



ABLE ACADEMY
Parent/Student
Handbook
2024-2025

Policies & Procedures
For Effective Student Behavior

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Welcome Parents and Guardians,

The staff at ABLE Academy would like to take this opportunity to welcome your family to the 2024-2025 school year. The Parent/Student Handbook will familiarize you with ABLE Academy and outline what you can expect from our school. It will answer some questions you may have about programs and policies. This handbook is not meant to take the place of personal communication between your family and ABLE Academy.

Please feel free to contact ABLE Academy, if you have questions regarding programs or procedures. Please take time to acquaint yourself with each section. We hope you find the information to be helpful and we welcome any feedback and questions.

Thank you,

ABLE Academy Administration & Staff

School Information

School Days/Hours

Regular School Year: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

ESY Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

Contact Information:

Address: 3S140 Barkley Avenue
Warrenville, IL 60555

Main Office: (630) 425-3183

ABLE Cell: (630) 398-9673

Fax: (630) 429-9428

Website: www.ableil.org

ABLE Academy Program Information

ABLE Academy's Mission

ABLE Academy is committed to ensuring all students reach their optimal level of independence by using evidence-based behavior analytic interventions.

ABLE Academy's Vision

- ABLE Academy encourages students to Achieve Beyond Limits and Expectations.
- ABLE Academy's foundation is rooted in utilizing empirically-based Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) methodologies to support all students in achieving optimal levels of independence.
- ABLE Academy recognizes that the accomplishments of the students impact the family and community and strive for each student to reach their full potential.

Program Components

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will drive each student's goals. Data collection and analysis are key components to ABLE Academy's high quality education. Data collection and analysis occurs on a routine basis to ensure progress toward goals is being achieved. Instruction is delivered both individually and in small group settings from the Learning Behavioral Specialist (LBS) Teachers, Vocational Coordinator, and Physical Education Teacher all supported by the paraprofessionals. There are four primary components to ABLE Academy's programming: Academics, both core and functional, behavior, communication and life skills. Therapy services may include:

- **Behavioral Therapy:** Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the foundation of ABLE Academy's program and is utilized within the classroom and individual sessions.
- **Speech/Language Therapy:** Professional services are provided by licensed Speech Language Pathologists to increase skills in the area(s) of receptive, expressive and pragmatic communication.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Professional services are provided by licensed Occupational Therapists to increase skills in the area(s) of fine motor skills and sensory integration in order to maximize independence across all environments.
- **Social Work or Counseling:** Professional services are provided by a licensed Social Worker or Counselor to increase social skills and coping strategies.
- **Individualized or Classroom Paraprofessionals:** Highly trained paraprofessionals are provided to students as necessary based upon each student's need. Paraprofessionals work closely with the BCBA to ensure that the student's behavior intervention plan is consistently implemented.
- **Additional Related Services:** Additional Related services will be supported and provided by the students' home district in accordance with a student's Individualized Educational Plan.

Programs Available at Able Academy *

Middle School Education (6-8) ABLE Academy's middle school education program provides intensive instruction in the area(s) of behavior support, functional communication, daily living skills, and academics. ABLE Academy's middle school education program has its foundation rooted in ABA, with the BCBA working very closely with the classroom teacher, paraprofessionals, and related services providers to coordinate both skill acquisition and behavior intervention plans. Each student receives individualized instruction as specified within his/her IEP, whose goals are developed from assessment and current level of performance. Modified grading systems will be utilized as appropriate, progress monitoring will occur on a weekly basis, and progress on goals will be reported quarterly to families and referring school districts.

Secondary Education (9-12) ABLE Academy's secondary education program focuses on promoting student independence in all areas to the greatest extent possible. The level of staff support needed is assessed and determined for each skill area and faded as appropriate. ABLE Academy's programming will heavily focus on functional and core academics, behavior support, functional communication, and independent living skills. The assessment and subsequent areas of skill mastery for students will help guide differentiated instruction and move students toward a more traditional model of education. These skills will be incorporated into academics and coursework in addition to content-area instruction to increase classroom success. Modified grading systems will be utilized as appropriate, progress monitoring will occur on a weekly basis, and progress on goals will be reported quarterly to families and referring school districts.

Transition (18-21 years of age) ABLE Academy's transition program will continue on the spectrum of promoting independence with all students to the greatest extent possible. Vocational training and independent living skills are the top priorities within our transition program. As with all ABLE Academy's programming, our transition services will heavily focus on behavior support, functional communication, life skills, vocational training and job coaching, opportunities for working on-site, as well as during community outings. The level of staff support needed is monitored through daily data collection and systematically faded based on data analysis of support necessary with a focus on increasing independence and tolerance to tasks.

*ABLE Academy understands that there are age range requirements of not more than a 4- year span for elementary grades and not more than a 6-year span for secondary grades. No classroom will extend beyond the age range requirements without an approved deviation and, if additional classroom space needs to be secured, ABLE will do so prior to accepting referrals beyond the age range requirements.

Unified Academic and Daily Living Skills Curriculum

Reading and Language Arts ABLE Academy utilizes a wide variety of curricular materials to meet each student's individualized needs and IEP goals. Research-based direct instruction (DI) which focuses on increasing a student's comprehension and explicit instruction in improving skills for phonetic skills, vocabulary enhancement, and sight words. The teachers access a variety of resources including, TEACHTown, Reading Milestones, Story Champs, Jolly Phonics and News to You/Unique Learning which are all aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Since reading comprehension and one's ability to understand language go hand in hand, ABLE Academy's Speech Language Pathologist(s) works closely with the classroom teacher and BCBA to develop an individualized program for each student targeting functional communication skills.

Mathematics Research-based direct instruction (DI) is also at the heart of ABLÉ Academy's Math curriculum including Teachtown ENCORE Math Grades 6-12, News to You/Unique Learning, Equals Math by ABLENET, Attainment Math Series in Algebra and Geometry. All curricula are aligned with the Common Core Standards. Additionally Functional Daily Living Math skill instruction occurs in real life experiences through running our coffee house, The Garage at ABLÉ, cooking classes, shopping in the community and experiencing community outings to restaurants to practice money management, ordering, and budgeting. Each student's teacher works closely with ABLÉ's occupational therapist and vocational coordinator to make certain individual needs are met.

Science and Social Studies Both science and social studies are taught in small group settings, ensuring the individual needs of the students are met and goals targeted. A variety of curricula are utilized that are aligned with Common Core Standards including, but not limited to Teachtown ENCORE Social Studies and Science Grades 6-12, Teachtown Social Skills Instruction, CNN 10, Attainment Science in Chemistry, General Science, and Physics. Science lessons are often taught in an experiential manner. Social studies instruction is closely aligned to assisting students in developing his/her functional daily living skills in the areas of improving social skills, and developing awareness to safety in the community. ABLÉ Academy's social worker and BCBA's work collaboratively with classroom teachers to ensure individual student needs are met.

Technology Students at ABLÉ Academy have access to classroom technology to support programming. This includes Chromebooks, iPads installed with various apps and programs that correlate with learning standards and individual goals, computers, podcasts, and interactive whiteboards. Additionally, all students who need alternative communication systems have access through AAC Devices which are used throughout the school day to facilitate functional communication. Technology is further outlined in classroom lesson plans, which are aligned to standards, to indicate when technology will be utilized to support instruction.

