



Participant Handbook

2020–2021

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Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to Minnesota Independence College and Community! We hope your experience at MICC will be exciting and beneficial to you. To get the most out of your time with MICC, your commitment and hard work will be essential.

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook contains a brief outline of information, policies and procedures of the College, Community, and Careers Programs at MICC and highlights what you can expect from MICC and what MICC expects from you.

It is important for you to understand the rules and policies to help ensure your time at MICC will be a positive and productive experience. This handbook was designed to act as a guide for you to follow.

Please remember information in this handbook may change from time to time. We will keep you informed as soon as any changes occur so you always have the correct information.

This handbook provides general guidance and information, and is not intended to cover every conceivable situation. Specific questions relating to policies, procedures, and interpretations of specific sections within the handbook should be addressed with the Directors of MICC Programs.

Our Vision

A world where individuals on the autism spectrum and with learning differences thrive and are valued.

Our Mission

Is to transform the lives of individuals and families affected by the autism spectrum and learning differences.

Our Truths

Everyone is different.

Students experience personal growth when they are offered unique and individualized programs, because no two individuals have the exact same needs.

People learn best by doing.

Academic instruction is not enough. By living in on-site apartments, and experiencing all that the city has to offer, people are better equipped to live independently.

Vocation leads to independence.

The ability to get and keep a job is one of the single most important factors to be able to live independently.

Cliffs are inevitable without life-long engagement.

Adults with ASD and/or learning differences face challenges throughout their lifetime and need access to a variety of support services in order to live a fulfilling, independent life.

Social beings need a social life.

People gain self-awareness, confidence and self-esteem when they can experience acceptance and develop friendships.

MICC's Philosophy

MICC uses a person centered approach, which means that our participants are at the center of all decisions and actions that relate to their life and their support. MICC will work to ensure delivery and support of person centered services. Each participant will have a plan developed to guide the achievement of their needs and desires for the future, and this plan will be built upon strengths of the participant and reviewed annually.

All members of the MICC community are expected to work together to help embrace diversity and grow by thinking of all perspectives and viewpoints. MICC commits to treating all humans with respect and dignity, regardless of race, gender identity, culture, age, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, ethnic background, spiritual belief or religion. MICC provides participants and staff education and training on diversity, inclusivity and social justice and encourages accountability and action toward creating a respectful environment for all. Participants can find more information about this on the MICC website.

MICC also implements positive behavioral interventions and supports. We focus on the expectations and actions necessary for a healthy, independent, integrated life, rather than focusing on deficits or behaviors. Participants are provided clear guidelines and reasons for these guidelines to promote a positive environment. As a community, we practice living our 3 "R" expectations, as outlined below.

We (participants and staff) are...

RESPECTFUL

We are kind.
We listen.
We are truthful.

RESPONSIBLE

We are punctual.
We are prepared.
We participate.

RESILIENT

We are courageous.
We are safe and own our emotions.
We are flexible

What You Can Expect From MICC

Definitions

References to MICC are inclusive of all programs and services provided by the organization as a whole (i.e. employees, activities, participants, functions, campus,

etc.). The 'MICC Campus' is defined as the townhome/apartment unit and/or space MICC rents, The Colony Apartments common areas (grounds, garages, parking lots, laundry rooms, patios, etc.), MICC Courtyard, Community Center, Careers Center, and requested space at various community locations.

Participant Rights & Responsibilities

Any person participating in Minnesota Independence College and Community programs has the following rights:

