivers will be called to bring the device to school immediately.
- Caregivers may be contacted to pick up their child to bring them immediately to their audiologist, especially if not having amplification creates a safety and health concern for your child.

Library

Clarke MA in Canton has a large children's library that brings curriculum support and greater knowledge to everyone at Clarke. The library has a wide selection of books which vary by reading level, children's author, and themes. The books are available for classroom and home use, as well as during instruction with our on-site literacy specialist. Each book is color coded by topic and author, and includes subject matter related to diversity and social-emotional concepts.

Family Involvement and Communication

Caregivers and families are the child's primary educators; therefore, we encourage and promote your involvement during these exciting and crucial years. Many caregivers of our young children are still learning how to meet their children's listening and spoken language needs.

All caregivers are strongly encouraged to observe at Clarke MA in Canton at least twice per year. **Families are welcome to visit and to observe as often as they wish.** You may wish to schedule your observation with your child's speech and language and/or classroom teacher, but **you are welcome to visit unannounced at any time that your child is present.**

Caregiver/Teacher conferences are offered twice per year in November and March. We encourage caregivers to attend conferences to receive updates on their IEP benchmarks and academic goals. Caregivers may request a conference with teachers, therapists, or supervisors at any time. Caregivers may want to schedule a conference following receipt of their child's Progress Reports, which are written three times per year.

The teachers want to hear from you often. If there are any changes in your child's life at home, including special events, new accomplishments, stressful situations, or anything which may inform your child's moods, feelings and behaviors - please let the teachers know. You can convey this information in a written note or leave a message for the teachers, and we will return your call. It is important that caregivers communicate important events, because the children are not always able to inform staff on their own. A short note regarding occurrences big and small helps the teacher to understand your child better and to provide an opportunity to shape conversation and expressive language skills.

Clarke Schools MA in Canton teachers and caregivers will maintain consistent communication to promote carryover between environments in the method that works for both the teacher and the caregiver. Caregiver-

teacher conferences will occur twice per year during which the teachers and speech-language pathologists will meet to discuss each child's progress and areas targeted within both the classroom and therapy environment.

Groups and family activities are also available throughout the school year to provide caregivers with access to other people caring for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. These events are opportunities to address the impact of deafness on a child's overall development, as well as on the family. Virtual Caregiver Connections with Clarke meetings will be held 4 times annually, and additional family activities will be announced throughout the year.

Family Visits and Observations

You are welcome to observe any day when your child is in school. You will be asked to sign in as a visitor at the front desk. Once you receive your visitor's pass, a designated member of the Clarke staff will escort you to the observation booth. **Families are welcome to visit and to observe as often as they wish.** You may wish to schedule your observation with your child's speech and language and/or classroom teacher.

We also will ask you to schedule **“Guided Observations”** at least once per year. This is an opportunity for you to observe your child in the classroom and within their speech and language session while guided by a school administrator. At these observations we will discuss ways that you can carry over strategies from the classroom or a speech session into your daily lives. Guided observations take approximately an hour and a half to complete, which includes 30 minutes observing the classroom, 30 minutes observing a speech session and a 30-minute meeting with the administrator. In addition, we welcome caregivers to plan to participate in classroom activities as well. Let the director and teachers know if you would like to participate!

Progression from Clarke

Progressing from a specialized program like Clarke to a mainstream school is an exciting time for each child and family. While each child is different, the age of progression to mainstream settings has decreased to the preschool level over the last 15-20 years. The reduced age of progression is directly related to newborn hearing screenings, early identification, early amplification, and early education around deaf or hard of hearing children. Clarke guides families through the progression process, providing step-by-step instructions and offering support and guidance throughout this important period of change. During these early years, the staff will provide a continuum of relevant information to assist with suitable school placement and to establish appropriate IEP goals, benchmarks, and accommodations.

Once a school is selected, a Clarke professional begins to prepare the staff of the school to receive the student and is available to provide ongoing support through our itinerant services. Some questions that may come up include:

- What is the best placement for my child?
- What kind of support services will my child need?
- How will the environment be modified to suit my child's needs?
- How do we educate our children's teachers and classmates about hearing loss?
- What do we do if something unexpected comes up?

Families form partnerships with Clarke's experienced mainstream staff or the district's teachers of the deaf to create a supportive team dedicated to the success and development of each child.

Caregiver-Family Rights

Caregivers of children with disabilities from ages three through twenty-one have defined educational rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These rights are called procedural safeguards. Procedural safeguards are the specific rules that make sure that you know what the school district is proposing to do ("receive notice"), agree with the school district's plan ("give caregiver consent") and have a range of opportunities for resolving disagreements with the school district ("due process"). When a caregiver has a concern, it is important that they contact their child's teacher or Clarke MA in Canton administrators. Caregivers must be given opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding their child's special education program. Caregivers have the right to participate in individualized education program (IEP) meetings to discuss and determine special education eligibility, assessment results, educational placement of their child and other matters relating to their child's free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Some basic rights you have as a caregiver are:

- To have your child receive free, appropriate public education (FAPE)
- To be a member of the team that develops your child's education program and to attend meetings about that program
- To understand every document, you sign
- To know and understand your rights in the language you understand best
- To pursue other options if you disagree with your local education agency (LEA)

For more information about your rights as they relate to your children, you may refer to Wrights law [here](https://www.wrightslaw.com/) - <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>

The Caregiver's Notice of Procedural Safeguards through the Department of Secondary Education (DESE) can be found here - <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>

Progress Reports

Clarke students' progress towards IEP goals and general curriculum acquisition are provided to the caregivers and to their public schools on an annual basis according to the school's calendar. In addition, progress towards IEP goals is measured and documented quarterly in December, March, and June. Progress notes are sent home to the caregivers and provided to the school district upon completion.

Health Policies

Where Clarke is a licensed Early Education and Childhood Center, we closely follow the EEC Health and Safety guidelines, which can be found in section 7.11 at the following website:

Health and Infectious Disease Reporting

Our goal is to keep your child and all of the children at Clarke MA in Canton healthy and as free from illness as possible.

The occurrence of certain diseases is required by law to be reported to the local Board of Health by the person making the diagnosis. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health list of reportable diseases is on file and at our reception desk. We will report any of these diseases at our center by telephone or in writing within 24 hours.

Clarke School MA in Canton will report an outbreak of a suspected infectious disease. An outbreak is defined as more than three children or staff with the same disease symptoms. Caregivers will be notified by letter, or telephone, if any communicable disease such as chicken pox or salmonella has been introduced to the school.

