

# **Student & Family Handbook**

## **2022-2023**

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## **A Message from our Chief Executive Officer**

It is with great joy that we welcome you to a new year at Pan American Academy Charter School. As always, this school year promises to be an exciting one for us all.

We are pleased to present our Student and Family Handbook. We hope this will be a useful guide as we begin a year of working and learning together. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with helpful information about day-to-day procedures at our school as well as important school policies. As you will see our school is committed to providing a learning environment founded on research and exemplary teaching methods.

This handbook contains important information for you about our operational policies, procedures and school expectations. Please take some time to read and review the handbook with your child and become familiar with its contents. This handbook is posted on our website should you need to refer to it to answer any question that you might have. During the school year, changes may be made to this Handbook from time to time. We will advise you of those changes through our communication outlets (School Messenger, ClassDojo, and our website).

Parents play an important role in making this school great. We cannot achieve our goals without you. Therefore, we greatly encourage your participation in all programs and activities. Please refer to this handbook during the school year. Please feel free to call, email or visit with any questions or concerns.

We share the highest expectations for the upcoming year. We look forward to serving our students and families.

Dr. Darcy Russotto  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Mission & Vision

### Mission

Our mission is to prepare bilingual, internationally minded inquirers who learn and contribute to the community through service and action.

### Vision

We will provide a supportive school community culture of well-being in order for all students to thrive socially, emotionally and academically.

## Values And Beliefs

At Pan American Academy we believe in achieving our goals through CARE: by being Compassionate, Accountable, Respectful and Engaged.

Our students will strive to be:

⌘ Inquirers	⌘ Principled	⌘ Balanced
⌘ Knowledgeable	⌘ Open-minded	⌘ Reflective
⌘ Thinkers	⌘ Caring	
⌘ Communicators	⌘ Risk-takers	

It is vital that there is also focus on the development of personal attitudes towards people, towards the environment and towards learning. These positive attitudes contribute to the well-being of the individual and of the group. At Pan American Academy students should demonstrate appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect and tolerance.

## About Us

Pan American Academy Charter School is an independent, free, public K-8 charter school serving a little over 750 students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

We have the highest academic expectations for students. All Pan American teachers are dedicated, caring, skilled professionals. They help all students achieve by bringing culture and hands-on learning into the classroom every day. Through our focus on inquiry-based learning, Pan American is creating the next generation of strong, internationally-minded, bilingual leaders in our community.

A unique feature of Pan American Academy is our implementation of a dual language program. All students in kindergarten through eighth grade participate in the dual language program. Our students will learn to speak, read and write in English and Spanish. We provide a biliterate, bicultural, academically enriched program in English and Spanish that enables students to make the most of their individual talents.

As an authorized IB World School, we have been authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) to implement the Primary Years Programme (PYP) curriculum in grades K through 4 and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in grades 5 through 8. Our curriculum aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

Parents at Pan American Academy Charter School are encouraged and expected to be a part of their children's schooling. We want you to feel comfortable at the school, and help us to help your child learn, grow, and gain a global perspective that teaches them to interact and learn effectively throughout their lives.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## COVID-19 Mitigation

As we continue to respond to the global Coronavirus Pandemic, Pan American Academy Charter School will cooperate with local and state health department officials and medical experts in developing procedures for mitigating the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our school. All students and staff at Pan American Academy are required to adhere to rules, procedures and behavior expectations set forth in this Handbook. Should additional guidelines be developed, modifications will be communicated to all stakeholders.

## School Board of Trustees

Brenda L. Marrero, Esq., Board Chair  
Nelson Flores, Ph.D., Vice Chair  
Dana Espinosa, Secretary & Parent Representative  
Donna L. Nuccio, Treasurer  
Jessika Garcia, Parent Representative

Joseph DuCette, Ph.D.  
Caroline C. Gorman, Esq.  
VACANCY  
VACANCY

## School Board Meetings

The monthly School Board meetings for the Pan American Academy Charter School Board of Trustees are generally held on the third Monday of each month at 4:30 p.m. Meetings are held in-person and onsite in the iMedia Center, 3rd Floor. In an effort to mitigate COVID19 transmission, meetings may be scheduled virtually with links provided upon request from the school board liaison.

## Concerns Resolution Process

Situations or incidents may occur that cause parent concern. We want to provide a convenient and meaningful way for parents to meet and discuss concerns with school officials. Parents are requested to complete a Parent Concern Form at [Resources – Pan American Academy Charter School](#). The Principals or other appropriate administrator will investigate the concern as necessary and hold a conference with the student or parent within five (5) days after receipt of the Form or as soon thereafter as is practicable.

Parents and students are encouraged to resolve concerns and disputes about school policy and decisions made by teachers, staff and administration in an informal manner by requesting a conference to discuss the issue. If concerns are not remedied in a manner satisfactory to the parents or student, further grievance is available by addressing the PAACS Board of Trustees by registering for public comment at a public board meeting.