Daily Living Skills Students at ABLÉ Academy engage in learning and practice of daily living skills through specific programs aligned to their needs in the areas of hygiene and daily grooming, home maintenance skills, workplace production, and community awareness. This curriculum includes Teachtown Transitional Life Skills, Attainment Vocational Training, Workshop Materials in the areas of assembly, production, and sorting. Community outings reinforce classroom instruction in real life situations.

Physical Education Physical fitness and education are important for all students at ABLÉ Academy. Physical Education is conducted daily with an emphasis on physical well being for life. Skills taught include, but are not limited to: physical fitness in the areas of endurance, strength building, agility and balance, life-long recreation and leisure, team building, and healthy life-style choice promotion.

Responsibilities and Expectations

Administration/Staff Responsibilities

The ABLE Academy administration/staff will strive to provide effective services and programming to all the students. The staff will be responsible for:

- Respect all students and treat each student with dignity.
- Maintain a positive school environment for all students.
- Provide a learning environment where each student reaches their full potential.
- Enforce all rules and responsibilities.
- Initiate communication with parents on student progress and collaborate on student's programming.
- Protect students and staff from harm.
- Respect the privacy of each student when providing personal, medical or mental health care

Abused & Neglected Child Reporting

Any employee who suspects or receives knowledge that a student may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately make a report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) on its Child Abuse Hotline 800-25-ABUSE and follow directions given by DCFS concerning filing a written report within 48 hours with the nearest DCFS field office. Any employee who believes a student is in immediate danger or harm, shall first call 911. The employee shall also promptly notify the Executive Director or Director that a report has been made. Any employee who discovers child pornography on electronic equipment shall immediately report it to local law enforcement. The ABLE Executive Director or Director shall also be promptly notified of the discovery and that a report has been made.

Faith's Law: Employee Code of Professional Conduct

All ABLE Academy employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships, to demonstrate integrity and honesty, to be considerate and cooperative, and to maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others. In addition, the [Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators](#), adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education, is incorporated into this Code of Conduct. Any employee who sexually harasses a student, willfully or negligently fails to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), engages in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25, engages in grooming behaviors, violates boundaries for appropriate school employee-student conduct, engages in sexual misconduct as defined in 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5, or otherwise violates an employee conduct standard will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

Standards related to school employee-student conduct shall, at a minimum:

1. Comply with the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education;

2. Prohibited grooming behaviors and sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to (i) any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, (ii) by an employee with direct contact with a student, (iii) that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a. A sexual or romantic invitation.
 - b. Dating or soliciting a date.
 - c. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialogue.
 - d. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.
 - e. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
 - f. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student.
3. Employees are expected to maintain professional relationships with students.
 - a. Employees are strictly prohibited from using any form of communication with students (e-mails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, conversations) that includes any subject matter that would be deemed unprofessional and inappropriate between an employee and student. ABLÉ Academy has a “zero tolerance for any conduct that crosses over that professional line.
 - b. Employees are not permitted to transport ABLÉ Academy students in the employee’s privately owned vehicle, unless the employee has obtained the prior permission of the Executive Director or the Director to do so.
 - c. Employees are not permitted to take or possess a photo or video of a student on their private devices. Student pictures for school sponsored activities used in furtherance of ABLÉ Academy’s mission are permitted. In this circumstance, Pictures may be taken only for agency sponsored activities and only with permission from ABLÉ Academy Executive Director or Director.
 - i. Pictures must be deleted from your phone once they are placed in the file folder labeled “student pictures”.
 - ii. Pictures may not be shared with others outside of ABLÉ Academy.
 - iii. Pictures may only be taken with consent of parents or guardians.
 - d. Employees are not permitted to meet with a student or contact a student outside the employee’s professional role. Employees are expected to avoid crossing a line that results in an actual or perceived inappropriate relationship.
4. ABLÉ Academy employees are mandated reporters and required to comply with all reporting requirements of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.), and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7926);

5. Employees, students, parents, and any third party can report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations pursuant to ABLÉ Academy policies, Uniform Grievance Procedure, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting, to a the Director, Human Resources Coordinator or the Executive Director or any other ABLÉ Academy staff member the person feels comfortable reporting to; and
6. Employees are required to complete training related to educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations as required by law and policies.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

The ABLÉ Academy staff practices a team approach with parents/guardians. We expect parents/guardians to read the Parent/Student Handbook and sign the form stating they have read the handbook. Parents are responsible for:

- Make sure your student attends school daily unless they are absent due to an illness or family emergency beyond your control.
- Report any tardiness or absence to the school in a timely manner.
- Assist your student in being neat, clean, respectful and courteous.
- Assist your student in achieving individualized goals.
- Check the student's backpack daily and read and respond to communication notes.
- Attend conferences/meetings throughout the school year.
- Follow the sick/illness policy and keep your student home when sick.

Student Responsibilities

Your student has the right to:

- Learn in a safe and healthy environment.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Be allowed to express their viewpoints in an appropriate manner.

Your student is responsible for:

- Making an effort to be an effective learner.
- Attend class and be on time.
- Come prepared with all supplies and materials.
- Follow directions and adhere to standards of good conduct.

Attendance Procedures

Regular school attendance is necessary in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities at ABLÉ Academy. Students are expected to be in attendance every day when school is in session. It is pertinent that you contact ABLÉ Academy to report your student's absence(s) and follow the reporting absence guidelines. If we do not hear from the responsible party, school personnel will contact the listed parent or guardian via phone to inquire about your student's status. If your student is unable to attend school, please report the absence by following the guidelines listed below.

Reporting Student Absence

1. A student's absence needs to be reported to the school by a parent/guardian before 8:30 a.m. by either; emailing your student's classroom teacher or calling the direct line at (630) 425-3183.
2. Communicate the reason for the absence, name of student, your name & phone number.
3. If applicable, contact the district transportation company about your student's absence.
4. Notify school immediately if your student is hospitalized for any reason.

Student Absence

School attendance is mandated by the State of Illinois. A truant is defined as a student who is absent without valid cause. Similarly, a chronic truant is defined as one who is absent without valid cause (medical documentation) for 10% or more of the 180 school attendance days. Appropriate disciplinary consequences may be given should an administrator deem a student as a chronic truant. Also, the authorities, such as the home school district and the county truancy officer, will be notified.

Late Arrival/Early Dismissal

The parent/guardian must contact the school when your student will be arriving after 9:00 a.m. or if he/she is leaving before 3:00 p.m. The students must be signed in or out by the parent/guardian when arriving after 9:00 a.m. or leaving prior to 3:00 p.m. Please contact your bus company to inform them that your student will be dropped off at school or picked up early. It is your responsibility to make sure the bus company is aware of your student's late arrival or early dismissal. If your student requires a bus safety harness, make sure you bring it to school or it is in your student's backpack. If a student usually travels with a harness, but the harness has been left at home, the parents will be expected to pick up the student at the end of the school day.

School Cancellation/Emergency Closings

ABLE Academy recognizes that there will be days when school will not be able to be in session due to inclement weather conditions. The school will be open every day that it is safe for students to be transported to and from school. ABLE Academy personnel will make school cancellation decisions due to inclement weather after reviewing local news and media for school closures in the area. ABLE Academy personnel will communicate via email and phone calls notifying families of any school closures. ABLE Academy may choose to implement an e-Learning session in lieu of school attendance for emergency school closings.

