

IVY STREET
S C H O O L
Nurtured Learning. Exceptional Futures.

The journey to adulthood starts here.





A school that will shape the rest of your life.



For many families, the journey leading to the Ivy Street School has been challenging. Here, you'll experience a change.

We take the time to really understand. We focus on strengths. All students have the same opportunities, whether they live here or commute.

Our small size means that everyone gets the attention they deserve.

And our comprehensive therapeutic environment means that we have the resources, expertise and dedication to help each student follow a unique and individual path to a full and satisfying life.

Our students are adolescents and young adults aged 13 to 21 who have brain injuries, autism spectrum disorder or behavioral health challenges.

They come here from all over the country for one simple reason: we help them build confidence and skills that will make a difference for a lifetime.





Every student has a unique story. That's where we begin.

No two students face the same issues. And everyone's motivation is different. So we work with each local school district, student and family to create the optimal plan for success.

We believe in state-of-the-art assessments—and meeting each student where they are in their journey.

It truly is about getting to know who each student is, their life goals, and then building a plan and curriculum that helps them prepare for life with all the skills they need to realize their potential.

For all students, we are a transition-focused school. That means that on day one we start to work on what each student will need for life in the community—social skills, solving problems, managing behaviors, and much more.

For students who need specialized transition programming to take the next step, we have dedicated classrooms and a unique summer program. We also offer an optional fee-based program, Skills for Life, that works with transition-aged students and families in their home communities.

Our approach is evidence-based and laser-focused on building the skills and motivation that are needed for a successful adulthood.



A parent's story: Sam

It was obvious that Sam wasn't typical as soon as he got around other kids. First grade was brutal. I walked into a birthday party at Chuck E. Cheese and the kids were literally taunting him and beating him with balloon swords.

We took him out of the public schools because we knew that if he didn't develop self-esteem nothing would be possible. If he melts down, no learning is going to happen. He's 21 now and about to take his driver's test. For two years he's been doing college level work, completely and independently. He can get from MassBay Community College to Ivy Street by himself.

What worked for Sam was being able to practice in a real environment. And practicing in different environments—at his job at Wheelock, in the summer residential program at Bay State College, in his classes at MassBay, that's what allowed him to learn to generalize those skills. But the support and instruction of the Ivy Street staff, while he was practicing, is what really made it work. Especially given the staff's willingness to listen and learn about his individualized difficulties and what he needs.

A staff with deep expertise and experience, rivaled only by their enthusiasm.

The Ivy Street Team are highly educated and passionate about what they do. But families are the experts on their children. We get the best results by working together.

With a ratio of two staff members to every student, there is deep involvement in every aspect of a student's growth, and you see it on a daily basis.

Whether it's our transition team, our social workers, or any of our instructors or members of our clinical team, it's all about working closely and collaboratively with every student and family. That's the reason so many of our students find success.



- Certified special education teachers
- Individual and family therapy with specialization in trauma informed care, expressive arts, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and social thinking skill development
- A sensory room
- College-educated residential staff
- All medications are supervised by nursing staff
- Clinical services including occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, physical therapy
- Adaptive physical education and team sports
- A team dedicated to transition services and vocational support
- Certified behavior analysts and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) experts
- Assistive technology consultation
- Certified brain injury specialists
- Family support group and advisory council
- English Language Learner (ELL) specialists
- Professional development awards and partnerships with universities to support advanced degrees and integration of best practices

A parent's story: Christine

Christine was a beautiful baby. But as she grew she struggled with horrific meltdowns, often crying until she would throw up. She wouldn't interact with other children at play dates or in school, slept poorly or not at all, and began to withdraw and become isolated.

By the time she was in ninth grade Christine had been to multiple hospitals, receiving a variety of diagnoses. She had been to numerous schools but continued to fall through the cracks. We moved to Massachusetts, looking for medical help and a school where she would feel like she could succeed, because at this point she was just giving up. It was easier to stay in bed than to fail.

Ivy Street is not afraid to look outside the box. And that was very refreshing, to be in a place where someone says "We may not have all the answers but we sure as heck are going to try and find them."

I'm thrilled with the fact that she passed MCAS, because I see it as a chance for Christine to have an independent life, to get a degree and to hold a job. None of those things can happen if she can't learn to self regulate and believe in herself. Ivy Street is helping her learn this. She's getting there and that for me is most important.