## Board Accessibility: Public Comment Procedures

The Board of Trustees recognizes the value to school governance of public comment on educational issues and the importance of involving members of the public in Board meetings. In order to permit fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board will provide a period for public participation at every public meeting of the Board. Public comment will be limited to a topic related to the operation of the Pan American Academy Charter School. Written requests to address the Board must be submitted to the Board Liaison 24 hours prior to the Board meeting. The request is to be submitted via the school website at [Board of Directors Public Comment](#) or by U.S. mail or hand delivery to:

Lisandra Kelly  
Pan American Academy Charter School  
2830 North American Street Philadelphia, PA 19133  
ATTN: Board of Trustees Public Comment Request

The request must include the topic which will be addressed, identify the person addressing the Board and a copy of the comment. The following rules govern the public participation process:

- Time allotted for public comment at any meeting shall be limited to a total of thirty minutes.
- Time allotted to an individual or party/representative of a group to address the Board of Trustees is limited to three (3) minutes. However, written comments may be presented and considered by the board. Written comments shall be read into the record at the board meeting, but such reading shall be limited to three (3) minutes.
- An individual or party/representative of a group may address the Board one time per meeting on a particular topic. The individual or party/representative of a group may, at the sole discretion of the Board Chair, address the Board a second time only after all individuals or parties/representatives have been heard and sufficient meeting time remains.
- Individuals making comments must state their name, place of residence and identify the topic they wish to address.
- All comments are to be directed to the Chair. Board members and administrators will not respond to public comment during the comment period.

## Equal Opportunity/Anti-Discrimination Policy

PAACS is committed to maintaining an education and workplace environment for all school community members that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation. The members of the Charter School community include the Charter School's students, Board of Trustees, employees, administration, faculty, staff, school volunteers, parties under contract to perform work for or with the Charter School, and family members participating in school meetings or school-sponsored activities.

The Charter School does not exclude from participation, deny the benefits of the Charter School from or otherwise discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), age, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic background, marital status, pregnancy, disability, veteran/military status, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies or in its programs and activities.

The Board also declares it to be the policy of this Charter School to comply with federal law and regulations under Title IX prohibiting sexual harassment, which is a form of unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex. Inquiries regarding the application of Title IX to the Charter School may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education.

Discrimination in any of its forms is inconsistent with the rights of students and the mission and educational goals of the Charter School and is prohibited at or during school-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities. Violations of this policy, including acts of retaliation as described in this handbook or board-adopted policy, or knowingly providing false information, may result in disciplinary consequences under other Board policies or the Charter School's student code of conduct.

More information related to PAACS non-discrimination policies and procedures can be found on the school's website.

## Policies and Procedures

The Board of Trustees of the Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS) is responsible for establishing policies under which the school operates. This Student and Family Handbook includes the school's Code of Conduct adopted to apprise students, parents, and school personnel of the conduct and behavior required of all students to ensure a safe learning environment. These rules are intended to promote self-respect, respect for others and respect for property. It is therefore expected that all students enrolled herein abide by all school policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct and accept responsibility for their actions and behavior.

## Enrollment

Pan American Academy Charter School offers admission for available openings in grades K-8. PAACS offers available slots using a random lottery selection process and a numbered waiting list system. Applications to PAACS are valid only for the school year of the application. Applicants not awarded admission are placed on the waiting list for the duration of the school year. The waiting list does not roll over to the next school year. Students must reapply for the next school year. Slots are determined by current enrollment numbers.

### How to Apply

Families can obtain and apply for admission online at [ApplyPhillyCharter.org](http://ApplyPhillyCharter.org) or apply via the Apply Philly Charter toll-free number, 1-800-891-3999. Families are welcome to visit the School for assistance, and families will be provided with information on how to apply and, subject to availability, a computer or tablet to access [ApplyPhillyCharter.org](http://ApplyPhillyCharter.org). The online application is available for translation into Spanish.

### Lottery and Enrollment Preference

Preference in the enrollment and waiting list process is given as follows:

- Sibling Preference: To siblings of students presently enrolled in the charter school.
- Area Preference: To students living in the 19133 or 19134 zip code area.
- Founding Member: A child of a member of the Pan American Academy Charter School’s founding board.

### Required Documentation for Enrollment and Timeline

- Proof of Age
- Proof of Residency
- Record of Required Immunizations
- Act 26 Form / Parent Registration Form
- Home Language Survey

Students who submit these five required documents by the enrollment deadline are considered enrolled for the 2023-2024 school year.

DATE	ENROLLMENT PROCESS
Friday, September 23, 2022	Apply Philly Charter application window opens
Monday, January 23, 2023	Apply Philly Charter application window closes
Wednesday, February 8, 2023	Apply Philly Charter Admissions lottery held
Friday, February 10, 2023	Families notified of lottery results via phone, email, text message, and/or standard mail.

## Students Experiencing Homelessness - McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act guarantees a free and appropriate public education for all homeless children and youth. “Homeless” is defined as anyone lacking a fixed, adequate, regular nighttime residence. The law makes sure that these students receive a free and suitable public education by removing barriers to school enrollment and daily participation in school activities. If you are experiencing homelessness or feel you qualify as homeless based on the definition above, please contact the school’s social worker for more information and to discuss your situation to determine if you qualify for additional support/services. PAACS School Social Worker can be reached at [studentservices@panamcs.org](mailto:studentservices@panamcs.org) or by calling 215-425-1212.

