

# ***PEAK***

## *Personal Emotional and Academic Knowledge*

### **Mission Statement**

The social and emotional wellness of our students is our first priority. *PEAK* focuses on helping students build independence so that they can maximize their potential to the fullest in high school and beyond. In the therapeutic milieu of *PEAK*, and with strong relationships between students and staff, our students are encouraged to have a voice in their educational process so that they learn to appropriately advocate for themselves in their post-secondary lives.

### **Core Values**

Safety	The safety of our students drives the day-to-day operation of <i>PEAK</i>
Advocacy	We are our students' advocates in school everyday
Belonging	We believe that our students need to feel a strong sense of acceptance and belonging in our school community every moment of everyday
Communication	We are committed to meaningful communication with our students and their families and significant people in their lives
Flexibility	Individual plans for learning and safety are a key component of <i>PEAK</i>
Goals	We will help our students set and achieve meaningful goals for their learning and for their post-secondary lives
Skills	We will teach our students skills so that they may cope with challenges in and outside of school
Resilience	We strive to build resilience in our students
Relationships	We see our relationships with our students as deciding factors in their success

### **5 Components of a Successful Therapeutic Program**

1. *Leadership and Administrative Support* – Our Central Office administrators and School Administrators are fully informed and supportive of our crisis management and prevention system. *PEAK* is provided with sufficient resources including adequate and qualified staff in an organizational culture that puts the safety and wellness of students first.

2. *Social Work and Clinical Services Participation* – Social work and clinical services play an important role in *PEAK*. Every student in *PEAK* has the opportunity to receive individual, goals based counseling services and group counseling to focus on age appropriate, pro-social behavior and skills.
3. *Supervision and Post Crisis Response* – Reflective and supportive supervision is built into *PEAK*. The Principal along with *PEAK* staff are fully trained in the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools System (TCIS) as administered by Cornell University. Our post-crisis response system ensures that all students and staff members receive immediate support and debriefing following a crisis. Once a crisis has ended all staff involved deconstructs the incident to develop strategies for intervening in the future via the Individual Crisis Management Plan (ICMP).
4. *Training and Competency Standards* – *PEAK* faculty and staff are fully trained in TCIS. This 21-hour training is among the most comprehensive school crisis intervention and prevention programs in the world. *PEAK* social workers are fully licensed and further trained in the implementation of MATCH – ADTC, a modular approach to therapy for anxiety, depression, trauma, and conduct disorders. This research based program has been extensively tested and is proven to be effective in providing promising outcomes for students.
5. *Data Driven Incident Monitoring and Feedback* – Via the ICMP, every stressful incident is reviewed and changes in how adults prepare for and respond to student behavior are considered. *PEAK* students are also monitored daily for their ability to be respectful of their peers, follow directions, complete tasks, and be respectful to adults. Students can earn up to 90 points each day, and this data when aggregated shows individual student and class growth over time.

### **Typical Student Served by *PEAK***

*PEAK* students present with a wide range of diagnostic criteria. The most important concern is their inability to access the curriculum as a result of their social/emotional needs and/or struggles with self-regulation or communication. Students are cognitively and behaviorally capable of accessing the curriculum and making effective progress within the support and structure of the program. Some characteristics of students referred to *PEAK* are:

1. Anxiety
2. Complex trauma
3. Conduct disorders

4. Depression
5. Emotional Disabilities
6. Executive functioning challenges
7. Impulsivity
8. Inappropriate and ineffective responses to real-life situations
9. Lagging academic skills as a result of social, emotional, or behavioral issues
10. Mood instability
11. Poverty/Household Dysfunction
12. School Refusal/Attendance Issues
13. Specific Learning Disabilities
14. Substance/Alcohol Abuse

### ***PEAK* Referral Checklist**

To ensure that students will have the best chance of success and growth in *PEAK* and so *PEAK* faculty and staff can properly prepare for student entry, it is imperative that documentation is carefully evaluated. Further, interviews with the student are important. Information gathered from this process will help administrators and staff learn if *PEAK* is the best option and/or prepare for thoughtful transition into the program. Through documentation and interview the *PEAK* Team will seek to learn the student's:

1. Age
2. Attendance/Discipline/Academic Reports
3. Credits earned
4. Individualized Education Program (IEP)
5. Information necessary for the completion of the ICMP
6. Level of motivation
7. MCAS scores
8. Outside agency/provider involvement and contacts
9. Peer relationship concerns
10. Reasons for not being successful
11. Relevant assessments (special education, 504, etc.)
12. Social emotional and family history
13. Student Statement Section – Why do you want to be in the *PEAK* Program?

### **Entry Process for *PEAK***

Prior to being considered for *PEAK*, students will be asked to complete an interest inventory and/or application to the program. This can be completed with staff support. Students seeking entry into the *PEAK* program must complete a three-day trial before full admittance shall be considered. Upon completion of the three-day trial the *PEAK* team will meet with the Principal

to discuss data collected during the three-day trial. The Principal shall serve as the primary arbiter with regard to *PEAK* admission.

### **An Inclusive Program**

*PEAK* is an inclusion program. Students with and without Individualized Educational Programs receive educational and clinical services in an inclusive environment. Depending on our students' academic goals, through thoughtful transition planning, student time in the mainstreamed learning environment can gradually increase.