- to be treated with consideration and respect for personal dignity, autonomy, and privacy;
- to have services provided in a safe, healthy environment with the fewest restrictions possible;
- to confidentiality of information about one's self;
- to be informed of one's own diagnosis and disability and how it may affect their ability to learn, live independently and maintain employment;
- to be informed of services provided for them at MICC;
- to an individualized program of services that best addresses one's own mental health, physical health, social and economic needs, and that specifies the provision of appropriate and adequate services, as available, either directly or by referral;
- to one's own records of program services, progress reports, etc.;
- to timely, active and informed participation in the establishment, periodic review, and reassessment of one's program of services;
- to acceptance or refusal of services, with the understanding that refusal of services may impact their standing in the program
- to be free from intellectual, emotional and/or physical abuse
- to be free from financial or other exploitation, retaliation, humiliation, and neglect;
- to receive pertinent information pertinent in sufficient time to facilitate his/her decision making;
- to informed consent, refusal or expression of choice regarding services, service delivery, release of information, concurrent services, composition of delivery team;
- to access or referral to legal entities for appropriate representation, self-help support services, and advocacy services;
- to information on the procedure by which the persons served may make a formal complaint, file a grievance, or appeal a decision made by the organization's personnel or team members;
- to investigation and resolution of alleged infringement of rights and other legal rights;
- to be fully informed of all rights;
- to have their rights communicated in a way that is meaningful to the persons served and shared with persons served prior to the beginning of service delivery and/or at initiation of service delivery; annually for persons in a program longer than one year; and available at all times for review and clarification
- to have research guidelines and ethics policies adhered to.

Participant Expectations

Participant Behavior

Participant behavior, both on and off the MICC Campus, may impact a participant's current or future participation in MICC. Participants are expected to contribute to the community with courtesy and have positive and respectful behavior at all times. Rules are provided to protect the rights, safety, and wellbeing of everyone. It is expected that participants follow all laws, The Colony Apartment rules and MICC policies. Participants violating civil and criminal law may be subject to MICC conduct procedures, regardless of where the incident occurs.

Campus Dress Code

MICC Program participants represent MICC during scheduled programming and events both on and off campus. Therefore, MICC Program participants are expected to adhere to a reasonable dress code as indicated below:

- Program participants must appear to be clean and presentable (i.e. no odor, hair groomed, clean clothing)
- No inappropriate pictures or words on clothing; attire must not negatively impact the social environment
- Shoes, socks and attire must be appropriate for activity
- All tops must allow for movement and bending over without exposure
- Clothing must be clean and fit appropriately
- Must adhere to uniform requirements for the workplace

Any program participants not following the dress code will be instructed to return to their residence to change into proper attire before being allowed to attend an activity or return to programming.

Tobacco, Alcohol, & Drug Use

While on MICC campus or at MICC functions of activities, participants must adhere to legal restrictions regarding tobacco, alcohol and drug use.

Tobacco use (including smoking, electronic devices, and chewing tobacco) by participants, employees, or visitors is not permitted on the MICC campus or at MICC functions or activities.

Alcohol possession and alcohol-use by participants is not permitted on the MICC Campus. Participants who are 21 or older may consume alcohol at MICC functions and activities where alcohol is provided as part of the event (i.e. Gala or other fundraisers). However, participants may not consume alcohol during MICC functions and activities that do not include alcohol as a part of the sponsored event (i.e. at a restaurant during a weekend social or at the bowling alley) when MICC is providing transportation. Any participants who consume alcohol off-campus legally are encouraged to practice

healthy choices upon return to campus and to consider medication interactions. Inebriated and disruptive participants on campus may be asked to leave.

The following regulations for drug use have been established in accordance with state and federal laws:

- MICC will not permit any coercion to abuse illegal or prescription drugs.
- MICC prohibits the use or possession of illegal drugs and paraphernalia, the misuse of prescription drugs, and the sale or distribution of illegal drugs and prescription drugs.
- Criminal activity by participants or guests of participants, including drug-related criminal activity, will not be permitted. "Drug-related criminal activity" includes the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, use, or possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use of a controlled substance. Participants shall not engage in any act intended to facilitate criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, on or near the MICC Campus, nor shall they permit their guests to engage in such activity.

Participant's unlawful use, possession, buying, selling, or distributing illegal substances, paraphernalia, or unauthorized prescription drugs, or providing alcohol to persons under age 21, if found or reported, will be disciplined accordingly.