## Withdrawal from School

If a student moves or must withdraw from school during the school year, parents/guardians must complete a withdrawal form. The form is available at the school office. When possible, parents/guardians should provide a minimum of two



weeks' notice of the withdrawal. At the time of withdrawal, all student technology equipment must be returned to the school. The school can then provide a printout of the student's current classes and grades. Withdrawal from PAACS means that the student will no longer be on PAACS's enrollment rolls or entitled to educational services at PAACS, and, on the effective date of the withdrawal, the student shall be considered a student of his/her school district of residence.

## Emergency Contact Notification and Change of Address

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the office of any changes in emergency contacts, change of address, phone number, or child-custody status to ensure that the school has accurate and up-to-date information. Parents/guardians are requested to provide the school with a phone number where they can be reached during the school day.

## Child Nutrition Services and Wellness

PAACS understands that good nutrition is essential to a student's health and development. We encourage our students to eat nutritious school meals in an effort to enable each student to concentrate and learn. Our Wellness Policy guides us in promoting physical activity and healthy nutrition to our school community. The school is committed to promoting and protecting children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by promoting healthy eating habits, hygiene, and physical activity.

### School Meals

Breakfast and lunch are served at no cost to all students regardless of income. PAACS falls under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) – a provision from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) with high poverty rates to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. CEP eliminates the burden of collecting household applications to determine eligibility for school meals.

### School Menus

Our monthly menus can be found on the school's website by clicking the menu tab on the calendar or going directly to: [Calendar](#)

### Food Allergies/Special Dietary Needs

We are a nut-free school. Foods containing peanuts or tree nuts are NOT permitted in the building. Parents are required to inform the school nurse and the classroom teacher of any food allergies and dietary recommendations for their children. If special dietary needs are required, a request in writing must be provided by the physician.

### Lunches and Snacks from Home

- Fast food, candy, soda and beverages high in sugar or any meals that interfere with nutritional standards are not permitted.
- Must be ready-to-eat meals. Meals will not be heated and prepared for individual students.
- Meals may not be shared with other students.
- Glass containers are not permitted.

### Physical Education and Activity

Physical activity will be offered to all students in Physical Education class and integrated across the curriculum with activities that are safe, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate for all students. In addition, when available, the school will offer the opportunity to join athletic clubs or other extracurricular activities. These activities will be available to students who demonstrate interest, are team players, and follow the Pan American behavioral expectations.

## Immunization Requirements

Parents/guardians must provide documentation of immunizations and/or a written plan from their child's doctor before the start of the current school year. Under the law, if documentation is not provided prior to the start of school, then the child may be excluded from school. We do not want to exclude any student, so we are committed to work with families to support them in ensuring requirements are met. Please work with your medical provider or the PA Department of Health (PaDOH) immunization clinic to ensure all immunizations have been given. Please contact the school nurse at [nurse@panamcs.org](mailto:nurse@panamcs.org) or 215-425-1212 if you need help. Exemptions for medical, philosophical or religious reasons remain in place under the new regulations.

## School Health Services

Pan American Academy Charter School provides a health services program to appraise, protect and promote the health of students. Our dedicated Wellness Center is open Monday through Friday when school is in session. Care for students on a daily basis is provided by a health room aide and/or licensed practical nurse (LPN) under the guidance and direction of the school registered nurse (RN) who may or may not be on campus full-time. The school RN has the knowledge, education, experience and authority to manage and provide the full range of health services in the education system. The ultimate goal of school nursing practice is to support students' optimal state of health to promote the capacity for successful learning.

### Health Records

Health records are maintained in the Wellness Center for each student. It is important that regular updates to student records be received from parents or guardians regarding the following:

- Change in health status
- Medications a child may currently be taking
- Long-term medication therapy
- Medication that has been discontinued
- Any recent hospitalizations for medical treatment or surgery
- Routine immunizations or booster information.

### Medications in School

Pan American Academy Charter School complies with all regulations concerning the dispensation of medicines and requires that all parents do the same. Students may not possess any prescription or non-prescription medication. Students found with prescription or non-prescription medication in their possession will face immediate disciplinary action. All prescription and non-prescription medication must be turned over to the Wellness Center staff with appropriate paperwork for dissemination.

Medications should be dispensed at home as prescribed by your healthcare provider. If your child needs medication dispensed during school hours, a Medical & Parental Consent Form must be completed. The form is available in the office and must be signed by the parent and by the student's physician. Medication must be provided in the original container with accurate content and dosage information on the label. All medication must be checked into the office. (Those students with inhalers must also leave the inhaler in the Wellness Center)

### School Health Mandated Screenings/Examinations

Pennsylvania Health Law mandates that all students have complete immunization records upon entering school (at any grade). State mandated screenings are completed in all grades. These include vision screening and height/weight measurements. Hearing is checked in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh and eleventh grades. Scoliosis screenings are performed in sixth and seventh grades. Should a problem be detected in any of the screenings, parents/guardians will be notified.