With advance planning, an informed staff, and cooperation from caregivers, we *can* minimize the spread of infectious disease. Caregivers are asked to be watchful for signs of infectious disease; to send an email to ClarkeCanton@clarkeschools.org when their child is ill-when a specific diagnosis is made (i.e., strep throat); to tell us immediately if a diagnosis of Hib or meningococcal disease is made; and to inform us of any changes in emergency telephone numbers.

For additional information on infectious diseases, please consult your child's physician. Your child's teacher will be glad to help find websites or other resources.

Illness and Exclusion Policy

Any child who is ill should not refrain from attending school. Control of communicable illness among children is of significant concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illness at Clarke School MA in Canton have been developed in conformance with regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control in the Department of Public Health. **To protect all other children and staff at Clarke MA in Canton, we ask that caregivers assist us by keeping sick children at home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms in the previous 24-hour period:**

- vomiting
- complaints of sore throat headache, stomachache
- a fever of over 100 degrees, orally
- persistent, bothersome cough
- conjunctivitis- if less than 2 doses of antibiotic have been administered
- impetigo- if it is a mild case (prescribed a topical treatment) the student does not need to be excluded. If put on oral antibiotics, the student should remain out for 24 hours
- frequent diarrhea
- unexplained rash
- lice-child may return to school after 1 treatment of anti-lice shampoo
- other diagnosed or suspected communicable disease

A child may return to school once the infectious disease is under control and the child is no longer contagious. **Caregivers must wait 24 hours after a child's fever has broken before sending the student back to school.** A child returning to the school should feel well enough to participate in all activities (including outdoor play and field trips).

Meeting the needs of mildly ill children while at school

Staff at Clarke School MA in Canton are not equipped to care for sick children, and our exclusion policy outlines the procedures that we will take when a child becomes ill while at the school. If your child becomes ill with any of the symptoms listed above during the school day, we will contact you as a caregiver to come pick your child up to take home. However, there are times when children are tired, ill, upset, or are waiting to be picked up by their caregiver or emergency contact person. The procedure we follow for meeting the needs of mildly ill children while in our care is as follows:

1. Children who are tired or upset but not otherwise showing symptoms of illness will be given a chance to rest in a quiet area of the school classroom, such as in the book area window seat. Close supervision is made possible by keeping the child in the classroom.
2. If a child is suspected of being ill, Clarke staff will consult virtually or by phone with our licensed health care consultant to determine the appropriate course of action. With the help of the Clarke staff, the health care consultant will gather information related to the following: general mood, activity level, fever, breathing difficulties, skin color, rashes, sores, swelling or bruises, severe coughing, and discharge from nose, eyes, and ears. Although we are not qualified to diagnose a specific illness, based on the child's symptoms, together we will determine if the child should rest for a short time or be sent home.
3. If the decision has been made to send the student home, he/she will be removed from the classroom and given space in an area of the school separate from peers while arrangements are made to transport the child home. Clarke staff will first contact the primary caregivers and, if they are unavailable, the emergency contact will be called. A staff member will stay with the child until his/her ride arrives. The child will be provided with food, water, and rest as deemed appropriate.
4. If the decision is made that the child only requires a short period of rest to continue to participate in academic activities, he/she will be monitored and allowed to return to class when appropriate. A caregiver will also be notified of the child's need for a rest. If the child's symptoms progress and they are unable to successfully participate in learning, a caregiver will be contacted to pick up their student.

Plan for administering medication (prescription, non-prescription and topical medications)

Non-prescription medications may not be administered to children at Clarke School MA in Canton. In the event of a rare, unanticipated situation, non-prescription topical medications may be administered. Caregivers should plan to give their child any necessary prescription medications at home before and/or after school. Should it become necessary for prescription medication to be administered at school, we follow the policy outlined below:

1. The caregiver must contact the school for the required permission forms that must be signed by both a doctor and caregiver.
2. All medication must be in its original, clearly labeled prescription bottle with the child's name, the name of the medication, and specific dosing directions.
3. In the unusual circumstance in which a child requires medication to be administered during school hours, designated Clarke staff members must be trained and certified annually by a health care professional in the administration of the medication.
4. A medication log will be completed each time the medication is administered. The log will include the name of the medication, the name of the person administering the medication, and the time and date the drug was administered. This log and the original permission slip will be placed in the child's file.
5. The medication will remain in a locked drawer, and any unused medication will be returned directly to the caregiver. Medications will not be kept at the school for any student.
6. If the medication requires refrigeration, then it will be placed in the refrigerator in the staff kitchen which is not accessible to students.
7. If any students require epinephrine auto injector for an allergy, it will be kept in the classroom and will be easily accessible to staff. The child's allergy plan will be kept with epinephrine.
8. School staff will never administer the first dose of any medication
9. All medications will be administered in accordance with the plan generated by the doctor.

Should it become necessary for a child to receive a topical, non-prescription medication at school, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The caregiver must give written authorization. We will also provide the caregiver with a permission slip, a signed copy of which will be placed in the child's file.
2. The medication must be in its original, clearly labeled container that includes the directions for use. It must also be marked with the child's name. It may only be used for the child to whom it belongs.
3. A medication log will be completed each time the medication is administered. The log will include the name of the medication, the name of the person administering the medication, and the time and date the drug was administered. This log and the original permission slip will be placed in the child's file.
4. If the medication requires refrigeration, then it will be placed in the refrigerator in the staff kitchen which is not accessible to students.
5. If a student has a diaper rash and a staff person administers a diaper rash cream, the caregivers will be notified at the end of the day.

Physical Examination and Immunization Records

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Education both require that each child have a yearly physical examination, including vaccinations and a lead screening, conducted by a physician/health care provider. The Department of Public health mandates that we have immunization records on file. Your physician's office may mail or fax the completed and signed form directly to the school if you wish. **Additionally, a letter dated within 30 days of the start of the school year must be received from your health care provider stating that your child is healthy to attend Clarke School.**

Emergency Medical Plan

The emergency care of injuries shall be limited to simple first aid procedures. Caregivers must be notified of all injuries on the same day that the injury occurs. The procedure that Clarke School MA in Canton follows when a child is injured is as follows:

1. The teacher-in-charge is notified immediately of any injury to a child.
2. The teacher-in-charge or other designated Clarke employee will call the caregivers, or if the caregivers are unavailable, the emergency contact.
3. When ambulance transportation is necessary, a staff member will accompany the child if the caregiver is not able to do so. Once an ambulance is called, the student must be transported from Clarke regardless of parent consent.
4. The health care consultant, the Director of Clarke, and the Clarke president will be notified/looped on any medical emergencies

Additional information regarding procedures followed during emergencies can be found in the Health Care Plan addendum. Our current licensed health care consultant is Michelle Kenyon R.N (License # 2272503).