### **Staffing Pattern**

So that students are able to receive the full range of academic curricula, *PEAK* is staffed with full time content specialty teachers in English and Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. To support *PEAK* students, the program is also staffed with a full-time Special Education Teacher, full-time Social Worker, and full-time Social Emotional Interventionist.

### **Academic Program Components**

*PEAK* is comprised of four department-specific classrooms in which students are grouped according to age, grade, and/or ability level, all within the 48- month age span as stated in Massachusetts Special Education Regulations. *PEAK* students also have the option of participating in classes that are part of the whole school program. Since the Woburn Public Schools graduation requirement is for a student to have earned 100 credits across the curriculum, it is recognized that *PEAK* students may attend partial days of school. For students who opt into *this* situation, it is understood that graduation may take longer than the typical four-year period.

### **Regular School Attendance**

While regular and on time school attendance is an expectations for all students, *PEAK* does not follow the Woburn Memorial High School attendance policy as it is stated in the Woburn Memorial High School Student Handbook. The flexibility of *PEAK* allows for individual goals for student attendance to be considered.

### **Clinical Services**

*PEAK* provides individual, strength based services, delivered on an individual basis and/or in groups. *PEAK* students learn skills that focus on the recognition of feelings, reasons for feelings, and how to better manage responses to those feelings. Two approaches are weaved into therapy sessions. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based practice, which focuses on how thoughts lead to certain (sometimes maladaptive) behaviors. MATCH - ADTC is an evidence-based program which focuses on enhancing flexibility that will teach students how to handle emotional roadblocks as they arise. In addition to individual and/or group sessions,

*PEAK* works to develop skills that will help students better navigate the complex world of developing and maintaining healthy relationships with others.

### **Clinical Supervision**

To ensure *PEAK* students have opportunities to be engaged with the most promising clinical practices and methods, *PEAK* social workers will participate in bi-weekly clinical supervision. Clinical supervision is a formal and structured partnership that is generally, but not necessarily, between a more experienced and a less experienced clinician. During this supervision, *PEAK* clinicians' methods with students are reviewed and reflected upon. The goals of this partnership are enhancing the *PEAK* clinicians' work with students, ensuring student welfare, supporting the *PEAK* clinicians in relation to their daily efforts, and providing their professional development.

### **The Life Space Interview**

*PEAK* seeks to develop an atmosphere where teaching and learning can occur. Students have a right to learn and teach others, as well as to be listened to and have their ideas heard without mockery or put-downs. Building this type of community takes commitment from all participants to respect each other, take responsibility for their actions and engage in problem solving. The Life Space Interview is a process in which any crisis can be turned into an opportunity for learning. This seven-step process as spelled out in TCIS is a regular part of *PEAK*.

### **Thoughtful Transitions**

Change can be a difficult process for any student. *PEAK* makes every effort to make this process as smooth as possible to reduce student anxiety and help ensure successful transitions.

Thoughtful transition planning will take place for any student entering *PEAK*, potentially being included in the mainstreamed learning environment, or departing *PEAK* to the whole school setting.

In some instances, student progress may be reviewed based upon data and staff impressions of their engagement and overall success in *PEAK*. These reviews may result in recommendations for alternative options to be explored.

*PEAK* is committed to the following:

- Transition planning is an ongoing process with discussions occurring on a regular basis
- Plans must be developed with proper resources and time for implementation
- Meetings will occur as often as needed to ensure that all parts of the plan will be discussed, agreed to, and implemented
- Providing access to post-high school planning and opportunities to participate in vocational experiences

# APPLICATION AND CONTRACT FOR ADMISSION INTO THE

## Personal Emotional and Academic Knowledge (*PEAK*) Program

*Prospective students and their parents/guardian should thoroughly acquaint themselves with this form.*

*This application and contract will be picked up from and submitted to the PEAK Staff.*

**An admissions committee made up of the building administration and staff of the PEAK Program will review the application and contract and make recommendations to the Principal, who has the final decision.**

**Upon selection to the PEAK Program, the student along with parents/guardian will have signed a contract agreeing to all of the rules and regulations of Woburn Memorial High School as stated in the school handbook, as well as, the PEAK Program; which could differ in the following respects:**

- The student may be required to take and pass a drug and alcohol screening if circumstances indicate that drug and alcohol use is a factor in poor academic performance, excessive tardiness or absenteeism or unsatisfactory behavior.
- The student will be required to participate in work-study: a minimum of 15 hours per week, 3 hours per day. Pay stubs must be turned into PEAK staff. Pay stubs will only be counted when you are in attendance at school a minimum of three days per week.
- If the student does not have a job, the student will be required to do community service or other jobs deemed appropriate by the PEAK staff. Students who do not comply with this rule will be removed from the PEAK roster. Exceptions can be made with the permission of the principal.
- Credits for work study will only be awarded when the student has passed three core subjects.
- A student who loses his or her job due to theft may be removed from the program.
- The student may be required to enroll in counseling, either here at school or outside of the school setting if student performance indicates issues impeding progress.

A PEAK student who would like to leave the program must make a written request. The request will be reviewed by the committee. The Principal will have the final determination. The following criteria will be used: 1.)

**Attendance 2.) Academic Progress 3.) Behavior and Attitude 4.) Indications for Success**

**By signing the following, the students and their parents agree that they have read this contract, understand it and will comply with its conditions.**

**Student's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