Student Release

Please notify the classroom teacher in advance, if someone that is not currently listed on the Authorization To Release Student to Person Other Than Parent Form, will be picking up your student. ABLE staff are unable to release your student to anyone not listed on this form without prior written notification from the parent or guardian. Please contact ABLE Academy if you need to update or make changes to your student's file and forms as soon as possible.

Behavior Intervention and Crisis Procedures

Behavior Management

ABLE Academy staff shall develop, implement, and monitor procedures on the use of behavioral interventions with the students. When effective these behavioral interventions promote and strengthen desirable behaviors, and reduce identified inappropriate behaviors. If required and necessary, a student will have an intervention plan in his/her IEP that identifies which behaviors each student needs to address and what replacement behavior and/or strategy will help support them. In that case, data is taken daily to track frequency and intensity of target behaviors, so that adjustments can be made and/or progress measured by monthly charting of the data.

List of Positive Behavior Supports include but are not limited to:

1. Positive Reinforcement
2. Differential Reinforcement Procedures
3. Noncontingent Reinforcement
4. Functional Communication Training
5. Reward Based Systems/Token Economies
6. Antecedent/Consequence manipulations
7. Environmental Manipulations
8. Functional Behavior Assessment
9. Replacement Behavior Training
10. Behavior Contracts
11. Errorless Teaching Procedures
12. Self Management Programs
13. Stimulus/Demand Fading

List of Approved Interventions

1. Response Blocking
2. Redirection
3. Overcorrection

More Restrictive Interventions (only as a last resort)

1. Time out
2. Physical Restraint (Staff are trained in QBS Safety-Care)

Aversive techniques are prohibited at ABLE Academy. Non-restrictive interventions are attempted first, as they are of low risk, with the purpose of teaching the student a new skill that will reduce the inappropriate behavior and replace it with appropriate behavior. Restrictive interventions are those that respond to behaviors which pose a risk of harm to the student, staff or other students and are used only if less restrictive interventions have been attempted or failed. Restrictive interventions will be a collaboration between school staff and the parents/guardians as part of the IEP process.

Use of Physical Restraint

ABLE Academy is committed to making the safety of its students and staff our number one priority. All staff are trained by a certified instructor in QBS Safety-Care.

The goal of QBS Safety-Care is the care, welfare, safety and security of all people involved in a crisis situation. Understanding nonverbal behavior, such as nonverbal communication, personal space, and body posture are some of the key elements in QBS Safety-Care. Communication is

important when attempting to diffuse a situation, as staff give directives and/or options to students in a way that is consistent with the statement ‘it is not what you say, but how you say it’.

By recognizing precipitating factors, staff can understand the underlying causes of escalating behaviors and respond in a more professional manner. Staff will attempt to de-escalate the situation based on possible antecedents and prior experiences with student(s) in similar situations.

Staff learns personal safety techniques that reduce the risk of injuries if a student tries to hit, kick, grab, bite, choke, etc. Authorized techniques are implemented when other methods are exhausted and the situation requires physical intervention. This is always a last resort and involves the use of non-harmful control and restraint positions to safely control an individual until he/she can regain control of his/her behavior.

After a restraint has occurred, staff will complete an incident report and the parent is notified the same day. A copy of the report will be filed in the student’s file and sent to the student’s school district.

Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior Definition

“Bullying” means any severe or pervasive (repeated over time) physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward your student, that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects:

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

“Cyberbullying” means using information and communication technologies to bully. This definition includes cyberbullying by means of technology that is not owned, leased, or used by ABLÉ Academy when an administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred. This policy does not require ABLÉ Academy, its administration or staff to monitor any non-school related activity function or program.

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

Bullying behaviors may also qualify as other inappropriate behaviors. When deciding whether inappropriate behavior constitutes bullying, administrators should consider a student’s intent, the frequency or recurrence of the inappropriate behavior, and whether there are power imbalances between the students involved. While bullying is often characterized by repeated acts, sometimes a single incident constitutes bullying depending on the student’s intent and power imbalances. *See pages 27-35 for ABLÉ’s complete Anti-Bullying Policy.*

Response to Physical or Emotional Threats or Actions

Students and Staff are expected to consistently demonstrate respect for others. ABLE Academy intends to provide a safe, nurturing, comfortable environment for all students and staff members. If a situation arises in which a student becomes threatening, is verbally cruel, sexually harassing and/or becomes physically aggressive in any way the following options are available:

1. Behavior Intervention Plan will be drafted or amended and consistently implemented;
2. Counseling for others involved in the situation;
3. Removal from the peer group (in or out of school suspension);
4. Parents notified and asked to come to the school to pick up student;
5. Police notified (battery, aggravated battery, damages to property, etc.);
6. Assessment for psychiatric treatment and/or hospitalization.

Making a Complaint

Students and parents are encouraged to report incidences of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or any other prohibited conduct to the ABLE Executive Director. A student may choose to report to a person of the same gender. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined.

Weapons Prohibition

A student who is determined to have brought one of the following objects to school, any school-sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school shall be suspended and may be asked to leave ABLE Academy:

1. A firearm, meaning any gun, rifle, shotgun, weapon as defined by Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, firearm as defined in Section 1.1 of the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act, or firearm as defined in Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code of 1961.
2. A knife, brass knuckles or other knuckle weapon regardless of its composition, a billy club, or any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including “look-a-likes” of any firearm as defined above.

Additional action may be taken by the student’s home school district.

Transportation Information

Bus Transportation

Student transportation is set up by your student’s school district. Parents must inform ABLE Academy staff, with 24 hours prior notice, if someone other than yourself or the bus will be transporting your student. ABLE Academy staff cannot transport your student in their personal vehicle under any circumstances. If there are any problems with your student’s transportation, contact your School District Representative and the ABLE Executive Director

Community Trip Transportation

School staff plan weekly community outings in accordance with educational goals. Parents/Guardians are asked to provide permission at the start of the regular school year. ABLE does not send home Permission slips for each trip. Parents receive a monthly calendar with

planned community dates and locations. Parents can revoke permission at any time prior to the day of a planned community trip.

Parent Communication

Daily Communication

A summary of your student's day will be sent home to notify you of important information, which may include information on academics, behavior, therapy sessions and any other important information your student's teacher would like to share with you. ABLE is communicating each day's information on a weekly sheet. This weekly sheet can also be used as a means for parents/guardians to communicate important information about his/her student to the school team. Parents are asked to send back to school each Mon-Thursday. On Friday, Parents are to retain the copy for their records.

Meetings

Annual IEP meetings will be scheduled by the appropriate school personnel and your home school district. The school will be contacting the parents/guardians about meeting dates and times. Once the meeting has been scheduled, parents/guardians will receive written notification of the scheduled meeting. We strongly encourage parents to attend these annual review meetings, as your input on the proposed goals is very important in the education process. We encourage parents/guardians to contact their student's teacher or school personnel to discuss issues, concerns, or progress related to their student.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Progress Reports/Report Cards are issued at the end of each quarter for High School students. IEP goal progress reports will also be provided for all students. Address concerns related to a student's progress to the attention of the Executive Director or Director for follow-up.

Phone Calls

Parents/guardians may contact ABLE staff by calling the main number between 8:15 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on school days or by emailing staff members at any time. We will make an effort to return emails and phone calls within 24 hours. In the event of an emergency, please call the ABLE Academy main phone number (630) 425-3183.