Weapons

Weapon possession and/or weapon-use by participants is not permitted on the MICC campus or at MICC functions or activities. Any item used to threaten, intimidate, or produce harm upon another person is deemed a weapon. Examples of weapons include but are not limited to guns and firearms (toy or real), bullets, bows, arrows, crossbows, machetes, throwing stars and other knives. Mace and pepper spray are also not allowed, but participants are allowed to carry personal alarms in the community.

Self-Harm and Attempted Suicide

Participants are strongly encouraged to report any self-harm or attempted suicide they have committed on themselves or believe others may have committed, including threats of self-harm or suicide. Self-harm is deliberately hurting one's self and is a harmful way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger or frustration. This could include experiencing a severe disturbance of mood or thinking that threatens a person's safety, cutting, scratching, burning, pulling hair, head banging or slapping, choking, picking at wounds, or other actions that result in injury. Attempted suicide is when someone harms themselves with the intent to end one's life.

Depending on the nature and severity of the action, participants may report in verbal or written form to obtain support. If participants are their own legal guardian, MICC provides them the option to inform their family for support in the process. If participants are not their own legal guardian, MICC will inform their legal guardian of the self-harm or attempted suicide. Legal guardians and participants always have the right to report self-harm or attempted suicide to additional external providers.

If it is an emergency, the participant should call 911 first. Employees reserve the right to contact 911 or Hennepin County's Crisis Services for Adults (COPE) at 612-596-1223.

Violence and Assault

MICC does not tolerate violence of any kind. Should a participant be threatened or physically harmed by anyone, an MICC employee should be notified immediately. The employee will evaluate the situation and respond accordingly to ensure participant safety and well-being. The Misconduct and Resolution Process section of this handbook includes possible resolutions, although MICC reserves the right to call local law enforcement in cases of severe violence.

Examples of violence include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse: using words to provoke, insult, or threaten another person
- Threats of violence: behaving in a physically intimidating manner, stalking, threats to harm the employees or community members, or damage to the premises
- Fighting: mutual pushing, grabbing, and hitting
- Assault: aggressively attacking another person by:
 - Provocation: insults, death threats.
 - Intimidation: making a fist, pushing, stalking, stealing/throwing objects.
 - Brutality: attacks, struggles or fights.
 - Punches and injuries: bites, bruises, injuries, dislocations, fractures.
 - Assault with a weapon.
 - Armed robbery (with a firearm or using force or the threat of force).

Sexual Misconduct

MICC does not tolerate sexual misconduct of any kind. Should a participant be threatened or physically harmed by anyone, an MICC employee should be notified immediately. If the situation is an emergency, participants should call 911 first and then notify an MICC employee. Employees will take proper steps in response to the situation and report to agencies, including Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center, as needed. Sexual harassment is the unwelcome conduct of sexual nature, such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This can include: intimidation, bullying or threats of sexual nature.

Sometimes a participant may not be the direct recipient of the unwelcome behavior. For example, a participant may observe others engaged in sexualized behavior or overhear a conversation that turns into an intimate sexual discussion or jokes. This could disrupt the learning or work environment and could be considered "third-party" sexual harassment.

Whether behavior constitutes sexual harassment depends upon the circumstances, but examples of sexual harassment may include, although are not limited to:

- Unwelcome verbal conduct, which may include sexually oriented jokes, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, making suggestive or insulting noises, or in appropriate inquiries into personal matters
- Unwelcome non-verbal conduct, which may include displaying suggestive objects, pictures, language that imply offensive behaviors or obscene gestures or invading a person's personal body space
- Unwelcome touching, which may include pats, pinches, hugs or other unnecessary bodily contact
- Indecent exposure
- Making sexual or romantic advances toward an individual
- Harassment not of sexual nature directed against an individual due to their gender.

Sexual misconduct is a broad term encompassing any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or by intimidation, coercion, or manipulation. Sexual misconduct can be committed by a person of any gender and could occur between a participant and other participant(s), roommates, staff or other individuals in the community. The following are examples of sexual misconduct:

- Someone touches any part of another person's body in a sexual way, including over clothes
- Request for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome sexual advancement
- Non-consensual, forced physical sexual behavior
- Unwanted inappropriate touching
- Unwanted kissing, fondling, exposure of genitalia, voyeurism, and exhibitionism
- Non-consensual verbal sexual demands.