Smoking/Tobacco

Clarke is a tobacco-free location. Smoking, vaping, and chewing tobacco are prohibited on all school grounds and on and off-site activities.

Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures

Fire drills, emergency evacuation routes and “alternate” routes are posted within each classroom and throughout the building. Practice emergency procedures will be held periodically throughout the school year. The function of these drills is to practice a rapid, safe and organized method of keeping everyone safe whether in the building or when exiting the building. Practicing the procedures also helps students and adults remain calm and prepared in the event of an actual emergency. Practiced procedures include scenarios for severe weather emergencies and lockdowns, which would be implemented if there were a possibility of a person within the building or in the vicinity of the building that might cause a risk to students. All drills are treated as an actual emergency and all people present during a drill or actual emergency will be expected to follow the established procedures.

Due to the age of our students, explanations about the emergency procedures will be age-appropriate and will be explained to students prior to any of the practices. If the building must be evacuated, all students and staff will report to their predetermined emergency location immediately. No one should return to the building for any reason until the all-clear signals have been given. Emergencies are unexpected, unpredictable and take many forms. No one can be fully prepared for everything that may happen, but guidance, strategies, and practice are helpful in any emergency. Clarke’s primary goal is to ensure that our students are safe in any situation.

Weather related school closings of Clarke School will follow the Canton, MA Public School District. Please check local radio and tv stations for Canton, MA Public School weather closings. Families will receive communication from Clarke School for any delayed openings or school closings.

Food, Snacks, Lunch and Nutrition

Nutrition

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulations require programs to follow USDA guidelines for nutrition and food service. All educators at Clarke School MA in Canton are trained in the USDA nutrition requirements, good nutrition, and the “My Plate” guidelines (see below), the importance of physical activity, the importance of teaching children about healthy eating and food choking hazards. The program director manages the food program and assists the EEC Director with preparing the snack menu.

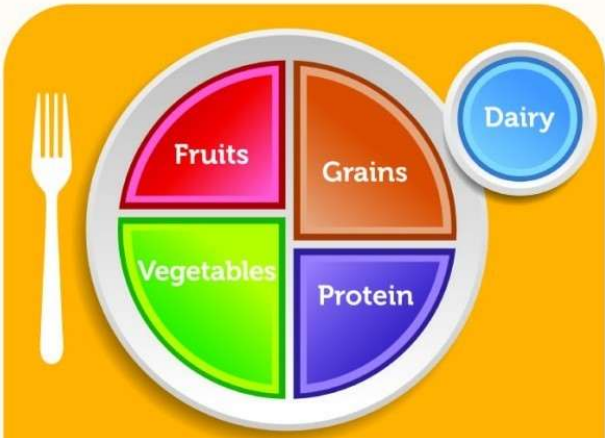
MyPlate is **the newest version of the United States Department of Agriculture's** (USDA's) Food Guidance System (replacing the Food Guide Pyramid). MyPlate depicts proper meal portions of the five food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy), helping Americans build healthy meals.

See the Pack Smart Graphic on the next page for guidance when packing your child’s lunch.

Pack Smart!

Help your kids stay healthy and focused in school—pack them a nutritious lunch. Each lunch should be about $\frac{1}{2}$ **Fruits** and **Vegetables**, $\frac{1}{4}$ **Grain**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ **Protein** with one serving of **Dairy**.

Encourage children to eat vegetables and fruits by making it fun. Provide healthy ingredients like the ones below and **let kids help with preparation!**



Choose **MyPlate.gov**

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Dairy
<i>Go easy on juice and make sure it's 100%.</i>	<i>Use dark green and orange veggies.</i>	<i>Make half of the grains whole grain.</i>	<i>Use low-sodium, lean or lowfat meats.</i>	<i>Choose lowfat or fat-free dairy.</i>
Apple Orange Pear Peaches Grapes Melon Dried Fruit	Broccoli Carrots Cauliflower Red Peppers Zucchini Broccoli Cucumber	Whole Wheat Bread Pita Bread Brown Rice Cereal Pasta Salad Sunflower Seeds	Chicken Turkey Fish Nuts Seeds Peas Beans	Yogurt Milk Cheese TIP Mix yogurt with cinnamon or garlic to make a delicious dip for fruits or veggies!

Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture

Snacks

We strive to provide wholesome, natural, and nutritional food within Clarke School MA in Canton as much as possible. We will provide mid-morning snacks every day. The weekly snack schedule is posted in each classroom and in the kitchen. Each day's snack follows USDA nutrition guidelines for preschool-aged children and includes at least 2 food groups. An alternative snack choice is available each day. Filtered water is available to children at any time throughout the day and is always offered during snack. Milk or juice will also be offered on occasion.

Lunch

Caregivers will need to send lunch daily for their child. We encourage you to send in nutritious and well-balanced meals that will not spoil while stored in their cubbies during the morning hours. Foods that need to be served warm should be sent in a thermos, because we will not have time to heat everyone's lunch. We will provide water but understand that a child may request a special drink in their lunch box from home and welcome them to bring them to school.

In accordance with EEC policy, caregivers are asked to prepare children's food in small, manageable, ready-to-eat portions. The EEC provides a list of foods that are considered choke hazards for young children. The list is available below. We ask caregivers to please review the list and to properly prepare food, or to avoid those that present choking hazards. For example, for children under four years of age, grapes must be cut in half, skin removed from apples, string cheese must be cut lengthwise and then sliced, and popcorn must be avoided.

Children will be allowed to eat the food in their lunch box in whatever order they choose, and we will not insist that a child eat specific food. Caregivers should be aware that children may choose to eat a treat or sweet dessert before or instead of more nutritious food. We will send home all uneaten food so that caregivers are aware of what foods their children eat each day. Some healthy lunch ideas include sandwiches (ham, turkey, tuna, etc.), bagels with cream cheese, cut up cold meats, leftovers (pizza, chicken, pasta, mac and cheese), cheese and crackers, whole grain waffles or pancakes with jam, soups (in thermoses), yogurt, cut up steamed vegetables with dip, pasta, peeled and cut up fruit and whole grain cereal mixes.