Addressing Concerns

As indicated on page 7, ABLE Academy's Board, Administrator, and faculty will "initiate communication with parents on student progress and collaborate on student's programming." We are committed to engaging in two-way communication and collaboration to address concerns. Generally speaking, questions or concerns should first be discussed with the teacher/related services provider who is closest to the situation. It is always best to follow the chain of command to ensure that all parties involved are properly informed of the situation. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the teacher for academic concerns, questions, or general information. In addition, parents/guardians are also encouraged to contact related service providers directly with questions or concerns specific to their discipline. If the concern is not resolved with the teacher or related services provider, please contact the Executive Director of Compliance or the Director

of Education. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director of Compliance and Director of Education to address most day-to-day concerns. Should the concern not be resolved, the parent/guardian may choose to address their concern with ABLE's Board Members.

Incident Reports

See page 20.

Personnel Changes

ABLE is a year round school and therefore personnel changes occur throughout the school year. Parents/guardians will receive written notification when there is a change in the classroom teacher or related services team member. Due to required confidentiality afforded all employees, advanced communication may not always be possible. When a new teacher or related service staff member is hired, parents/guardians will receive that notification on the start date. They will be provided the individual's name, role, and contact information. Paraprofessionals/RBTs are typically assigned to a specific classroom. When a new paraprofessional/RBT joins the classroom, the teacher will communicate that information to parents/guardians.

Staff Personal Information

ABLE Academy staff members are not allowed to share personal information such as cell or home phone numbers, email addresses or home addresses with families. Staff members are not permitted to provide personal services such as babysitting or home therapy unless prior written authorization has been granted from the ABLE Executive Director.

Dress Code Guidelines

Dress Code

Students are expected to come to school clean and appropriately dressed for their age group. Student appearance that is disruptive to the educational environment will be handled on an individual basis. ABL Academy staff and parents will work together to encourage students to take responsibility for their appearance and to work within the following dress code guidelines.

- Dresses and skirts should be modest length and necklines.
- No short skirts or shorts - the length must be below the longest fingertip.
- No tight or low cut garments.
- No midriff or undergarment exposure.
- No transparent or see through clothing.
- Shirts must cover the entire torso.
- Shirts and bottoms must meet even when the student is seated.
- No hanging straps, buckles or chains on the clothing.
- No clothing items displaying alcohol/drug related advertising; obscene or suggestive slogans; signs/colors/manner of wearing that could be gang related.
- No hats unless necessary as part of a student's behavior plan.
- No pajamas unless a noted pajama day.
- No flip flops, slippers, beach or shower shoes.
- No spaghetti straps or strapless tops-straps must be at least 1-2" thick.

Each family is asked to provide a complete set of spare clothing to be kept at school.

Money and Personal Items

Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices

Students are required to have prior permission before bringing mobile phones or electronic devices to school. Students are encouraged to leave these items at home and ABLA Academy is not held liable for any items that are lost or damaged during school hours and bus transportation.

Student Personal Items

The only time students should bring toys, games or sports equipment to school is when their school team instructs them to do so. The student will assume responsibility for any items brought to school. Parents and guardians are discouraged from allowing students to bring any money to school that is not needed for a specific purpose (Please note that ABLA assumes financial responsibility for most community trips). If there is a planned community trip, parents or guardians will receive advance written notification from the classroom teacher.

Health and Medication Policies

All ABLA health and medication policies will adhere to requirements set forth in 105 ILCS 5/22-30 and 23 Illinois Administrative Code 1.540.

It is our goal to follow healthy guidelines during the school year and teach healthy habits to students. It is important to indicate all pertinent health problems/concerns when completing the required Student Health Information forms. If your student has a special health problem such as: chronic asthma, food allergies, bee sting allergies, etc. please notify the school. We encourage all families to practice healthy habits and it is important to follow the specific school guidelines related to medication, allergies and specific health concerns.

Healthy Practices

Staff and students will wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water at the following times:

- After using the restroom;
- Before and after eating and food preparations;
- Upon returning from outdoor activities, community trips or outings;
- After wiping noses;
- After handling animals.

Please report any chronic illness such as bronchitis, asthma and/or allergies to the school staff and remember to communicate any changes. A health care provider must treat any rash or virus and a release from the health care provider must be provided for your student to return to school. All students that are absent for three (3) days or more may require a health care provider's note to return to school. Please report any and all medications and changes to medications to the school.

ABLE Academy reserves the right to call you to pick up your students when:

1. Your student has experienced more than two (2) episodes of diarrhea in one school day.
2. Your student has vomited for any reason other than indicated in his or her behavior plan.
3. Your student has a fever over 100 degrees.
4. Your student has three (3) or more of the following symptoms:

- Chest cough;
- Persistent green runny nose;
- Signs of bodily discomfort;
- Any rash that looks suspicious and/or is contagious;.
- Any eye that looks pink in nature;
- Any persistent, uncontrollable, inconsolable cry/tantrum that is not indicated on the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

Illness Policy

Your student must remain home until symptom free for 24 hours or more.

1. If he/she has vomited.
2. If he/she has experienced diarrhea.
3. If he/she has a fever over 100 degrees.
4. If he/she has a persistent phlegm cough.
5. If he/she has a green runny nose.
6. If he/she has any rash that has not been treated by a health care provider.
7. If he/she has any sign of the flu or bodily discomfort.
8. If he/she has pinkeye or conjunctivitis.
9. If he/she has been knowingly exposed to the chickenpox virus or lice in the past 3-4 days.
10. If he/she has any airborne illness.

Your student must be picked up within 60 minutes from the time of the phone call. ABLE will attempt to contact parents/guardians first and will continue down the emergency list until someone is available to pick-up your student. In order to maintain a healthy school environment, please follow the guidelines listed in the illness policy. Please note that given the needs of the students, staff is often required to be in close physical contact with a student. ***We ask that parents/guardians adhere to the illness policy to ensure that ABLE staff and students remain healthy.***

Contagious Diseases/Illnesses

We ask parents/guardians to notify the school office as soon as possible if the student develops a contagious illness. Without a health care provider's certificate, the following rules established by the Illinois Department of Public Health will be observed for the student's admission to school.

The following are considered contagious diseases:

1. Chicken Pox.
2. Conjunctivitis - the student is excluded from school until antibiotic (Pink Eye) treatment has been maintained for at least 24 hours.
3. Impetigo - the student may be in school if treated by a physician but must remain at home for the first 24 hours of using the prescribed ointments. The student must have a note from the physician.
4. Scarlet Fever - the student may return to school after being on medication for 24 hours.
5. Strep Throat - the student may return to school after being on medication for 24 hours.
6. COVID - ABLE Academy will adhere to current guidelines established by IDPH.

Care of Students with Diabetes

If your student has diabetes and requires assistance with managing this condition while at school and school functions, a Diabetes Care Plan must be submitted. Parents/guardians are responsible for and must:

1. Inform the school in a timely manner of any change which needs to be made to the Diabetes Care Plan on file with the school for their student.
2. Inform the school in a timely manner of any changes to their emergency contact numbers or contact numbers of health care providers.
3. Sign the Diabetes Care Plan.
4. Grant consent for and authorize designated School representatives to communicate directly with the health care provider whose instructions are included in the Diabetes Care Plan.