Pennsylvania Health Law requires a physical examination upon:

- Entrance to school (kindergarten or first grade)
- Sixth grade
- Eleventh grade

Dental examinations are required upon:

- Entrance to school
- Third grade
- Seventh grades

Mandated examinations and screenings are also required if your child's health file is missing the mandates at the required grades.

**Health Issues and Use of the Health Room**

Students too ill to remain in class must request permission from their teacher to report to the health room for evaluation. A parent will be contacted if the student needs to go home. Students may not remain in school with these conditions:

- temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- vomiting
- unknown rash
- diarrhea
- active head lice

Please be sure the school has up-to-date contact information.

The student must be fever-free without the aid of medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Children identified with health-related issues will be referred to the school nurse for follow-up. The school nurse may contact the parent for assistance in developing an individualized healthcare plan for the student.

**Student Injuries**

Every effort is made to keep our students safe while on our campuses. However, a student can still be injured during school activities. All student injuries must be reported to school staff as soon as possible for first aid and documentation purposes. Please talk to your children about the importance of reporting all injuries to the school staff. In the event of a medical emergency at school, staff will call 911. Every effort will be made to contact the student's parent/ guardian and emergency contacts provided to the school. Please ensure that all parent/ guardian and emergency contact information is current by providing updates through the school website or calling the main office.

**Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect**

Pennsylvania law requires that all school employees must report to the Department of Human Services any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. PAACS employees (as well as contracted professionals) are required to make a report when they have reason to suspect that a student is a victim of child abuse (including physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse). When staff members suspect child abuse, they are required to notify the Commonwealth's child abuse hotline either via telephone or online written report. Following the report, staff members are required to notify the school counselor, who is the PAACS staff member responsible for following up on child abuse reports. After a call to Childline is made, the school counselor may choose to alert the parents/guardians that a report was made or may choose to not alert them, depending on the circumstances.

All discussions of suspected child abuse shall be confidential. In limited circumstances, the school counselor may disclose information to staff on a "need to know" basis if doing so would be in the best interest of the child or otherwise promote

the health, welfare, and/or safety of the school environment. Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

1. Unusual bruising, marks or cuts on the child's body
2. Severe verbal reprimands
3. Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
4. Transporting a child without the proper child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
5. Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
6. Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
7. Leaving a child unattended in a car
8. Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
9. Sending a sick child to school overmedicated to hide symptoms, which typically would require the child be kept at home until symptoms subside
10. Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

## Safe2Say Something

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to "say something" BEFORE it is too late. With Safe2Say Something, it's easy and confidential to report safety concerns to help prevent violence and tragedies.

**Safe2Say Something is a school safety program that will save lives.** The Safe2Say system is an anonymous way for you to submit a tip to your school. You do not need to share your name, phone number or anything unless you want to.

### What types of things should I report?

If it makes you uncomfortable, submit a tip. It will be up to your school to determine what the next steps are. Do you think someone is going to harm themselves? Did you see something scary that concerns you online? Submit this kind of thing. Safe2Say Something is the easiest way to let someone know that there is a problem and let them handle it. The best part is, they will never know who it was that submitted it. It's that simple.

### Here's how it works:

- Submit an anonymous tip report through the Safe2SaySomething system
- Tip Line: **1-844-SAF2SAY (723-2729)**
- Website: <https://www.saf2sayaypa.org>
- Crisis center reviews, assesses and processes all submissions
- Crisis center sends all submissions to school administration and/or law enforcement for intervention
- If needed, crisis center may contact tipster anonymously through the app

## Acceptable Internet Use

Pan American Academy Charter School provides access to various computer resources and the internet. These resources are available to enhance the learning process in a supportive school environment and to achieve quality learning outcomes for our students. The school employs technological protections that filter or block all internet traffic that contains certain visual depictions deemed obscene, pornographic or harmful to minors in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) passed by Congress in October of 2000. The school expects students to become familiar with these guidelines for use of the computers. Do not allow other household members to use school issued devices for personal matters not related to the child's education. For the benefit of all users, students are expected to observe the following:

Students may not:

- Use the computer and internet for anything other than educational purposes.
- Enter a computer room unless a teacher is present.
- Play games, use the internet for entertainment, personal email, or engage in activities other than those which are school related.
- Tamper with the computer system. It is forbidden to seek access to restricted areas of the computer network.
- Swap computer equipment around unless expressly directed by a teacher (i.e. no changing of keyboards, mice or other equipment from one computer to another).
- Attempt to change or tamper with the computer in any way; this includes changing screen savers, desktop pictures, internet home pages, etc.
- Attempt to view blocked internet pages or bypass security in any way.
- Reveal any private information such as one's own or another person's address, phone number, etc.
- Attempt to retrieve, view or distribute any obscene, offensive, pornographic or illegal material.
- Threaten, abuse or harass any other user.
- Bring the school into disrespect in any way whatsoever.
- Download or print information without permission from the teacher.
- Access personal email accounts.

NOTE: Failure to comply with the policy will result in loss of computer privileges.

