Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School

Students in Foster Care

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School recognizes that students in foster care face unusual educational challenges. The purpose of this policy is to provide foster care students with educational stability free from bullying, harrassment or discrimination; and remove barriers to, and provide opportunities for, academic excellence. In order to achieve this purpose, the district will work collaboratively with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Child & Family Services (DCFS).

GNBVT designates the following individual(s) as the Point of Contact (POC)(s) for foster care students:

Dr. Heather Larkin- Director of Guidance & Pupil Personnel Services
heather.larkin@gnbvt.edu
508-998-3321 Ext. 790

Lael St.Tripp- School Adjustment Counselor (SAC)
lael.sttripp@gnbvt.edu
508-998-3321 Ext. 410

The POC(s) will provide assistance regarding all aspects of school enrollment, transfer, and withdrawal of students in foster care and serve as the point of contact for DESE and DCFS. The school's POC will also work with DESE and DCFS to implement the district's complaint resolution process.

Districts POCs will help ensure that students in foster care:

- Are identified and supported through coordination between districts and DCF;
- Are enrolled in and regularly attending school;
- Have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school and to meet the same challenging state academic standards as other students; and
- Receive educational services for which they are eligible.

Dispute Resolution:

If the parent/guardian, foster parent, student or educational decision maker disputes any aspect of the student's educational experience (outside of the special education/504 TEAM process) at GNBVT, he or she may contact the liaison in an effort to resolve the dispute. If the liaison is not able to resolve the dispute, the parent/guardian, foster parent, student or educational decision maker may request a conference with the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee will meet with the parent/guardian, foster parent, student or educational decision maker.

If the superintendent or designee is unable to resolve the dispute, the parent/guardian or educational decision maker may appeal to:

- **Kristen McKinnon, *DESE Foster Care Point of Contact***
  Email: kmckinnon@doe.mass.edu

- **Rebecca Brink, *DCF Associate Commissioner, Program Support***
  Email: rebecca.k.brink@massmail.state.ma.us

Additional Supports for Students in Foster Care at GNBVT:

GNBVT Guidance Counselors will serve as the first point of contact for DCFS social workers/ foster parents to obtain educational information regarding students in foster care (i.e., grades, attendance, behavior, 504 Accommodation Plan, etc.). **(508) 998-3321 Ext. 755.**

Special Education Liaisons/ School Psychologist will serve as the point of contact for DCFS social workers/ foster parents regarding a student's IEP/ 504. **(508) 998-3321 Ext. 748.**