Medical Cannabis Administration by Designated Caregiver Policy

The Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act allows a parent/guardian of a minor to register with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) as a designated caregiver to administer medical cannabis to their student. A designated caregiver may also be another individual other than the student's parent/guardian. Pursuant to Section 22-33 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/22-33), a student who is a registered qualifying patient may have his/her parent, guardian or other IDPH registered designated caregiver (who must be at least 21 years old) administer a medical cannabis infused product to the student on the premises of the school.

Medication Administration

It shall be the policy of ABLE Academy that the administration of medication or supervision of self-medication to students during regular school hours will be discouraged unless necessary to maintain the student in school, or in the event of an emergency. The objective of any medication program is to promote self-responsibility. In addition, ABLE Academy will adhere to the requirements set forth in 105 ILCS 5/10-22.21 for self-administration of medication for students.

The Executive Director will facilitate this process by providing information to the parents/guardians and students on the process to be followed for the administration of medication during school hours. ABLE Academy will insure and indemnify personnel designated to administer or supervise the self-administration of medication. We will ensure training has been provided by a nurse or physician for any individuals supervising or administering medication. School personnel will not diagnose or treat illnesses. This does not prohibit any school employee from administering emergency assistance to a student. Teachers or other employees can not be required to administer medication or supervise self-medication although they may volunteer to do so.

No school personnel shall administer to any student, nor shall any student possess or consume any prescription or non-prescription medication, unless the Authorization and Permission for Administration of Medication form has been filed with the school. This form shall be completed by the student's parent or guardian and licensed prescriber and shall be on file at the school prior to the dispensing of any medication to a student. The Authorization and Permission for Administration of Medication form must be renewed annually at the beginning of each school year.

Medication Guidelines

All medications given in school, including non-prescription drugs, shall be prescribed by a licensed prescriber on an individual basis as determined by the student's health status. Such written documentation must be maintained in the student's individual medication record.

A written order for prescription and non-prescription medications must be obtained from the student's licensed prescriber. The order includes:

1. Student's Name
2. Date of Birth
3. Licensed Prescriber Name, Signature and Date
4. Licensed Prescriber Phone and Emergency Number(s)
5. Name of Medication
 - a. Dosage
 - b. Route of Administration
 - c. Frequency
 - d. Time of Administration
6. Diagnosis Requiring
7. Medication
8. Intended Effect of the Medication /Possible Side Effects
9. Other Medications Student is Receiving
10. Time Interval for Re-Evaluation
11. Approval for Self-Administration
12. Approval for students to carry emergency medication on their person (i.e. inhaler, epipen)

Medication must be brought to the school in a container, labeled appropriately by the pharmacist or licensed prescriber. Prescription medication shall display:

1. Student's Name
2. Prescription Number
3. Medication Name and Dosage
4. Administration Route or Other Directions
5. Date and Refill
6. Licensed Prescriber's Name
7. Pharmacy Name, Address and Phone Number
8. Name or Initials of Pharmacist

Over the Counter Medication (OTC)

OTC (non-prescription) medication shall be brought in with the manufacturer's original label with the ingredients listed and the student's name affixed to the container.

In addition to the licensed prescriber's order, a written request shall be obtained from the parents/guardians requesting that medication be given during school hours. The request must include the name of the student, the parent(s) or guardian's name and phone number in case of emergency. It is the parent(s) or guardian's responsibility to ensure that the licensed prescriber's order, written request and medication are brought to the school.

Students should be evaluated on an individual basis regarding the need to carry emergency medication. A written statement signed by the student's physician and parents/guardians verifying the necessity and student's ability to self-administer the medication appropriately

should be on file in the health office.

Medications must be stored in a separate locked drawer or cabinet. When the medication being stored is a controlled substance, the locked cabinet must be securely affixed to the wall. Medications requiring refrigeration must be kept in a locked refrigerator separate from food products.

At the end of the school year or the end of the treatment regime, the student's parent(s) or guardian will be responsible for removing from the school any unused medication. If the parent(s) or guardian does not pick up the medication by the end of the school year, medication(s) will be disposed of and documented that it was discarded. Medication must be discarded in the presence of a witness and documentation signed by both parties.

A student has the right to refuse medication and in some instances may do so. In such instances, it is the responsibility of the party designated to administer or supervise medication and explain to the student as fully and clearly as possible the importance of taking the medication. If the student continues to refuse to comply, the parent(s) or guardian and student's physician must be notified.

Allergies/Dietary Restrictions

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school if your student has any food or environmental allergies. Please note that any student with special dietary needs and restrictions will not be offered food items other than what has been provided by the parent/guardian. Changes to any restriction(s) on file must be submitted in writing by the parent/guardian and submitted to the school as soon as possible.

Accident/Incident Reports

An Accident/Incident Report is completed when a student is injured, causes injury, or engages in property destruction. If a minor accident or injury (scrape, cut, bump, etc.) occurs with your student during school hours, a staff person will administer first aid and complete an Accident/Incident Report. A copy of the report, including how the incident occurred and the steps that were taken, will be sent home with the student. In most instances, the report will be sent home the same day. If not, it will be sent home on the following student attendance day. Every effort will be made to contact the parent via phone or email on the date of the occurrence, and no later than the next student attendance day. If a serious injury occurs, in addition to the written report, school staff will immediately contact the listed parents/guardians. If a severe injury or accident were to occur during the school day, we will place a call to 911 to seek medical assistance and notify the listed parents/guardians. ABLE Academy is not responsible for the cost of medical attention/emergency care.

Visitor Policy and Procedures

Access to the school and school personnel is permitted in limited situations. The following procedures apply to those including but not limited to: parents/guardians, qualified professionals retained by or on behalf of the parents/guardians. Visitation will be allowed at any time, with or without prior notice, by personnel from the State Board of Education or the school district of residence of any enrolled student.

Visitors will be provided reasonable access to facilities and personnel. To minimize disruption to the students and their needs, visitors shall provide as much notice as possible of the day and time of the visit request. ABLÉ Academy will reasonably in its sole discretion grant the request or modify the request to a mutually agreeable time.

1. Visitors must comply with or agree:
 - a. Policies and procedures, including but not limited to safety, security, and visitation policies at all times. This includes signing in and signing out at the front desk prior.
 - b. Privacy laws, including but not limited to: those laws protecting the confidentiality of records and information such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Illinois Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act, and their respective regulations.
 - c. Visitors shall not disrupt the educational process.
 - d. To hold harmless and indemnify ABLÉ Academy, Inc., its directors, officers, employees and agents against any and all claims and actions arising out of the visitor(s) presence within its facilities, including, without limitation, expenses, judgments, claims, causes of action, fines, settlements and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any liability, suit, action, loss, or damage arising or resulting from such visit(s).
2. Reasonable Access is most often defined as not more than 1 observation for a student per quarter during the regular school year and not more than 1 observation during ESY.
3. If the visitor is a parent/guardian, he or she will be afforded reasonable access as described above for the purpose of:
 - a. Observing his or her student, or
 - b. Visiting to determine if the school meets his or her student's needs.
4. If the visitor is a qualified professional retained by or on behalf of a parent or student, the qualified professional will be provided reasonable access for the purpose of conducting an evaluation of the student and information related to that student. A qualified professional may bring and use reasonable testing or assessment materials. Audio and/or video recording devices (including but not limited to tape recorders, video cameras, computers with recording capabilities, iPads and picture phones) are prohibited, unless deemed necessary and appropriate by ABLÉ Academy.
5. If the visitor violates any policy or procedure or interferes with any school activity or duties of school personnel, ABLÉ Academy may direct the visitor's immediate removal from the school and its facilities.
6. Before the visit, any visitor must acknowledge that he or she is obligated to honor all students' confidentiality rights and refrain from any re-disclosure of information.