## Student Media Release

By acknowledging the Student Media Release via the Enrollment Form, the parent/guardian gives permission to Pan American Academy Charter School to publish photos/images of their child on the school website, Twitter, YouTube or other social news/media websites that promote the goals and objectives of the school. Additionally, student work product may be displayed in the school building.

By granting this permission, the parent/guardian understands that Pan American Academy Charter School may use photos/images/videos of their child for purposes such as celebrating achievements and publicizing education events, as deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

The parent/guardian further understands that their child may be named, or other personally identifiable information could be used with any photo/image/video.

Parent/Guardian consent provided on the Student Media Release form remains in effect for the duration of the student's enrollment at PAACS or until revoked by the Parent/Guardian. Parents/guardians who wish to revoke the use of their child's name, image, or likeness and/or display of their student's work should email [information@panamcs.org](mailto:information@panamcs.org) or call the main office, who will immediately notify the respective individuals. The requested rescission will take effect upon the school's receipt of notification.

## Parent Code of Conduct

Pan American Academy requires the parents/guardians of enrolled children to behave at all times in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of our goals is to provide the most appropriate learning environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

Parents/guardians of enrolled children at Pan American Academy Charter School may not threaten an employee, child, other parent or adult associated with Pan American Academy at any time. Interactions between program staff and other families should always remain professional. In the event of a conflict or differences in opinion the Principal will schedule a conference with the parent and discuss situation and conflict resolution options. Threats

of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be addressed by temporary or permanent restriction from school grounds. Pan American Academy Charter School does not support or condone the use of corporal punishment by a parent/guardian; such acts are not permitted on the school campus. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are strictly prohibited from correcting or disciplining a child that is not their own. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher or the Principal.

Furthermore, it is inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought directly to our attention. At that point we will address the issue with the other person should it be deemed necessary. Although you may be curious about the outcome of such a conversation, we are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you, and you may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the School.

## Parent Access to Student Records

In the normal course of the school year, many parents stop into the school office and request their child's school records. In the majority of cases this is no problem, and the release of records is done with ease. It can take up to 72 hours to complete a request for records. Please allow for this processing time when making a request for records.

In the case of separated or divorced parents, the Custody and Grandparent Visitation Act must be applied. This law states that in cases where parents are separated or divorced, the school must provide access to their child's records...unless the custodial parent can provide a court order denying such access to the non-custodial parent. In order to comply with the law and provide services to parents, the school will use the following procedure for parental access to student records:

1. Parents should come into the office and request to see their child's records. The records will be reviewed in the presence of the school principal or his/her designee. The purpose of this is not to delay the review, but to help the parent understand the information contained in the records, to answer questions or to correct errors, if any, found in the records.
2. In cases where the parents are separated or divorced, the parent who has custody should provide the school with legal proof of that custody.
3. When the non-custodial parent requests access to a student's records, the school will first contact the custodial parent and apprise that parent of the request. The custodial parent will have five days to get a court order denying access to the child's records by the non-custodial parent. If after five days no court order is provided to the school, the non-custodial parent will be granted access to the child's records as outlined in number one above.
4. In cases where the parents are separated, and custody has not been determined by the courts, the school has no choice but to provide access of student records to both parents. Procedures outlined in number one above will be used.

## SCHEDULES AND OPERATIONS

### Building Access

For security reasons, all entrances to the building are locked. The official school entrance is in the front of the building, located at American and Cambria Streets. There is a security camera at this entrance. Ring the buzzer, and the front desk attendant will let you in after you have identified yourself by name. You must sign in and obtain visitor's clearance prior to going to other locations in the building. Please have a valid ID such as a driver's license or other state

identification with you to sign into our visitor system. All students, parents, visitors, and employees will be required to follow PAACS’s COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan. The Health and Safety Plan is available on the school’s website, and may change from time to time as the school year progresses. Parents are encouraged to make appointments for the purpose of COVID19 mitigation and to reduce wait time.

## School and Office Hours

School Day Start Time	School Day End Time
8:05am	3:15pm

**The main office will be open from 8:30am until 2:30pm daily.** Please note that the main office and faculty begin preparation for student dismissal and support with supervision between 2:30-3:25pm. Therefore, early dismissals are only granted before 2:30pm and changes to student bus transport/daycare pickup should be communicated before 2:30pm. Please note that availability of staff is limited during this time.

## Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Students are expected to attend school every day and to arrive on time. It is also expected that students will be picked up on time at dismissal.

### Morning Arrival

Gates open at 7:50am. Parents are not permitted to enter through the gate during morning dropoff. Students arriving before 7:50 am must remain under the direct supervision of their parent(s), outside of the gates. Staff supervision is not provided before 7:50am. Therefore, parents and escorts may not drop off students before 7:50 am.

Parents who are dropping students off by car must use the designated drop off area that is marked by orange cones on American Street. Please enter the drop-off line to ensure that your child is dropped off safely. Attempting to bypass this line will block traffic and will not be a safe drop-off point for your child. As another safety precaution, please have your child prepared to exit the vehicle on the passenger side, directly onto the sidewalk.