Anti-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment

MICC strives to maintain an environment that is safe for all members of the community. This means an environment free from physical violence, sexual harassment and misconduct, bullying, retaliation, and discrimination. Accordingly, MICC will not tolerate any form of harassment because of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability.

Bullying

Any form, type, or level of bullying is unacceptable and will be addressed accordingly. This covers conduct that occurs on MICC's campus, at MICC sponsored activities or events, in MICC provided transportation, through MICC technology, or participant-owned personal communication devices.

Examples of bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, public humiliation, or destruction of property
- Harassment because of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability

- Retaliating against a participant or employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment
- Perpetuating conduct by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause physical harm to another.
- Bullying by any use of electronic communication, including, but not limited to, email, instant messaging, text messaging, blogs, on-line games, social networking sites, and/or the use of an individual's picture, video, or audio without permission.

Attendance

Per MICC policy, participants are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times, whether in person or virtually. This includes MICC classes, socials, electives, support services, Job Developer meetings, and/or Advisor/Specialist meetings. Failure to arrive will result in an absence.

Excused absences include illness, serious illness within the immediate family, death or funeral in immediate family, emergency medical appointments, religious holidays, and suspension. Participants must follow the communication protocol as outlined by the program prior to the absence. Documentation of the reason for the absence may be requested by MICC staff.

All absences and tardies will be monitored by MICC program staff, and concerns will be addressed through an attendance support plan or accommodations and could result in removal from programming.

Misconduct and Resolution Process

Examples

Violations of the preceding Participant Expectations, as well as the behaviors below, are considered misconduct and may result in disciplinary consequences or a resolution process. This is not intended to be a complete list of all behaviors that may be considered misconduct. Depending on the circumstances, other behaviors may be considered misconduct and subject to the same outcomes.

Misconduct includes:

- willfully providing false or misleading information
- cheating and dishonesty
- failure to follow MICC's technology rules
- use of alcohol or illegal drugs on the MICC Campus and/or the abuse of alcohol or drugs
- sexual harassment and misconduct
- disorderly conduct including:
- actions which endanger the health, safety, or welfare of others including physical aggression
- predatory advances/behavior

- verbal harassment or abuse
- disruption of activities, instruction or employee duties
- damage or theft of MICC property, or the property of other participants, guests or employees
- trespassing or unauthorized use of keys
- violations of MICC policies
- failure to follow rules, procedures, expectations, or terms of disciplinary actions
- assisting other participants in breaking MICC rules and policies
- not complying with the direct requests of a staff member

Resolution Process

MICC strives to create a positive environment that supports the dignity, safety and learning of each participant. MICC uses a restorative justice approach to misconduct, with the aim of teaching critical skills to prevent future misconduct, and repairing harm done to the community. Each case of misconduct is considered on an individual basis, as outlined in MICC's "Person Centered Policy". Therefore, no set response or consequence will apply to all participants. In appropriate cases, information will be gathered from all individuals impacted by the reported misconduct. Barring any extenuating circumstances, next steps will be determined within 48 hours of a reported alleged misconduct.

MICC participants also have responsibilities as citizens. MICC is not a court of law and does not replace or reduce the requirements of civil or criminal laws. In addition to MICC's internal review, all criminal activity may be referred to local law enforcement. The following resolutions may be used by all employees to address general misconduct. These are meant to be only examples, and are not the only steps that an employee may take to address misconduct.