Choking Hazards

Caregivers are advised that children younger than four are not provided with round firm food, unless it is cut into small, non-round pieces. Young children may not chew food properly before swallowing, increasing the risk of swallowing the food whole and choking. Foods to avoid, particularly for children under age four include:

- Hot dogs or sausage, whole or cut into rounds (they may be sliced lengthwise and cut as well)
- Nuts
- Tough or large chunks of meat
- Grapes
- Hard Candy
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Chunks/spoonful of peanut butter (may be spread thinly)
- Raisins
- Raw carrots
- String cheese (may be sliced lengthwise and cut up)

Birthdays

If you would like your child to celebrate his or her birthday at school, please notify the teachers several days in advance. You may send in cupcakes, muffins, doughnuts, cookies, or ice cream. Individual servings are much easier for the teachers to handle within the classroom than one large cake. Caregivers are welcome to attend their children's party. If you would like to send a special snack to school with your child to share with the class at any other time, please feel free to do so. As a reminder, we are a nut free school. Please keep this in mind when preparing birthday treats.

Helpful Hints

Adjustment to School

Children may respond to starting school in a variety of different ways. The change from home to school is a major one in the child's life. Effects of this stress may be observed in a child's behavior and are considered normal and healthy. Some children may cry when they leave home, others may revert to earlier behaviors such as bed-wetting or baby talk, and others may simply refuse to talk about school with their families. It is helpful to be patient and supportive of your child's feelings and to share changes in behavior at home with the teachers.

In the classroom, children adjust to being in a group with other children in different ways as well. Some children join the group right away, seem comfortable from the start, and experience few problems with separation. Other children may seem to adjust easily at first but show signs of stress after a week or two. We will try to make this transition as smooth as possible for your child and will let you know how your child is adjusting in the form of frequent notes and phone calls during the first few weeks of school.

One of the best methods for a smooth transition in the morning is a hug, a kiss and reassurance that "I'll be back" or "I'll see you soon," then a quick exit versus remaining with your child for an extended period.

The staff realize that the separation of a child from their caregiver(s) is filled with emotion for the caregivers, as well as the child. The beginning of school is especially difficult for those caregivers who will be separated from their child on a regular basis for the first time. Clarke's goal is to be supportive of families as well as to their children. Please feel free to talk to staff if you are having difficulty adjusting to separation from your child.

Bringing Items from Home

We discourage children from bringing their own toys to school, as they might be lost, misplaced, or broken. In addition, it is often difficult for children to share their special possessions. The classroom teachers will often have a weekly designated "sharing" time when children can bring special things from home and tell the other children about what they have brought at group time.

However, we also realize that sometimes children need a "progressional object" to help them through the progression from home to school. This is especially true of those children who ride the bus to and from school.

A book, a favorite stuffed animal, a photo of the family or a blanket could all serve as transitional objects. We welcome these objects but ask that they remain in the child's cubby during class time. Caregivers can help by assuring the child that while it is fine to bring a reminder of home to school, their item will stay in their cubby during class time.

Clothing

Each child should wear comfortable play clothes that they can manage for toileting. Clothes with elastic waists are ideal. Sneakers are preferred and sandals with backs and straps are permitted. Please, **no flip-flops or heels allowed**. Children in the preschool and pre-kindergarten classes are required to wear shorts under dresses/skirts. Please send clothing that is appropriate to the weather conditions -hats and lightweight clothes in the summer, snowpants, hats and gloves in the winter and layers in between seasons. Do not dress your child in clothing that has to be kept especially clean. We encourage the child's use of materials, and we would not want their clothing to inhibit their freedom to investigate and explore.

Accidents Happen

We have many potty-training or newly potty-trained students. In working with young children, we expect that bathroom accidents, spills, and general messes will occur. As such, **we ask that each child have a bag with two complete changes of clothing** (e.g., underwear, socks, pants, shirt, etc.). Your child's name should be marked clearly on the bag. In December we will need another two sets of clothes that are appropriate for the cooler temperatures. If back-up items are used and soiled, the dirty clothing will be sent home. At that time, please be sure to send replacements for the classroom.

Pets

As of this writing, there are no classroom pets living at Clarke. From time to time, families may have a pet they would like to introduce to their child's class. Arrangements for pet visits should be made in advance with your child's teacher to make sure we can accommodate all safety concerns. There may also be opportunities for community organizations to offer animal visits to our location. Should such visits be planned, we will inform families in advance in the event they would prefer that their child not participate. Any visiting animals should be leashed and/or in a crate and under the sole supervision of their owner.

Social-Emotional Learning and Behavior Supports

Clarke MA in Canton is committed to providing discipline and guidance that is consistent and based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of each child. Discipline is directed to the goal of maximizing growth and development of the children and for protecting the group and the individuals in it. Clarke uses elements of curriculum from the Strong Start, Pyramid Model, and Social Thinking Programs which provide a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.

When a child's behavior is deemed inappropriate or endangers others, they will be redirected to another activity. The child is welcome to return when they are ready to do so. A teacher may ask the child if they need a "body

break," this gives the child a few minutes to gain control of themselves. When inappropriate behavior is consistent and chronic, a teacher may request a meeting with the caregiver(s) to develop a plan to modify the behavior to be followed at school as well as at home.

Our curriculum goals and objectives support children to learn social, communication and emotional regulation skills. When students demonstrate challenges regulating their behaviors, we use a wide variety of sensory and self-regulation strategies or other redirecting techniques.

Clarke's mascots "Millie the Hearing Monkey", "Kee the Hearing Koala" and "Sophie the Hearing Schnauzer" are tools used to help create a positive atmosphere and promote positive social-emotional development. Your child will have opportunities to bring Millie, Kee or Sophie home for weekend adventures. A chart is prominently displayed in each classroom so that students have a visual aide to help them regulate their own behavior. We also use visual timers and other picture cues to assist with progressions between activities and environments throughout the day. These environmental and activity modifications are effective ways to prevent challenging behaviors.

Staff have been trained through on-going professional development to recognize triggers for children that mark an escalation in challenging behaviors. Therefore, they can intervene quickly and redirect the student.

In the beginning of the school year, teachers spend time teaching the students the classroom routines and establishing expected classroom behaviors. The children participate in regular discussions about their emotions, the emotions of others with whom they are interacting, and the impact that their behaviors have on others within their environment. Role-playing and puppets, part of the Pyramid Model curriculum, are also used to help students begin to verbalize their feelings. At times positive reinforcement is implemented when trying to help a child to generalize a specific skill.