Please follow the “Kiss and Go” procedure, which is to kiss your child, drop them off and keep going. Be sure that your child has everything they need in hand before entering the drop-off line to ensure that the line moves quickly. The driver may not park and leave the car in the drop-off lane.

<b>Kindergarten</b>	3rd Street Gate and into Main Building <i>(Only kindergarten students and their siblings will be permitted to enter this gate)</i>
<b>Grades 1-4</b>	American Street Gate and into Annex <i>(NO kindergarten students will be permitted to enter this gate)</i>
<b>Grades 5-8</b>	American Street Gate and into Student Cafeteria

### Late Arrival to School

The Gates will remain open until 8:15 am. Students will be considered late after this time. They may enter the school building using the Main Entrance on American Street. They will be checked in by a staff member upon arrival, receive a late pass and go to their classroom. Excessive lateness may result in a referral to Student Services.

### End of Day Dismissal

The school day ends at 3:15pm with all students out of the building or to their designated areas of dismissal. Teachers may not release a student in grades K-4 unless the designated adult or sibling of the student has come to the line. Students will not be sent out from the schoolyard to parents waiting in cars. Once an adult approaches the student’s class line, the students must touch elbows with the teacher and indicate who is there to pick them up.

<b>Kindergarten</b>	Annex gate on 3rd Street. Parents will pick up students in the Kindergarten Schoolyard Area and proceed to exit through the 3rd Street closest to the corner on Cambria St.
<b>Grades 1-4</b>	American Street Gate. Parents will enter the school yard and meet their child's class line.
<b>Grades 5-8</b>	Front Entrance. Students are released on their own.

### **Inclement Weather Dismissal**

<b>Kindergarten</b>	3rd Street Gate. Parents will enter the building and report to the classroom.
<b>Grades 1-4</b>	American Street Gate. Parents will enter the school yard and report to the Annex.
<b>Grades 5-8</b>	Front Entrance. Students are released on their own.

### Traffic Safety

Please be mindful to slow down when entering and exiting campus, and pay close attention to our Safety Monitors who provide guidance and direction during arrival and dismissal. Please do not double park on American Street and do not park in the bus lane on Cambria Street. Parking tickets will be issued for cars double parked or in the bus lane. Vehicles should park in legal parking spaces located on American, Somerset, or Cambria Streets. If your child is walking to and from school, please reiterate and reinforce the importance of obeying all pedestrian traffic rules. This includes walking on sidewalks, using crosswalks and adhering to all stop signs and stop lights.

### Release of Students

As a school staff, we need to know to whom we are releasing each child. If a child wishes to go with someone else, we must have **written permission** for this, unless the pick-up person is listed on your child's emergency contact form. Photo identification of individuals other than the parent, may be requested at time of pickup. We are unable to release students via verbal permission (over the phone) or by fax. Students who walk or ride public transportation to and from school do so at their own risk, and their mode of transportation should be indicated on the emergency contact form. The school does not provide crossing guards for all of its intersections.

### Late Pickup

There are infrequent occasions when a child is not picked up. If that happens, we will call the parents/guardians listed on the emergency contact form and then the emergency contact person. Parents arriving late will enter through the main entrance. Parents/guardians will be required to sign the late pickup register when they pick up their child. If no one can be reached, and an hour has passed, the school has no choice but to call the police and have the police pick up the child. In most cases, the police will then turn the child over to Social Services. Excessive late pickups may result in counseling referrals.

### Transportation

Bus transportation is provided by the School District of Philadelphia for grades 1-6. Eligible students in grades 7 and 8 are provided with SEPTA Fare Cards. Please contact the office for information if your family needs transportation services. Families should advise teachers of the usual dismissal procedure (school bus, SEPTA, walking home, or pick-up) for each student. As a general rule, students that are on the bus in the morning, will be placed on the bus in the afternoon. If a change is required, we ask that families call the office prior to noon to inform the school or to provide a written note to the student's teacher.



## Bus Schedules

Bus schedules, routes and bus stops are determined and provided by the School District of Philadelphia's Department of Transportation. The Transportation Dispatch Department is staffed with five customer service representatives that are available to answer your questions from 5:30am until the last student is off the bus and is safely home. To reach Dispatchers, call 215-400-4350 and choose from the menu options. Visit [Transportation – The School District of Philadelphia](#) for more information.

## Bus Riding Expectations

Students are expected to follow the same behavior expectations as they do while inside the school, and must follow any rules established by the busdriver or School District. Students are recommended to wear a mask at all times while on the school bus. Because our students' safety is of utmost importance to us, we ask that you review with your child the expected behaviors of all students while riding the school bus. These expectations and the accompanying consequences will be strictly enforced. Students are to expected to:

- remain seated and facing the front of the bus at all times
- to be respectful of one another and the bus driver at all times
- keep their hands and all belongings inside the bus
- refrain from arguing, cursing and using physical aggression
- not eat or drink on the bus

Please be advised that failure to adhere to the above expectations will result in consequences. These consequences are 1 to 3-day suspensions from riding the bus as well serving after school detentions. Repeated occurrences of not meeting expectations on the bus will result in expulsion from the bus.