Other Program Information

Lunch/Food

Students are encouraged to bring a sack lunch to school daily. Students may also bring unopened drinks to be consumed during lunch period. ABLÉ Academy will not be providing a hot breakfast/lunch. Please make sure your student's lunches, meals and snacks take into account the dietary allergies of other students.

Free and Reduced meals are available for qualified students. Contact the ABLE Executive Director for information regarding this process.

Photo/Media Release

Throughout the school year, we take photographs and videos of students for a variety of reasons including student programs, family events, school assemblies and other school events. If for any reason, you do not want your student to be involved in any type of media, please indicate ‘NO’ on the Media Release form. This form is sent out in the student packet at the beginning of each school year.

Review of Records

Parents/guardians have the right to inspect, copy and review student records. A qualified staff professional will assist the parent/guardian in interpreting the information contained in their student’s record. A parent may authorize release of his/her student records by signing a consent form. Students may inspect their permanent records and any student who is 18 years of age and over has all inspection rights.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

ABLE Academy has an emergency and disaster plan which is in compliance with the program procedures for reporting emergencies and evacuating the facility. This written plan is posted at the school and immediately accessible to all staff, substitutes and volunteers. Evacuation routes are posted in prominent locations throughout the building and the school team conducts quarterly emergency drills which are documented. The building is inspected annually by the local fire authority and maintains fire extinguishers with current tags.

The school staff and students will leave our building site and evacuate to a safe location outside or within the school in the event of an emergency or disaster. We will transport the students to the evacuation site by walking. Notification of emergency situations will be communicated to parents/guardians through the phone numbers given during registration. Please keep this information up to date. Emergency lockdown procedures will also be in place to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Child Custody

If you have court-ordered custody agreements which prohibit the student from being released to a particular parent or person, please provide a copy of this agreement to the ABLE Academy.

Live Animals

Students are not permitted to bring live animals to school without prior approval of the classroom teacher. Any animals brought to school without approval will be confiscated as soon as they are discovered and parents will be called to immediately pick up the animal(s).

No Smoking

The use of tobacco is prohibited on ABLE Academy property. This prohibition applies to such property before, during and after the regular school day and on days when school is not in session. For purposes of this policy, the term ‘tobacco’ refers to cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes, or tobacco in any other form, including smokeless tobacco.

Service Animals

Pursuant to Section 14-6.02 of the School Code service animals such as guide dogs, signal dogs or any other animal individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of your student with a disability (i.e. a student with an individual education plan) shall be permitted to accompany that student at all school functions, whether in or outside the classroom. If you wish to have a service animal accompany your student, fill out the appropriate form. Examples of service animal work or tasks include, but are not limited to:

1. Assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks;
2. Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds;
3. Providing non-violent protection or rescue work;
4. Pulling a wheelchair;
5. Assisting an individual during a seizure;
6. Alerting individuals to the presence of allergens.

Pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) a student eligible as a student with a disability within the meaning of Title II of the ADA as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may have a “service animal” attend school and school functions as the term “service animal” is defined in the regulations implementing Title II of the ADA (35 C.F.R. Section 35.104) in compliance with the ADA regulations governing the use of service animals (35 C.F.R Section 35.136). If you wish your student with a disability, under Section 504 to have a service animal accompany your student, please complete the appropriate form.

The Administrator shall confirm the status of the ABLÉ Academy’s insurance coverage regarding both service animals and adult handlers. He or she will make recommendations to ABLÉ Academy board members, if the Administrator determines that changes to ABLÉ Academy’s insurance policies are required.

Upon your request to have a service animal attend school or a school function the Executive Director and parent or guardian shall follow the process described below:

1. You shall complete Request for a Service Animal to Accompany Student in School Facilities form and return completed form signed to the Executive Director.
2. In determining whether an animal qualifies as a “service animal,” the Executive Director may make two inquiries of the parent/guardian
 - a. Is the service animal required because of your student’s disability?
 - b. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
 - c. In making the above inquiries the authorized Administrator may not require proof that the animal has, in fact, been trained, certified or licensed as a service animal nor may the Administrator make the above inquiries if it is readily apparent that the animal has been trained to work or perform tasks for a student with a disability.
3. The Executive Director shall consult with such consultants as needed to determine if any student or staff member would be adversely affected by a service animal at school.
4. The Executive Director may develop an implementation plan regarding practical issues concerning presence of the service animal at school.

5. The Executive Director shall determine, if communication to parents or students is necessary regarding the presence or treatment of the service animal in school, while recognizing the confidentiality rights of the student with the service animal.
6. Should the Executive Director deny access to a service animal the parent/guardian may challenge the Executive Director's determination by filing a discrimination complaint pursuant to binding mediation. If a service animal is excluded under this mediation, your student may still participate in school or school activities without having the service animal on the premises.

The Executive Director may exclude any service animal whose behavior poses a threat to the health or safety of others which may include threats caused by lack of proper housebreaking. The care and supervision of a service animal is the responsibility of the service animal's handler. The handler shall maintain control of the service animal at all times. A service animal shall have a harness, leash or other tether, unless such harness interferes with the safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control. The service animal's adult handler must submit to a criminal background check and cannot be a person who is a sex offender as defined under Illinois law. Criminal background checks will be conducted on adult handlers in accordance with ABLÉ Academy procedures.

1. **Supervision or Care** - The school is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal.
2. **Prior Notice Requirements** - If a parent/guardian or service handler brings a service animal to school without prior notice or completion of the requisite form the Executive Director shall ask the parent/guardian to retrieve the animal and complete the necessary form. Until the parent/guardian retrieves the animal, the animal shall remain with the student unless circumstances dictate otherwise in the Executive Director's judgment.
3. **Resources** - Relevant resources for school personnel and parents include:
 - The U.S. Department of Education's "Reasonable Accommodation Handbook," Section C10, provides information about balancing competing interests in the context of a service animal's presence in the work environment. It is available at: www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/acshbom3.pdf.
 - The Illinois Attorney General Office's "Disability Rights Service Animals: A Guide for Illinois Businesses and Other Public Accommodations," available at: <https://ag.state.il.us/rights/servanimals.html>
 - The U.S. Dept. of Justice's Civil Rights Division American with Disabilities Act Title II Division: available at: <https://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs/title-ii-2010-regulations/>

Student Termination Procedures

If your student's educational, physical or medical needs can no longer be met at ABLÉ Academy, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Executive Director will request an IEP meeting be held with you, your student's school district representatives and appropriate ABLÉ Academy staff members. Your student's entire program will be discussed at the meeting and a joint decision will be made about the appropriateness of continuing the placement at ABLÉ Academy.
2. If the determination is made that your student will continue to be placed at ABLÉ Academy, the IEP shall be amended to address and accommodate your student's

- academic and behavior needs. The appropriate ABLÉ Academy staff will implement the changes in the student's IEP.
3. Should it be determined that your student requires a different educational placement, written notification is sent to the parents/guardians and school district. Services at ABLÉ Academy will be terminated 20 business days after the notice has been sent. The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of termination procedures.