Under no circumstances do we use corporal punishment (including spanking), severe or cruel punishment, humiliation, neglect or verbal or physical abuse. No form of physical punishment (e.g. hitting, shaking, etc.) is ever used or tolerated at Clarke School, nor are there any type of threats or derogatory remarks. We do not deny children snacks or outdoor time as a form of punishment. Under no circumstances do we force-feed children or make them eat any food item against their will or use food consequently. We do not discipline or punish children for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. We do not force children to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet. Clarke has appropriate clothing in the event a child does not have an extra set of clothes in their cubby.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Clarke MA in Canton community is committed to making our school a safe and caring environment for all students. We treat each other with respect.

Bullying is not always easy to define but is unfair and one-sided.

Young children at times may put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported, and that young children do not intentionally wish to cause harm. Strategies that are used in our program include:

- Recognizing that young children are not always able to manage their own feelings and deliver them appropriately. Clarke staff work hard to model and promote vocabulary required to label and express emotions, problem solve social situations, and comprehend the impact of their behavior on themselves and others
- Offer support to all children who may be involved to help them comprehend and discuss the issues through play, stories, and other age-appropriate methods

Clarke staff will teach the students to do the following things to prevent bullying, and everyone feels safe at school:

- Treat everyone with respect and kindness
- Will not bully others
- Will not let other students be bullied
- Include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out

Teachers and staff do the following things to prevent bullying and help children feel safe at school:

- Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground
- Watch for signs of bullying behavior and stop it immediately
- Explore all reported bullying incidents
- Assign consequences based on the school social, emotional, and behavior supports

The role of caregivers:

- Caregivers who are concerned or have questions about bullying should contact the child's teacher and the program director
- Caregivers are encouraged to support Clarke's policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the Clarke community
- Work closely with Clarke staff to promote healthy social-emotional development

Visitors Policy

All visitors to the building must be allowed entry to the locked building by a staff member. Upon entering, the visitor must sign in, sign a nondisclosure policy, and will be provided with a visitor badge to be worn throughout their time at Clarke.

Release of Children from School

Please remember that we cannot release your child to anyone other than a caregiver, legal guardian, or bus driver without written permission. We will review proof of identification when anyone other than the caregiver, legal guardian or bus driver picks up a child. Please send an email to **ClarkeCanton@clarkeschools.org** to notify and authorize your child's teaching staff and administration if someone different is picking up your child from school.

Building Security

Clarke has a security system in place for the safety of families, staff, and students. Your understanding and cooperation are appreciated. All visitors, including families, staff from various school districts, and other Clarke campuses must ring the bell and be allowed into the building through the front door. They must sign in and take an identification badge to be worn throughout their time in school. The sign-in allows Clarke MA in Canton to have an accurate count of the individuals who are in the building in the event of an evacuation such as a fire. All doors are always securely locked.

Sexual Harassment

There is nothing more important to us than the children we teach and support. We understand that children and youth are not only our future; they are a valuable part of the community. However, our students are also vulnerable. Sadly, because of their vulnerability, they can be taken advantage of or become victims of abuse. Therefore, it is imperative that we are proactive in protecting them and in providing safe environments.

In addition, we must protect those who work with our students. Our school personnel need the security of knowing that they are working in a setting where processes and procedures are in place to minimize any possibility of an erroneous accusation.

Clarke's Plan to Protect[®] Policy establishes the criteria for the provision of a safe environment for all children, youth, and school personnel.

Special Events

Celebrations and special events are an important and exciting part of Clarke MA in Canton throughout the school year. Such celebrations can range from a more formal event that includes food and drink to something as small as extra impromptu outside activities. Five ways in which special events tie into the curriculum and promote educational/social skills include:

- Helping to build connections between students and teachers or peers
- Helping to develop social skills
- Helping to build positive relationships with the community
- Helping children practice and develop social expectations in real-life situations
- Helping to support academic achievement by targeting language and academic concepts

One of our goals at Clarke is to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within our school so that all children bring their whole selves to school, feel safe and welcome, and embrace their differences. I am writing to clarify

Holidays

No holidays will be *celebrated* at Clarke MA in Canton and there will not be a focus on one singular holiday. Instead, throughout the year, the emphasis will be on learning what various holidays mean to different students and the numerous ways that even the same holiday may be celebrated in different homes. A non-exhaustive list of holidays that some of our families may celebrate are listed below.

Clarke MA in Canton staff encourage you to reach out with additional holidays that you would like included and we invite you to observe in the classroom or participate at ANY time.

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| -Hanukkah | -New Year | -Lunar New Year | -Thanksgiving |
| -Christmas | -Diwali | -Eid | -Ramadan |
| -Kwanzaa | -4 th of July | | |
| -Special People's Day (an all-encompassing version of Mother's and Father's Day) | | | |

The focus throughout each holiday activity will remain on each child's specific academic, audition, and speech/language goals which include but are not limited to the list below. Your teachers will be sure to send home information so that you can carry the vocabulary and concepts over into your home environment including:

- literacy skills
- math skills
- following directions
- increasing receptive and expressive vocabulary
- articulation and overall intelligibility
- comparing and contrasting
- improving narrative development/storytelling
- promoting social interactions (asking and answering questions, being respectful of differences, recognizing and expressing emotions, strategies for self-regulation, etc.)

We here at Clarke hope you know how important every single one of your children is to us. They deserve to be recognized and to share all of the unique things that make them the wonderful little people they are today.

Research, Fundraising, Publicity and Student Clinician Policies

From time-to-time Clarke participates in research projects with other institutions. When such projects arise, we will request permission for your child's participation and will provide detailed information regarding the nature of the research study. Clarke saves data related to children's enrollment, services, demographic characteristics, assessment, and testing. The data is used to monitor each child's progress, to assist in program improvement and to document listening and spoken language outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Fundraising and Publicity

To continue to remain such an excellent and transformative program, Clarke depends on the support and generosity of those in our community who recognize the crucial work that we do with young children. Clarke conducts necessary fundraising and promotion for programs and services. If you would like to become more involved with efforts to support fundraising and Clarke's long-term sustainability, please contact develop@clarkeschools.org.

Observations and Student Clinicians

Clarke is committed to training future professionals, such as teachers and speech-language pathologists, to work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- College students and professionals often visit Clarke for the opportunity to observe and learn more about the work we do with Listening and Spoken Language. Observers are not allowed to have any direct, unsupervised interaction with any child.
- Graduate student clinicians, typically speech/language interns or student teachers, are often accepted for placement at Clarke as they complete the required components of their professional training. They come from a variety of colleges and universities, such as Columbia University, Northeastern University, Stonehill College, Bridgewater State University, and many others. All student interns and student teachers undergo the same rigorous background checks that employees go through. You will be notified if your child's teacher or speech-language pathologist will be mentoring a student clinician.