## Breakfast, Lunch and Recess

Breakfast and lunch are typically provided in the student cafeteria. Breakfast is served daily from 7:50am to 8:10am. All K–8 students go outside for recess, unless there is inclement weather. The lunch and recess schedule is as follows:

Grades	Monday-Friday
2nd & 3rd	10:45am - 11:30am
Kindergarten & 1st	11:30am - 12:15pm
6th, 7th & 8th	12:15pm - 1:00pm
4th	1:00pm - 1:45pm
5th	1:30pm - 2:15pm

## Lunch and Recess Student Expectations

- Students will use their inside voices in the cafeteria
- Students will stay in their seats unless they have permission to leave them
- Students will listen and follow directions given by all adults in the cafeteria and schoolyard
- Students will clean up after themselves, and respect the school by keeping the cafeteria and bathrooms clean
- Students will keep hands, feet, and body to themselves
- Classes will be dismissed to recess when they demonstrate that they are ready to exit the cafeteria.
  - Students are quiet
  - Tables/floor has been cleaned of all trash and other items

Classes that follow these expectations at each lunch will receive rewards and points for prizes.

## School Trips, Special Events and Parent Volunteer Requirements

School trips are decided upon based on current content lessons, the academic program and performance standards. Buses will be scheduled by the school or public transportation will be used when possible. Private vehicles may not be used to transport students. According to Pennsylvania law, all parents attending a class trip as a chaperone or working in the school as a volunteer must have both PA criminal and child abuse clearances (FBI clearance if parent has resided in PA for less than 10 years). Please see main office staff for information about obtaining these clearances. No student will be permitted to attend any designated class trip unless an authorized parental permission form is on file with the classroom teacher and/or office. Information will be provided to parents regarding: the date of trip, location, exact cost per student, departure and arrival times, and signatures required to attend the trip. Parents will be given sufficient notification for all trips in order to make any arrangements for payment. No student shall be excluded from a trip due to his or her inability to pay.

If any student exhibits behavior that would deem it unsafe to take them, a parent will be requested to accompany the student. If a parent or responsible adult cannot attend, the teacher will make alternative class arrangements for the student(s).

## Birthdays Celebrations

To celebrate your child's birthday, the school adheres to the following guidelines:

- We refrain from celebrating with food due to the wide range of allergies and dietary restrictions within each classroom. Non-food items for the whole class are welcome (such as pencils, bookmarks, fun erasers, party favors, etc.) Balloons are not permitted.
- Birthday celebrations will be limited to the class. Teachers will recognize student birthdays with classroom-based activities, for example: student choice read aloud, show-and-tell, book share, or other student-centered activity.
- To respect the feelings of all students, when sending out invitations, we ask that you mail them, hand deliver them to the friends' homes, or make email or phone invitations. We are not able to forward personal emails from one family to another family or families. Invitations may not be handed out at school including before/after in line-up unless you are inviting the entire class.

## Emergency Drills

Emergency Procedures State Law requires that emergency drills be held periodically throughout the school year. Monthly fire drills and other periodic emergency preparedness drills will be held throughout the school year. Students practice fire drills, shelter-in-place, and lock down drills under the guidance of school personnel.

### **Evacuation/Fire Drills– students will follow these procedures:**

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds.
2. Walk to the assigned place briskly, in a single file line, and in silence.
3. Stand in a single file line, facing away from the building.
4. Return to the building when the signal is given.

### **Shelter-In-Place– students will follow these procedures:**

1. Rise in silence when the message is given.
2. Walk briskly to the assigned place in a single file line.
3. Sit in the assigned class area in silence.
4. Return to the classroom when the designated signal is given.

### **“Lock Down” Drills– students will follow these procedures:**

1. Listen for the CODE
2. Stay in the room and sit on the floor away from the door.
3. All doors are locked and will remain locked until an "all clear" announcement is made.

## Emergency School Cancellations

PAACS closely follows the School District of Philadelphia regarding the closure, delays and early dismissals of schools. If this happens before or during the school day, it will be announced via local media outlets (television and radio stations). You will receive an automated call and/or email/text message. In addition, check for updates on PAACS's website, [www.panamcs.org](http://www.panamcs.org).

If we close for any reason after the beginning of school, we will only release students according to our "[Release of Students](#)" procedure. In the event of an early dismissal, students will be sent home via their normal means of transportation, unless otherwise notified. (For example, if an early dismissal is called on a Tuesday, and your child is typically a bus rider on a Tuesday, we will send them on the bus, unless parents notify the office.)

**\*\*It is important that parents have an emergency plan in place in the event of an unexpected emergency dismissal. Parents must update changes in phone numbers and e-mail addresses for emergency contact immediately and all students should be aware of family plans in the case of an emergency.**

## Communication

Every effort should be made to keep open lines of communication. Oftentimes, the school sends communications and information that are important for families to read. Communication and information is provided via:

1. School Messenger (phone/texts/emails)
2. Class Dojo (communication app)
3. School Website ([panamcs.org](http://panamcs.org))
4. Social Media - [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) @panamcs2008

Additionally, teachers will provide parents their school-issued phone numbers to assist with communication. Calls or texts before or after business hours or during instructional time, may not be answered right away. Please allow a 24-hour response time. In the event of an emergency or urgent matter, please call the main office at 215-425-1212.