These examples include:

- verbal warnings
- written warnings
- meetings with Advisors, Specialists or other program staff
- differentiating instruction, social narratives, visuals, or other accommodations
- comprehensive support plans to build skills and address root concern
- confiscation of items violating MICC policy (e.g. weapons or illegal drugs)
- conflict resolution with peers
- implementation of de-escalation techniques to stop the negative behavior
- environmental changes to schedules, living situations and other routines
- referral to outside providers (e.g.; medical doctor, counselor, psychiatrist), which could include a requirement for specific therapeutic intervention, assessment or letters
- routine home visits
- family consultation
- behavior contracts and use of incentives
- mandatory educational workshops

- written educational assignments
- loss of privileges (i.e. mutually agreed upon curfew changes, attendance at certain activities)
- reimbursement for damaged property
- medical clearance from doctor or mental health external therapeutic services
- restorative justice, including MICC community service, letters of apology or personal reflection log
- involuntary leave
- staff reports to Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC)

Methods of Communication

MICC believes communication to be integral to person-centered practices, as well as to the success of the organization. As a result, MICC practices transparent, timely communication with program participants and their families. MICC maintains an open channel of communication for participants and their families to discuss organization-related questions, concerns, suggestions and affirmations.

Participant Complaint and Appeal Process

The goal of MICC is to deliver quality programming to all program participants. If a participant of MICC is dissatisfied with decisions made or services received, and the program manager and/or director has not been able to informally resolve the matter, the participant is entitled to express their dissatisfaction through a written complaint process. Please see the **Participant Rights** section for more information on the rights of participants.

There are two forms of complaints.

Informal Complaint

Participants are encouraged and assisted to continuously share ideas and express concerns in informal discussions with MICC program employees. This could take place during Specialist/Advisor meetings, focus groups, or other meetings.

Each concern will be addressed and attempts made to reach a fair resolution in a reasonable manner. If the matter has not or cannot be resolved through an informal discussion, the participant may bring their complaint to the highest level of authority in the program via MICC's written complaint process, which is a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

Any participant who has a complaint which they feel has not been adequately addressed through the informal complaint process, must submit their complaint in writing by utilizing the "Participant Complaint Form" to the applicable program manager or director. A "Participant Complaint Form" can be obtained from any MICC employee.

Retaliation for Reporting

Participants who report events or actions of misconduct can expect confidentiality. The only exceptions are situations where law enforcement and other service providers require witness statements and/or mandated reporting.

Retaliation is the act of harming someone because they harmed you, also known as “revenge”. This includes intimidation, harassment or violence. Retaliation against reporters is considered a violation of MICC policy. All reports of retaliation will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated by MICC where appropriate and may result in program probation and/or more serious consequences.

Leaves of Absence

At times a participant may take a leave of absence from MICC programming. The following are types of approved leaves.

Temporary Leave

A temporary leave from MICC may happen voluntarily or involuntarily. A leave is considered temporary when both the participant and MICC have the intention for a return within the current program year.

Voluntary Leave

Voluntary leave is defined as and not limited to; family crisis, medical, active duty, extended travel lasting 30 days or more.

Involuntary Leave

Involuntary leave from an MICC program is a program mandated departure that results in a temporary or permanent dismissal of the MICC program(s).

Suspension/Probation

Suspension/Probation from the MICC program(s) are results of code of conduct violations/program handbook guidelines or no longer meeting eligibility criteria.

Program Dismissal

Dismissal from the program is a termination of the participant from the College or Community Program by the Program Director against the will of the participant and/or family due to the result of not meeting program requirements guidelines.

Technology

Terms of Use

At all times, MICC's technology is to be used in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner, in accordance with all MICC rules and policies. Access to technology is a privilege, not a right. This privilege may be revoked at any time. Use of technology in an unacceptable manner may result in disciplinary action. Participants should not expect that their use of MICC's technology will be private and should know that their files and/or internet activity may be monitored or viewed by employees of MICC.

Accessing the internet via MICC's network (throughout MICC's campus, including hotspots in student apartments), or using MICC-supplied equipment (including Chromebooks, computers, printers, scanners, TVs, cameras, or software) carries with it the automatic agreement to follow the guidelines below.

Internet Filtering

The internet offers access to an ever-increasing amount of data, information, communications, images and sounds; some of which may be inappropriate for participant access. In addition to monitoring internet use, MICC uses content filtering to prevent access to many inappropriate web sites. Like any safeguard measure, it is not perfect, so use of MICC's internet access comes with the risk of inappropriate websites being accessible either accidentally or purposefully. MICC has put in place reasonable safeguards but it is ultimately the participant's responsibility to ensure they are not accessing inappropriate websites or engaging in unethical, illegal, or disrespectful activities using MICC technologies and internet.