Families in Temporary Housing

Please let us know if you/your child are in temporary housing, such as a shelter. There are special regulations to support your child in enrolling in school and providing more time, if needed, to get some of the health requirements for us.

Payment Options/Billing

We accept most insurance and Medicaid. We also accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover credit cards for payment for speech services and/or summer school year when applicable.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies or any information contained within Clarke's handbook, please contact:

Melanie Austin, MS, CCC-SLP, Director

Email: maustin@clarkeschools.org

Phone: (781) 821-3499, x2201

2026-2027 Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements

Massachusetts school immunization requirements are created under the authority of [105 CMR 220.000: Immunization of Students Before Admission to School](#).

Requirements apply to all students, including individuals from other countries attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of an academic visitation or exchange program. Requirements apply to all students in every grade, even if they are over 18 years of age.

Childcare/Preschool^{§£††}

Attendees <2 years should be immunized for their age according to [2026 AAP Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule](#). Requirements listed in the table below apply to all attendees ≥2 years. These requirements also apply to children in preschool classes called K0 or K1.

Hib	1-4 doses; number of doses is determined by vaccine product and age the series begins
DTaP	4 doses
Polio	3 doses
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
MMR	1 dose; must be given on or after the 1 st birthday; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	1 dose; must be given on or after the 1 st birthday; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

[§] Address questions about enforcement with your legal counsel. School requirements are enforced at the local level.

[£] Doses that satisfy the [2026 American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule](#) also satisfy school requirements.

^{††} Meningococcal vaccine requirements (see Grades 7-10 and 11-12) also apply to residential students in Grades Preschool through 8 if the school combines these grades in the same school as students in Grades 9-12.

[†] Medical exemptions (statement from a physician stating that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for a student) must be renewed annually at the start of the school year, and religious exemptions (statement from a student or parent/guardian, if the student is <18 years of age, stating that a vaccine is against sincerely held religious beliefs), should be renewed annually at the start of the school year.

* A reliable history of chickenpox includes a diagnosis of chickenpox or interpretation of parent/guardian description of chickenpox by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or designee.

See the following pages for Grades K-6, Grades 7-12, and College (Postsecondary Institutions)

2026-2027 Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements

Grades Kindergarten-6^{§£††}

In ungraded classrooms, Kindergarten requirements apply to all students ≥5 years.

DTaP/Tdap	5 doses; 4 doses are acceptable if the fourth dose is given on or after the 4th birthday; DT is only acceptable with a letter stating a medical contraindication to DTaP
Polio	4 doses; fourth dose must be given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose or a fifth dose is required; 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
MMR	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday, and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

§ Address questions about enforcement with your legal counsel. School requirements are enforced at the local level.

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See the following pages for Grades 7-12, and College (Postsecondary Institutions)

Every child with a chronic medical condition diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner must have an Individual Health Care Plan on file at the program, even if there is no medication, or the medication associated with the plan does not need to be administered at the program.

The Department
of Early
Education and
Care

51 Sleeper Street,
4th Floor
Boston, MA



Individual Health
Care Plans (IHCP)



The Do's and
Don'ts

Do's

The IHCP Must have the following:

- Description of the chronic condition.
- The symptoms of the condition.
- Any medical treatment that is necessary while the child is in care.
- When to give treatment(s). If the plan has more than one treatment, make sure that it clearly states what medication to administer for each of the symptoms listed.
- The potential side effects of the treatment.
- The potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered.
- The Educator(s) in the program must have been successfully trained in the child's chronic medical condition/needs by the child's health practitioner, or receive training by the parent or the program's health care consultant, as authorized by the practitioner.
- Make sure that the plan is signed and dated by both the parent and the Health Care Practitioner annually.
- Make sure that the treatment listed on the IHCP is in the program while the child is in care.
- Medication must be stored in it's original box with it's original label.

Don'ts

- Don't accept a plan that has missing information.
- Don't have information or directions for the medication written as needed or a PRN (per request as needed).
- Don't allow multiple chronic health conditions to be listed on one IHCP. A plan must be written for each chronic health care condition. (i.e. If a child has asthma and is allergic to bees, then this child would have two separate IHCP's).
- Don't change, cross out, or add information on the plan after it is created and signed by the doctor and parent.
- Don't allow the child to attend the program unless the Director, Nurse, or designated staff has reviewed the IHCP and found it to be complete, and all related medication is provided.
- Don't forget to check that the medication provided as listed on the IHCP is current. For prescription medications, the script and the date stamped on the medication has to be current; for non-prescription medications, the date stamped on the medication box must be current.
- Don't provide a generic form of the medication treatment listed on the plan, unless the plan states such.

Tips

- When creating/obtaining an IHCP, make sure that it has all of the information listed in the "Do's" section of this brochure.
- Make sure that a medication consent form is fully completed for each medical treatment that is listed on the IHCP. If the medication listed on the IHCP is a prescription medication, then the consent form only needs to be signed by the parent. If the medication is non-prescription, then the consent form must be signed by both the parent and health care practitioner.
- All medication listed on a IHCP is considered an emergency life-saving medication, therefore it has to be readily available for the child for which it is intended. This medication must follow the child whether indoors or outdoors.
- If an allergy/action plan is received, review it to make sure it has all the necessary information. If it is only missing the information about whom the doctor authorizes to train, and whom at the program will be trained, then the following should be added prior to the health care practitioner signing the IHCP: "I authorize the parent or program's health care consultant to train '(name of program)' staff in my child's chronic health care needs and treatment."



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STUDENT PRIVACY POLICY OFFICE

SPPO-21-04

A Parent Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Other than statutory and regulatory requirements included in the document, the contents of this guidance do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) provides certain rights for parents regarding their children’s education records. FERPA gives these rights to custodial and noncustodial parents alike, unless there is a court order, legally binding document, or State law that specifically provides to the contrary. When a student reaches 18 years of age or attends an institution of postsecondary education at any age, he or she becomes an “eligible student,” and all rights under FERPA transfer from the parent to the student. Given the target audience for this document is parents, this guide is intended to discuss parents’ rights under FERPA. Under FERPA, the term “parent” means a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian. A companion document discussing eligible students’ rights under FERPA is available on our website at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/ferpa-general-guidance-students>.

FERPA is a Federal law that is administered by the Student Privacy Policy Office (SPPO) in the U.S. Department of Education (Department). FERPA protects “education records,” which are generally defined as records that are directly related to a student and maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. An “educational agency or institution,” herein after referred to as a “school,” generally means a school district, a public elementary or secondary school, or an institution of postsecondary education such as a college or university. There are also a few exceptions to the definition of education records, such as law enforcement unit records and sole possession records. More information is available at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/what-records-are-exempted-ferpa>.