Opportunities for Parent Involvement

Fundraising

ABLE Academy will be providing more information about scheduled fundraising events throughout the school year.

Volunteering

Parents are welcome to schedule a time to volunteer during the school day to assist with various job duties as needed from time to time. Please contact your student's teacher for opportunities.

2024-2025
ABLE Academy School Calendar

8/12/24	No School - Staff Inservice Day
8/13/24	First Day of School
9/2/24	No School - Labor Day
9/3/24	No School - Staff Inservice Day
10/11/24	End First Quarter
10/14/24	No School - Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
11/27/24 - 11/29/24	No School - Thanksgiving Break
12/20/24	End 2nd quarter
12/23/24 - 1/3/25	No School - Holiday/Winter Break
1/6/25	School Resumes
1/20/25	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
1/21/25	No School - Staff Inservice Day
2/17/25	No School - Presidents' Day
2/28/25	No School - Staff Inservice Day
3/14/25	End 3rd quarter
3/31/25 - 4/4/25	No School - Spring Break
4/7/25	School Resumes
5/9/25	No School - Staff Inservice Day
5/23/25	Last Day of Regular School year (Tentative) End 4th quarter
5/26/25	No School - Memorial Day
5/27/25 - 6/2/25	Emergency Days (if needed)
6/3/25 - 6/9/25	No School - Summer Break
6/10/25	First Day ESY (Follow ESY Schedule, 9:00 - 1:00 pm)
6/19/25	No School - Juneteenth
7/4/25	No School - July 4th
7/23/25	Last Day of ESY

Staff Training days are full day of **non-attendance for students.**
 Regular School Hours 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
 ESY Hours 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Purpose

The Illinois General Assembly has found that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with their ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and violence. It is the goal of the Board of Directors (the Board) of ABL Academy (ABLE) to create a learning environment in all its school communities where students are protected from bullying so they feel safe and supported in their efforts to succeed academically and develop emotionally into responsible, caring individuals.

ABLE asks every student, with the support of his/her parent(s), guardian(s) and the adults at school, to commit to the following principles, which will apply to everyone on school property and at school-related activities:

- I will not bully others.
- I will try to help anyone I suspect is being bullied.
- I will work to include students who are left out.
- If someone is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

Development, Notification, and Posting

- (1) The Bully policy is consistent with the other ABL Academy policies.
- (2) The District's bullying prevention and response plan is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians.
- (3) The Executive Director or designee shall post this policy on the District's website, and include it in the student handbook, and employee handbook.
- (4) The Bully policy will be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, and school personnel (including new employees when hired).

Scope

Bullying is contrary to Illinois law and this Policy is consistent with the Illinois School Code. This Policy protects ABL students against bullying and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military service, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic. The Board recognizes the particular vulnerability of students with actual or perceived disabilities and those who identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Nothing in this Policy is intended to infringe upon any expression protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.

Bullying is prohibited:

- (1) during any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned program or activity;
- (2) in school, on school property, on school buses or other ABL-provided transportation, and at designated locations for students to wait for buses and other ABL-provided transportation;

- (3) through the transmission of information from a ABLE computer or computer network, or other electronic school equipment;
- (4) when communicated through any electronic technology or personal electronic device while on school property, on school buses or other provided transportation, and at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities;
- (5) when it is conveyed that a threat will be carried out in a school setting, including threats made outside school hours with intent to carry them out during any school-related or sponsored program or activity or on provided transportation;
- (6) through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by ABLE Academy if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school. This item (6) applies only in cases in which a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred and it does not require a school to staff or monitor any nonschool-related activity, function, or program.

Definitions from 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7

“Bullying” includes *cyberbullying* and means any severe or pervasive (repeated over time) physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students, that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects:

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

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

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

Bullying behaviors may also qualify as other inappropriate behaviors. When deciding whether

inappropriate behavior constitutes bullying, administrators should consider the student's intent, the frequency or recurrence of the inappropriate behavior, and whether there are power imbalances between the students involved. While bullying is often characterized by repeated acts, sometimes a single incident constitutes bullying depending on the student's intent and power imbalances.

Retaliation means any form of intimidation, reprisal including but not limited to the submission of knowingly false bullying allegations, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited and will result in the imposition of appropriate interventions/consequences according to this Policy.

Peer Conflict means disagreements and oppositional interactions that are situational, immediate and developmentally appropriate. When school employees are aware of peer conflict, they are expected to guide students in developing new skills in social competency, learning personal boundaries and peaceably resolving conflict, and to model appropriate social interactions. These interventions are designed to prevent Peer Conflict from escalating to Bullying.

Restorative Measures means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline that are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community, contribute to maintaining school safety, protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate, teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society, serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school, and increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Intervening to Address Bullying

Responsibilities of ABLE Employees and Contractors

All ABLE employees and contractors, including security officers, lunchroom staff and bus drivers, who witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying, must:

- (1) intervene immediately in a manner that is appropriate to the context and ensures the safety of all people involved;
- (2) report the incident of bullying or retaliation to the Executive Director as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, on the Bullying Complaint Form (Attachment A); and
- (3) cooperate fully in any investigation of the incident and in implementing any safety plan established by the Executive Director.

ABLE Employees and Contractors are to contact Executive Director to submit report:

Kathleen Kosteck, Ed.D.

Executive Director of Compliance, ABLE Academy

(630) 425-3183

kkosteck@ableil.org

Individuals may also email info@ableil.org to make a report.

Responsibilities of Students, Parents and Guardians

No student who witnesses bullying may stand by or participate in the bullying, but must notify an adult at school and an adult at home as quickly as practicable. Any parent or guardian who witnesses or is notified of bullying has an obligation to advise the Executive Director as quickly as practicable. Reports can be made to any ABLE employee or contractor in person, by completing Attachment A and submitting it to the Executive Director. No disciplinary action will be taken on the sole basis of an anonymous report. Please refer to Attachment A for a bully report form.

Please submit this report to the Executive Director or any school staff member.

Contact Executive Director to submit report:

Kathleen Kosteck, Ed.D.

Executive Director of Compliance, ABLE Academy

(630) 425-3183

kkosteck@ableil.org

Individuals may also email info@ableil.org to make a report.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

The ABLE Board or designee shall develop and maintain a bullying prevention and response plan that advances the school's goal of providing all students with a safe learning environment free of bullying and harassment. This plan must be consistent with the following requirements:

1. Using the definition of bullying as provided in this policy, the ABLE Board or designee shall emphasize to the school community that: (1) the School prohibits bullying, and (2) all students should conduct themselves with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students. This may include a process for commending or acknowledging students for demonstrating appropriate behavior. 7:180
2. Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of this District. However, nothing in the District's bullying prevention and response plan is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or under Section 3 of Article I of the Illinois Constitution.
3. Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Executive Director, Director, Classroom teacher, or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the ABLE named officials or any staff member. ABLE's named officials and all staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anonymous reports are also accepted.
4. A reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying is prohibited. A student's act of reprisal or retaliation will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
5. A student will not be punished for reporting bullying or supplying information, even if the District's investigation concludes that no bullying occurred. However, knowingly making a false accusation or providing knowingly false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining any consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.
6. See section titled "**Investigation**" for the specific process for investigating complaints of bullying.