Acceptable Uses of Technology

- Activities which support teaching and learning in activities of daily living and career support.
- Activities which support exploration of appropriate interests and hobbies.
- Activities which support participants with additional modes of communication with family, peers, MICC employees and established community partners.
- Activities which support participants existing personal technology use through Wi-Fi access.

Unacceptable Uses of Technology

- Accessing inappropriate internet sites which contain pornography, gambling, hacking, web proxy bypass, violence/weapons content, hate groups, or otherwise offensive content areas.
- Using someone else's name or account, or in any way impersonating another or misrepresenting affiliation with a person, group, or entity.
- Loading or downloading any software, written works, information, images, or other files in violation of copyright or patent protection as stated by the owner or by U.S. law, or plagiarizing such works.
- Intentionally transmitting any material or messages that contain software viruses, unsolicited advertising, "spamming", or chain letters.
- Compromising personal safety by posting personal contact information about you or someone else.
- Accessing or **attempting** to access, for any reason, any server or files of any system without specific prior permission from the system administrator or MICC Director.
- Using computers and other devices to create fraudulent documents.
- Use of MICC access to view, copy, send, or print material that is obscene, pornographic, or sexual in nature.

- Use of MICC access to view, send, or print material that provides information that could be used in the production of destructive devices such as bombs, explosives, or fireworks.
- Use of MICC access to view, send, print, or purchase weapons (including personal defense weapons).
- Gaining unauthorized access to resources or files; identifying yourself with another person's name or password or using an account or password of another user without proper authorization.
- Theft or vandalism of data, equipment, or intellectual property including intentionally introducing a virus or otherwise improperly tampering with the network system.
- Recording videos or text messages of another person without prior consent from them.
- Using MICC technology and internet access to violate any of the policies outlined in this handbook including but not limited to anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, bullying, retaliation, and social media policies.

Social Media Policy

Participants must abide by the same laws, rules of conduct, and etiquette on and offline. MICC does not tolerate misconduct of any kind through social media. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to texting, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, Google Classroom, etc.

Should social media misconduct occur by any participant, an MICC employee should be notified immediately. MICC reserves the right, under circumstances it deems appropriate and subject to applicable laws and regulations, to impose disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal from MICC, upon participants who use private social media sites or communication resources to:

- Harass, threaten, insult, defame, or bully another person or entity or to engage in any unlawful act, including, but not limited to identity theft or other types of fraud.
- Post or store content that is obscene, pornographic, defamatory, racist, excessively violent, harassing, threatening, bullying, or otherwise objectionable or injurious.
- Operate an illegal lottery, gambling operation, or other illegal venture.
- Disparage, or engage in other conduct detrimental to the interests of MICC or members of the MICC community.
- Create fictitious aliases in email, social platforms, or spoof cell phone numbers (anonymous texting included), IP addressed for purpose of harassment

In appropriate cases, such conduct will also be reported to law enforcement authorities.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology is a collaboration of tools and services used to support participation and enable access to a full educational experience that promotes an increase in quality of life, productivity and success. MICC uses Assistive Technology to

increase access to or participation in life, employment, education or inclusion in the community. MICC supports the individualized use of assistive technology through programming and general operations. Examples of this include use of apps on handheld devices and computers, use of large screen TVs in instructional areas and high visibility themes on webpages. MICC also supports the use of previously adopted technologies obtained from participants that have been successfully utilized in the home, community or at school.

If a participant requests information or staff identify that a participant could benefit from assistive technology, they will be directed to outside community resources that specialize in the field.

Technology Equipment

MICC is not responsible for lost or stolen technology equipment such as personal computers, tablets, or phones. As a result, participants are advised to leave personal, valuable electronics secured in their residence when not in use. Participants are prohibited from direct wiring into MICC data ports on walls and the local area network and are allowed to use the Participant Wi-Fi only. Data usage and file storage on MICC equipment may be monitored and changed at any time.