FERPA applies to schools that receive funding under any program administered by the Department. Private and faith-based schools at the elementary and secondary levels generally do not receive such funding and are, therefore, generally not subject to FERPA. In addition, the confidentiality of personally identifiable information (PII) in the education records of children with disabilities is further protected by Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1417(c) and 34 CFR §§ 300.610-300.626). These regulations contain confidentiality provisions that are similar to, but broader than, FERPA. The IDEA-FERPA crosswalk contains additional information comparing IDEA and FERPA and is available at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/ferpaidea-cross-walk>.

The rights provided by FERPA to a parent include, but are not limited to:

- **Access to Education Records**

Under FERPA, a school or State educational agency (SEA) must provide a parent with an opportunity to inspect and review their child's education records within a reasonable period of time, but not more than 45 calendar days following receipt of a request. A school or SEA is generally not required to provide *copies* of the education records unless circumstances effectively prevent the parent from exercising the right to inspect and review the education records. For example, if a parent who does not live within commuting distance of their child's school requests that the school provide access to his or her child's education records, the school would be required to make other arrangements for the parent to inspect and review the requested records, or to provide a copy of the requested records.

- **Amendment of Education Records**

Under FERPA, a parent has the right to seek amendment or correction of their child's education records that the parent believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the child's rights of privacy. However, while a school is not required to amend an education record in accordance with a parent's request, a school is required to consider the request for amendment, to inform the parent of its decision, and, if the request is denied, to advise the parent of his or her right to a hearing on the matter. If, as a result of the hearing, a school decides not to amend the education records, then the parent has the right to insert a statement in the record commenting on the contested information or stating why the parent disagrees with the decision, or both. That statement must remain with the contested part of the education record for as long as the record is maintained and be included whenever the contested part is disclosed.

While a parent has the right to seek to amend non-substantive factual errors in the student's education records, the right is not unlimited, and a school is not required by FERPA to afford a parent the right to seek to change substantive decisions made by school officials, such as substantive decisions made in the context of grades given to a student based on their performance, other evaluations of the student's performance, or disciplinary decisions. These substantive decisions also include evaluations of whether a student has a disability and is eligible for special education and related services, disagreements about the content of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), or the student's educational placement under Part B of IDEA. While under FERPA a parent may seek amendment to correct a non-substantive factual error in an IEP, a parent should utilize the Part B of IDEA dispute resolution procedures (State complaints, mediation, or due process hearing procedures) to resolve disputes with a school regarding substantive matters. Each State has resources to help parents to participate effectively in their children's education and development. State contact information is available at <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/contacts/#state>.

- **Disclosure of Education Records**

Under FERPA, a school generally may not disclose PII from a student's education records to a third party unless the student's parent has provided prior written consent. However,

there are a number of exceptions to FERPA's general consent requirement, some of which are described below. Under these exceptions, schools are *permitted* to disclose PII from education records without consent, but they are not *required* to do so by FERPA.

School Official

FERPA allows "school officials," including teachers, within the school to obtain access to PII from education records without consent, provided that the school has determined the officials have a "legitimate educational interest" in the information. The school's annual notification of rights under FERPA must specify the criteria for determining who constitutes a "school official" and what the school considers to be a "legitimate educational interest." Typically, a school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Also, under the "school officials" exception to the consent requirement, FERPA permits a school to disclose education records to contractors (e.g., software/application vendors, lawyers), consultants (e.g., nutritional or information technology consultants), volunteers (e.g., home room parent volunteers, field trip chaperones, student volunteers), or other third parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the outside party:

1. Performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use employees;
2. Is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of education records;
3. Is subject to the requirements in FERPA that PII from education records may be used only for the purposes for which the disclosure was made, and which govern the redisclosure of PII from education records; and
4. Meets the criteria specified in the school's annual notification of FERPA rights for being a school official with a legitimate educational interest in the education records.

More information regarding the use of school volunteers and FERPA is available at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/school-volunteers-and-ferpa>.

Seeks or Intends to Enroll

Another exception to FERPA's general consent requirement permits a school to disclose PII from a student's education records, without consent, to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled, as long as the purpose of the disclosure is related to the student's enrollment or transfer. A school that discloses education records under this exception must make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent of the disclosure, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent, or the school's annual notification of rights under FERPA includes a notice that it forwards education records to other schools that have requested the records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled, as long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. A school that discloses education records under this exception also must provide the parent, upon request, a copy of the records that were

disclosed or, upon request, an opportunity for a hearing to amend the records that were disclosed. Under this exception, a school has the discretion to disclose academic, disciplinary, or any other PII from the student's education records to the new school. Further, a parent does not, under FERPA, have the right to prevent a school from disclosing such PII from the student's education records, or from communicating information about a student more generally, to the school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

Directory Information

FERPA also permits a school to disclose PII from a student's education records, without consent, when such information has been appropriately designated as "directory information" and the parent has not opted out of the disclosure of such designated information. The FERPA regulations define directory information as information in a student's education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information may include information such as the student's name, address, telephone number, email address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time), dates of attendance (i.e., the period of time during which the student attends or attended the school), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent school attended. FERPA provides that a school may disclose, without consent, directory information if the school has given public notice to parents of the types of PII that it has designated as directory information and the process, including period of time, for parents to opt out of certain directory information disclosures. This notice is often included in the annual notification discussed below. For more information regarding directory information, visit <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/b-cs-student-directory-information>.

Dependent Student

FERPA provides ways in which a school may share education records on an eligible student with their parents. Schools may, but are not required to, disclose any and all education records to parents, without the consent of the eligible student, if the student is a "dependent student," as that term is defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code. Generally, if either parent has claimed the student as a dependent on the parent's most recent income tax return, a school may disclose the student's education records to either parent, without the eligible student's consent.

This exception to FERPA's general consent rule also permits institutions of postsecondary education to share information with parents of students who are enrolled in both a high school and a college or university (dually enrolled). In this situation, the parents retain the rights over the student's education records maintained by the high school, if the student is under the age of 18 years, and the student retains the rights over the education records maintained by the college or university.