It's not just what we do, it's where we do it.

The first thing to mention about the facilities here at Ivy Street is our proximity to public transportation, jobs, banks, stores and everything a student might come across in everyday life. It's all just a short walk away.

We're located in a beautiful mansion and each residential student has their own room. We have indoor and outdoor fitness spaces, an occupational therapy lab, a professional kitchen for our culinary program, and a breathtaking library and computer center.

Immersion in the community is paramount to our success.



There's swimming and rock climbing at Boston University. Rowing on the Charles and learning history on the Freedom Trail. Real employment and internship opportunities. Rich experiences that capture the interests and capabilities of every student—or dare them to try something new.

Built into every adventure are social skills, executive functioning skills and confidence-building. With all of those you can do anything.

A parent's story: Olivia

Olivia made it through the public school system without anyone really understanding her. Even when teachers had the best intentions, it was always like trying to put a square peg in a round hole. We looked at three schools for transition programs and when we came to Ivy we both felt at home as soon as we walked in. I was so impressed by how flexible Ivy Street was. Most schools were like, "that's just the way we do it; these are our parameters and you have to work within those parameters." At Ivy Street we felt like the possibilities were endless.

After her first year, her class had an opportunity to live in the Cottage Farm apartment for a week and Olivia was extremely anxious about doing that. Olivia being away from home. Oh my gosh! But she did it and when she came home she surprised me by saying, "I think I need to live there." And I would never have expected to hear those words from Olivia, a girl who hesitates to spend even just one day away from home.

So flash forward to now and she is actually living in that apartment and it is something I never would have envisioned her doing at this point in her life. And not only is she living there, she is thriving and she's happy. I think she feels safe and supported and proud of herself. I know she's feeling independent. She's independent in so many ways that I would never have envisioned.

She's stepping up to the plate because she has the support and the expectations are there. It's kind of just falling into place and it amazes me.



“I belong here”





One of the greatest desires of any young person with a disability is to live a typical teenage life. At Ivy Street it's reality.

We offer all the experiences any high school student would look forward to. A peer group that's got your back. Athletics. A packed extra-curricular calendar with a prom, music, dance, theater, student-run businesses, volunteering, field trips and a student performance night unlike any high school musical you've ever seen.

All in a bully-free environment that inspires taking risks, trying new things, and forming deep friendships.

We honor the best part of being a teenager while providing the skills to help solve the unique challenges each student and family face.

There is no other school quite like ours.



A sister's story: Jeffrey

Jeffrey was born to a woman who was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He was taken away when he was an infant, after she fractured his skull in multiple places. My mom adopted him after I left for college. Before Jeffrey came to Ivy Street I thought he'd spend his life in an institution. You guys actually treated him like a person. So he felt like he wanted to do better. He wanted to achieve things and set goals for himself. He actually wanted to be a part of the community. And he felt like he could be somebody. He didn't want to just sit around and do nothing. He flourished at Ivy Street.

I can see him living independently in a few years. He understands what's right and what's wrong. He knows to go to work every day and he can take public transportation. He can manage money to pay his bills. And he actually has friends. It has been life changing for us. I wish my mom could see him now. It's been truly amazing.

The final step: Ready for a new beginning.

What does the future look like for an Ivy Street School student?

They are steering their own ship. They are empowered as young adults. They are prepared for the next step in life.

It could be to adult services, perhaps provided by Ivy's parent company or another community provider.

It may be back to high school or on to college. It could be into a job, using the skills they've learned with our vocational team and our community vocational partners.

Everyday life is about so many things, from education to work to friendships to just having fun. It's also about having the freedom to explore and try.

All of those things are part of the student experience at Ivy Street.

When you leave, you'll be ready.

That is our greatest success.

Admissions: 617-620-7779
admissions@ivystreetschool.org

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The Ivy Street School is located in a quiet residential neighborhood just a few miles from downtown Boston.

1 Ivy Street School

2 Cottage Farm Program

Ivy Street School Community Residence

A Fenway Park

B Boston University

C MBTA Stop

D Museum of Fine Arts

E Children's Hospital Boston



The Ivy Street School is a program of MAB Community Services, an organization that has been creating opportunities for people with disabilities since 1903. Our experience allows us to forge strong community partnerships to meet the pressing need for high quality services that transform lives.

Photography by Darlene DeVita