MICC's desktop and laptop computers are for classroom instruction and individual participant use. College participants are trained for technology use and safety. Participants will be assigned an MICC Google account/email that is unique to their programming. The Google accounts/emails are available to participants as long as they are actively enrolled in an MICC program. Participant Google accounts will be disabled upon departure from MICC's programs.

Participants are expected to be respectful while using technology including TVs, personal computers and devices, as well as MICC owned computer or devices. This means keeping the volume low or using headphones when using audio, etc. The equipment is not to be changed or altered by anyone without permission. This includes adding/removing games or programs, creating screen savers, downloading/uploading information or programs, and changing settings. Food and drinks are not allowed when using MICC owned technology. Participants are expected to log off when done using computers.

Participants are provided with training and support in learning appropriate computer use, including self-monitoring of time on the computer, use of social media, and other topics. A support plan will be put in place for participants needing additional support with technology addiction. These guidelines, training and support are meant to help create a safe and participatory environment for all participants.

Transportation

MICC believes that access to public and private transportation options is critical to an independent life. Participants must be able to travel to employment, social events,

grocery stores, and other essential community locations when and how they choose to in order to fully enjoy the benefits of independence. Therefore, MICC teaches and supports participants in accessing the community and using public transportation safely. Participants are required to complete a Transportation Release form at the beginning of each program year. While in MICC vehicles, participants are expected to be respectful.

MICC vehicles are used for programming purposes, planned services and for social activities. MICC staff are not responsible for driving participants to/from desired locations, except in the case of an emergency. Participants are encouraged to arrange their own transportation.

MICC participants regularly use an array of transportation methods. Some participants use ride shares (e.g. Uber, Lyft, Metro Mobility etc.) to get to appointments, places of employment and sometimes to travel to the airport. Families are expected to monitor ride usage. MICC staff members may assist in ordering rides until participants develop the skills to do so independently.

Medication

MICC does not administer or dispense participant medications under any circumstances. That is the responsibility of the participant, their parent or guardian, or an external service provider. Participants are responsible for ordering and physically taking their own medication. MICC College Program staff may assist in monitoring medication schedules based on a participant need and specific support plans. See the College Program Handbook Supplement for more detailed information.

Participant Property

It is MICC's belief that maintaining independence requires the ability to responsibly secure and access an individual's own possessions, important documents and financial resources. This includes identification documents (driver's license, passports, Social Security cards, etc.), check books, cash, debit and credit cards, gift cards, residence keys, cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc. The only circumstance where MICC will temporarily hold participant property is if it is part of a short term, time limited and agreed upon plan with the purpose of transition or transport. An example of this could be an MICC Activities staff holding on to a participant's passport while booking travel. MICC may never be in control of the property for extended period of time and can never hold funds for any period of time. This includes cash, checkbooks, debit/credit cards, or gift cards.

Program Closing Process

There are times that MICC's programming or services may have to be shortened, changed, cancelled or moved to virtual format due to staff absence, inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

Class or Appointment Cancellation

Participants will be notified as soon as possible if a class or appointment needs to be cancelled.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather (hazardous weather conditions such as extreme cold, snow conditions, unsafe temperature, and wind chill) the Executive Director will determine if services, classes, and/or field experiences will be canceled or altered due to participant and staff safety. Participants will be notified via email and text messages via EZ text reminders on personal cell phones.

Late Start

If opening hours are delayed due to inclement weather, participants will be notified by 8:00pm the evening prior.

Early Closure

If programming hours are shortened due to inclement weather, participants will be notified by 2:00pm the day of.

Full Closure

If MICC facilities are closed due to inclement weather, participants will be notified by 6:00 am the day of the closure. The Community Center, Career Center, Independence Center, Welcome Center, Advisory Offices and Administrative offices would be closed. College participants would have adjusted access to the Student Center.

MICC Office Closure

MICC observes various holidays throughout the year when MICC offices are closed. Please refer to the MICC Programs Calendar for a listing of these days. On these holidays, the following buildings will be closed: the MICC Administrative offices, Welcome Center and Careers Center. Hours for the Advisory Offices, Community Center and Student Center will be communicated with participants depending on the holiday and schedule.