Other Exceptions

Provided certain conditions are met that are not included in the summary below, other exceptions to FERPA's general consent requirement that would permit the disclosure of PII from education records include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To authorized representatives of, among others, State and local educational authorities, such as a State department of education, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs
- To a representative of a State or local child welfare agency or Tribal organization regarding a child in foster care
- To State and local officials or authorities pursuant to a State statute concerning the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve the student whose records are being disclosed
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school for specified purposes including improving instruction
- To comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena
- In connection with a health or safety emergency

Annual Notification of FERPA Rights

Under FERPA, a school must annually notify parents of their rights under FERPA. There are separate annual notifications and other rights under IDEA. The FERPA annual notification must include information regarding a parent's right to inspect and review his or her child's education records, the right to seek to amend the records, the right to consent to disclosure of PII from the records (except in certain circumstances), and the right to file a complaint with SPPO regarding an alleged failure by a school to comply with FERPA. The notification must also inform parents of the school's criteria for the terms "school official" and "legitimate educational interest" in certain instances. A school is not required to notify parents individually, but rather is required to provide the notice by any means that are reasonably likely to inform parents of their rights. These means could include publication in a school activities calendar, newsletter, student handbook, or on a school's website.

Complaints of Alleged Violations with FERPA

Parents who believe that their FERPA rights may have been violated may file a complaint with SPPO at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>. SPPO will review the complaint to ensure the complaint:

- Is filed, in writing, by a parent who maintains FERPA rights over the education records that are the subject of the complaint;
- Is submitted to SPPO within 180 days of the date of the alleged violation or of the date that the parent knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation; and
- Contains specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of FERPA has occurred.

SPPO will then make a case-by-case determination to determine the best mechanism for resolving the underlying situation. Sometimes the action will be a formal investigation; for other complaints, consistent with the statute and applicable regulations, we will take other appropriate actions, such as acting as an intermediary or providing resolution assistance. More information regarding our complaint process is available at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>.

Additional Information

For more information regarding FERPA and other student privacy issues, please visit our website at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov>.

If you have questions about FERPA that are not addressed here, you may also submit a question through our website at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/contact> or write to SPPO for additional guidance at the following address:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8520



DR. OPEOLUWA SOTONWA
MCDHH COMMISSIONER

WEBSITE:
MASS.GOV/MCDHH

MAILING ADDRESS:
600 WASHINGTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02111

CONTACT NUMBERS:

- 617.740.1600 (MAIN)
- 800.882.1155 (VOICE)
- 617.326.7546 (VP)
- 800.530.7570 (TTY)

MAURA HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIM DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

KATE WALSH
SECRETARY EOHHS

Children's Services

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Children's Specialists at MCDHH provide unique support services to families, professionals, and educators connected to children who are Deaf or hard of hearing throughout the Commonwealth.

CHILDREN'S SPECIALISTS

MCDHH carefully selects staff experienced in working with children and adolescents with varying degrees of hearing loss. Each staff possesses a wealth of knowledge in communicative and educational choices available for deaf and hard of hearing children. All Children's Specialists are bilingual in English and American Sign Language (ASL).

It is the goal of the Children's Specialists at MCDHH to ensure equal access to communication in the modality that best supports the child and family across all areas of life including home, school and community.

SERVICES

- Education relative to the effects of hearing loss at birth, during childhood and in the teenage years.
- Support with transitions around Early Intervention, the public school system, and adult service.
- Identification of Intervention Strategies for parents, educators, professionals and community members, including but not limited to the appropriate usage of technology and language development.
- Objective Information regarding choices for early language development.
- Information and Referral to specialized services such as mental health, behavioral health, psycho-educational evaluation and testing, speech and language pathologies and audiologists.
- Assistance with Early Intervention and educational programs regarding the communication need and cultural perspectives of Deaf and hard of hearing children.
- Advocacy and Support to families and agencies in the development and utilization of service plans.
- Connecting Children and Families to recreational and social activities as well as other families and Deaf adult role models.

All services are free and confidential.

MCDHH-CommServDiv@mass.gov



Back to School Packet Forms to be Completed Prior to the First Day of School

- ☐ Enrollment/Application Form
- ☐ Medical Form: documenting current health, immunizations, and special needs. This form must be consistent with the individual health care plan
- ☐ *Individual Health Care Needs Plan (IHCP)- This is for children with allergies, asthma, cochlear implants, any child who may need an EpiPen or other health needs. This must be completed in full by a doctor and it must be consistent with the Medical/Physical form.

*Children with EpiPens cannot be in school without this form completed and an unexpired EpiPen on site.

- ☐ Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- ☐ Emergency Contacts and Consent to Pick up:
- ☐ Clarke must have at least 3 contacts to call in case we cannot reach you.
- ☐ No child will be released to a non-caregiver caregiver if they are not listed on this form.
- ☐ Dental Form
- ☐ Consent to Obtain/Release Information
- ☐ Permission Slip-off campus trips/neighborhood walks
- ☐ Permission for Assessment
- ☐ Permission to apply topical protection
- ☐ Media Releases and Consent
- ☐ Transportation Plan
- ☐ Permission to Read with Cooper, the Dunkin' Service Dog

Additional Forms

These forms are needed for a child to receive services or required by regulation:

- ☐ Caregiver Handbook/Orientation Review Acknowledgement of receiving the orientation and enrollment material, including the Caregiver Handbook and all its information.
- ☐ Latest Audiogram
- ☐ Current IEP
- ☐ Student Development Forms
- ☐ Caregiver Involvement Forms

First Day of School Checklist

- ☐ Backpack-To be brought to school each day. Backpacks should be of reasonable weight. Each child should be able to carry his/her own backpack without assistance. The backpack should fit your child's lunchbox, notebook, and other items.
- ☐ Lunch in a lunch box (each day). No nut products. Clarke does NOT heat or refrigerate food.
- ☐ 2 Changes of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) appropriate for the season to be left in school. All items should be labeled with your child's name
- ☐ Supply of spare batteries for your child's hearing aids or cochlear implant
- ☐ Pull-Ups for children not yet toilet trained (Pull-Ups with velcro side tabs are preferred)
- ☐ A package of wipes

The following items are not mandatory but would be appreciated by your child's class:

- ☐ Packages of unopened wipes
- ☐ Glue/glue sticks
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ New non-toxic, washable markers
- ☐ New, unopened crayons
- ☐ Boxes of unopened, soft tissues
- ☐ Unopened boxes of healthy snacks- animal crackers, pretzels, rice cakes, etc. to share with class (NO NUTS)
- ☐ Cake, muffin, or brownie mixes (NO NUTS in ingredients) for special occasions.

Connect with the Clarke Community and Online Resources

Clarke produces a variety of resources for caregivers including tips, at-home strategies, blogs, newsletters and more. Visit clarkeschools.org/resources and follow @ClarkeSchools on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to stay connected.