Investigation

- (1) The Executive Director shall select a designee, knowledgeable about bullying prevention and intervention, to perform the investigation.
- (2) The Executive Director will notify the Director or other designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible, but no more than (1) one school day, after the report is received.
- (3) Investigation of a bullying incident shall be initiated within five school days of receipt of a report and completed within 10 school days.
- (4) The investigation shall include:
 - a. Identifying the perpetrator(s), target(s) and bystander(s), as well as any adult who witnessed the incident or may have reliable information about it.
 - b. Conducting an individual interview in a private setting with the alleged perpetrator and target. The alleged perpetrator and target should never be interviewed together or in public. Individual interviews shall also be conducted in private with student and adult bystanders.
 - c. Determining how often the conduct occurred, any past incident or continuing pattern of behavior, and whether the target's education was affected.
 - d. Assessing the individual and school-wide effects of the incident relating to safety, and assigning school staff to create and implement a safety plan that will restore a sense of safety for the target and other students who have been impacted.
 - e. When appropriate, preparing a Misconduct Report identifying his/her recommendation for individual consequences.
 - f. Comprehensively documenting the details of the investigation.
- (5) When the investigation is complete, the Executive Director shall ensure the investigation report is attached to the Bullying Complaint.

Notification

Consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, on the same day the investigation is initiated, the Executive Director shall report to the parent/legal guardian of all involved students, via telephone, personal conference and/or in writing, the occurrence of any alleged incident of bullying, and shall document these notifications. When the investigation is complete, the Executive Director shall notify the parents/legal guardians of all students involved of the outcome of the investigation. Parents/legal guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation may request a personal conference with the Executive Director to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying, and any resources available in or outside the school to help the students address the underlying reasons for the bullying (see "Referrals" section below).

If the investigation results in the imposition of consequences, the Executive Director may advise the parent/legal guardian of students other than the perpetrator this Policy was followed. S/he may not advise them of the specific consequence imposed, as that would violate the confidentiality of school-record information required by law.

When communicating incidents of bullying to the target's parent/guardian, the Executive Director should consider whether the student may want to keep certain information confidential. For example, if a student is bullied after coming out as gay, the Executive Director shall not disclose the student's sexual orientation to the parent/guardian without the student's permission,

unless there is a legitimate, school-related reason for doing so.

If the target is a student with a disability, the school shall convene the IEP Team to determine whether additional or different special education or related services are needed to address the student's individual needs and revise the IEP accordingly. For example, if the student's disability affects social skill development or makes the student vulnerable to bullying, the Executive Director shall ask the student's IEP Team to consider whether the IEP should include provisions to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying.

If the student who engaged in bullying behavior is a student with a disability, the school shall convene the IEP Team to determine if additional supports and services are needed to address the inappropriate behavior and consider examining the environment in which the bullying occurred to determine if changes to the environment are warranted. For example, the IEP Team should consider a behavior intervention plan for the student or review a current behavior intervention plan and revise if necessary. The Executive Director shall comply with the Procedural Safeguards for Discipline of Students with Disabilities/Impairments when considering interventions and consequences for students with disabilities.

Assigning Interventions and/or Consequences

Many Peer Conflicts can be resolved immediately and do not require reporting or creation of any report. If, however, a conflict is ongoing and meets the definition of bullying, the investigation procedures in this Policy must be followed.

Schools must respond to bullying in a manner tailored to the individual incident, considering the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. ABLÉ should avoid using punitive discipline (detention, suspensions, and expulsions) if any other method or consequence can be used with fidelity.

When an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the Executive Director shall explain the consequences in a non-hostile manner, and shall impose any consequence immediately and consistently. The Executive Director shall keep communicating and working with all parties involved until the situation is resolved. Some key indicators of resolution include:

- The perpetrator is no longer bullying and is interacting civilly with the target.
- The target reports feeling safe and is interacting civilly with the perpetrator.
- School staff notice an increase in positive behavior and social-emotional competency in the perpetrator and/or the target.
- School staff notice a more positive climate in the areas where bullying incidents were high.

What Not To Do:

- Solicit an apology from the perpetrator to the target, use peace circles, victim/offender conferences, or any form of mediation that puts the perpetrator and target in contact with one another in an immediate attempt to resolve the bullying.
- Restorative measures may be helpful to repair relationships between the perpetrator and target, but only if used after other interventions have balanced the power differential between the perpetrator and target.
- Dismiss bullying as typical student behavior or assume it is not serious.

Referrals

Interventions with bullies should not focus on feelings, but changing thinking. The Executive Director may refer students who bully to positive-behavior small-group interventions (for anger management, trauma or social skills), social work, counseling or school psychological services within the school, if necessary, to reinforce the behavioral expectation they violated and increase their social-emotional competency.

The targets of bullying need protection from bullies, but may also need support and help in changing their own behavior. The Executive Director shall ask a school mental health professional to refer these students to individual or group therapy where they can openly express their feelings about their bullying experience, social-skills training and/or groups where they can practice assertiveness and coping mechanisms, or social work, counseling or school psychological services available within the school.

Appeal

Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal to the Executive Director.

Consequences for ABLÉ Employees and Contractors

When it is determined that an employee or contractor was aware that bullying was taking place but failed to report it, the employee/contractor will be considered to have violated this Policy. The Executive Director shall consider employee discipline for such violations, making reference to any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Remedies for offending contractors should be imposed according to their Board contracts.

Notice and Dissemination of Requirements

The Executive Director shall follow the requirements established by the Illinois State Board of Education for posting this Anti-Bullying Policy on the school's website, in the school building as well as disseminating and presenting this Policy to school staff as part of pre-school-year professional development.

Training and Professional Development for Staff

Professional development will be offered to build the skills of all ABLÉ employees, contractors and volunteers to implement this Policy. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent incidents of bullying and to intervene immediately and effectively to stop them;
- (2) Information about the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, target, and witness to the bullying;
- (3) Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk, and any specific interventions that may be particularly effective for addressing bias-based bullying; and
- (4) Information about Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Evaluation and Assessment of Bullying Policy Effectiveness

The Executive Director shall assist the Board with its evaluation and assessment of this policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, without limitation:

- a. The frequency of victimization;

- b. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school;
- c. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs;
- d. The types of bullying utilized; and
- e. Bystander intervention or participation

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that ABLE already collects for other purposes. The Executive Director must post the information developed as a result of the policy evaluation on ABLE's website.

ATTACHMENT A
Bullying Complaint

NOTE: The reporter may remain anonymous, but no discipline will be imposed based solely upon an anonymous report.

Please submit this report to the Executive Director or any school staff member.

Contact Executive Director to submit report:

Kathleen Kosteck, Ed.D.

Executive Director of Compliance, ABLE Academy

(630) 425-3183

kkosteck@ableil.org

Individuals may also email info@ableil.org to make a report.

Victim or Target Information

School: _____

Name(s) and grade(s) of Victim/Target:

Reporting Information (*Optional for students/parents/guardians)

Name & Title of Person Reporting:

Relationship to Victim/Target: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Incident Information

Name(s) of student(s) accused of engaging in bullying behaviors OR description (if name(s) unknown):

Location of incident: _____

Date and time of incident: _____

Approximate dates, times, and frequency of prior incident(s): _____

Describe what happened and who was present in as much detail as possible (*Required Information):

Date of submission: _____