Participant Safety

Safety Team

MICC has a safety team made up of staff from all departments. They maintain emergency procedures and visuals around campus. The team helps conduct safety drills throughout the year. The meeting place for drills and emergencies for MICC Donaldson Park.

EZ Text System

MICC utilizes a text alert system called EZ text for all staff and participants. MICC uses this system to communicate alerts for safety drills, program closures and emergencies. These alerts are sent directly to participant's personal cell phone. If a participant chooses to "opt out" of these messages, they will be unable to be added again and will not receive critical emergency information. The number these alerts come from is: **797-979**.

Emergency Drills

MICC conducts emergency drills throughout the year for both staff and participants for practice and education purposes. These are communicated via the EZ Text system.

Sidewalk Safety

When walking to and from MICC campus or the greater community, it is important to **always** use sidewalks when traveling, not streets or private property. It is also important that participants use crosswalks and identified routes. It is expected that participants monitor weather conditions and wear proper footwear and clothing for the specific weather conditions.

Vehicle Passenger Safety

- Always wear your seat belt
- Stay seated at all times
- Keep the volume of your voice, cell phone or other electronic equipment down. The space in a vehicle is small and it becomes disruptive to peers and the driver
- No eating or drinking in the van except during extended travel such as retreats
- Employees reserve the right to assign seating for any reason deemed to reduce behavioral conflicts or accommodate physical disabilities of participants.

Vitals™ App

MICC has partnered with Vitals Aware Services and the City of Richfield to offer the Vitals™ App to all MICC participants. This is a free service designed to allow emergency personnel to be alerted when in close proximity to a person with a specialized keychain or other chipped device. The alert prompts the Richfield Police Officer or other emergency services person via a phone app to a medical condition, intellectual disability, vulnerable status, or any other relevant information including predetermined de-escalation strategies. Examples could include recordings of a parent voice, scripted messaging, or other effective calming strategies. Additional emergency contact and medical information such as allergies or medications can be included, as well as your affiliation with MICC. If you would like more information about the Vitals™ App, please contact your Advisor or Specialist.

Referrals and Reporting

MICC employees are Mandated Reporters, meaning all employees are required to make a report of suspected abuse of a participant to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC). Other situations may require MICC staff to seek outside

assistance to ensure the best level of care can be provided. This includes, but is not limited to the following resources:

Physical Health

MICC is not a medical facility, so all serious/immediate concerns of physical health will be handled by emergency services (911) or referred to the nearest local hospital/emergency room.

Mental Health

If a staff member suspects a severe disturbance of mood or thinking that threatens a person's safety, MICC will contact 911 or Hennepin County's Crisis Services for Adults (COPE) at 612-596-1223.

Law Enforcement

MICC is an educational institution and not a court of law. Any policy or procedure listed in this handbook does not replace or reduce the requirements of civil or criminal laws. If any member of MICC is involved in behavior where the law has been violated, the Richfield Police Department may be contacted.

Program Resources

Information on the scope of program services for all MICC programs can be found on MICC's website. This information includes:

- Population served
- Eligibility requirements
- Program Setting
- Program hours
- Days and frequency of services
- Cost of services
- Referral sources
- Specific services offered.

MICC Participant Handbook Acknowledgment

I acknowledge I have received a copy of the 2020-2021 Minnesota Independence College and Community (MICC) Participant Handbook and the Program Supplement that contains important information about participant expectations and policies/procedures at MICC. I understand I am responsible for complying with all policies, procedures and practices.

I also understand the provisions of this handbook can be changed, altered, modified or amended from time to time. Any revisions will substitute and replace prior policy or procedure statements.

When changes occur in the MICC policies or procedures, I understand I will be informed through normal communication channels, issuance of new policies, by way of meetings or supplements to this handbook.

I understand this handbook is not a contract and nothing herein conveys any rights to me.

Participant Name (print)

Participant Signature

Date

Parent of Trusted Adult Signature

Date