### **Appointments with Faculty Members**

Parents/guardians are required to make an appointment to see their child's teacher. Communicating through an email or a note sent with the child requesting a certain day or time for a conference will suffice. The teacher will respond to the parent/guardian as soon as possible to confirm or reschedule the appointment. Meetings can only be held during school hours, if agreed upon by staff and parent.

### **Appointments with the CEO or Principals**

The CEO or Principals are available before or during the school day to meet with parents who request an appointment. Appointments may be requested in writing, email, or by phone. The CEO or Principal will respond to the parent/guardian as soon as possible to confirm or reschedule the appointment.

### **Tips for Staying Involved**

- Check Class Dojo each day for news and updates
- Use [www.panamcs.org](http://www.panamcs.org) as a resource (There's a calendar!)
- Attend school events and workshops – both social and academic
- Make sure homework and school assignments are completed
- Sync our events calendar to your Google calendar
- Read all notices sent home or via email
- Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences – December & March
- Follow us on Social Media!
- Volunteer as a chaperone for school trips
- Contribute financially to fundraisers, no matter how big or small
- Spread the Pan American Academy Charter School love and let other families know about our wonderful school!

# INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

## Student Achievement

At Pan American Academy we believe in achieving our goals through a rigorous curriculum and a strong school community. Pan American Academy educates internationally minded students who strive to create a more harmonious world. As an IB World School, Pan American Academy inspires excellence by expanding students' perspectives and building strong character. The Student Services department is the hub that connects students, families, teachers and the community with the necessary resources and supports to assure the academic, social, behavioral and emotional well-being and success of all students.

## Dual Language Program

Pan American Academy Charter School prides itself in its Dual Language Program. The intended outcome of the dual language program is to graduate bilingual students who can read, write and speak proficiently in English and Spanish. Parents enrolling their children at our school must accept the dual language curriculum and the responsibilities that come with this unique school environment.

Proficiency in two languages is deemed the most important mission of the Pan American Academy Charter School, as this would provide our students with a decided advantage in today's highly competitive global workplace. More importantly, becoming multicultural allows our students to learn about and honor Latino cultural and historical roots and take pride in the contributions and traditions of Latino/Caribbean ancestry.

The dual language program is currently being implemented schoolwide. At present, the program consists of a 50/50 model. Children spend 50% of their day learning in Spanish and 50% of their day learning in English. Students will receive additional Spanish instruction from a language support teacher. Teachers integrate Spanish and culture into everyday classroom activities.

## International Baccalaureate

Pan American Academy Charter School is a recognized International Baccalaureate World school offering both the Primary and Middle Years programmes. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are a community of learners participating in the IB Primary Years Programme, which focuses on the development of the whole child. Students in grades 6 to 8 are a part of the IB Middle Years Programme, developing life skills and critical thinking abilities through interrelated academic courses. All students participate in an inquiry based curriculum in two languages; English and Spanish. The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

## Grading Practices and Scale

Common grading practices provide specific, clear learning goals for students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers and administrators regarding what a student must know and be able to do to master the content of a course. They allow teachers to be consistent with common best practices from grading based on educational research. Most importantly, standard grading practices provide tremendous clarity for students and families as to what the grading criteria and expectations are between and amongst teachers and courses. The chart below reflects the letter grade assigned to each numerical percentage and is applied to all subject areas.

<b>Advanced (A)</b>	<b>Proficient (P)</b>	<b>Basic (B)</b>	<b>Below Basic (BB)</b>
<b>93-100</b>	<b>80-92</b>	<b>66-79</b>	<b>0-65</b>

## PowerSchool Parent Portal

PAACS' Parent Portal allows parents to access their child's classroom progress, homework, assignments, and teacher comments. A notification letter containing a school generated login credential will be sent to parents. Please keep this information in a secure place. [Visit the PowerSchool Parent Portal here.](#)

## Promotion Requirements

The Board recognizes that the emotional, social, physical and educational growth of students will vary and that students should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate to their needs at various stages of their growth.

A student shall be promoted when s/he has successfully:

- Completed the course requirements at the presently assigned grade.
- Achieved the academic standards established for the present level, based on the professional judgment of his/her teachers and the results of assessment.
- Demonstrated proficiency to move ahead to the educational program of the next level.
- Demonstrated the degree of social, emotional and physical maturation necessary for successful learning experience at the next learning level.

The recommendation of the classroom teacher shall be weighted heavily in determining promotion or retention of a student. Parents shall be informed well in advance of the possibility of retention of a student. Principals will have final authority for determining the promotion or retention of each student.

## Homework

Homework is an essential part of a student's learning experience. Homework is intended to expand and reinforce learning skills presented in class. Generally, homework is assigned Monday through Thursday. However, students may be assigned homework on a Friday to be completed over the weekend. Included in homework every night is a period of quiet reading, we want to help children learn to love books.

Each time students do not complete a homework assignment, their overall grade suffers. Parents are able to check homework and other grades via the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

## Accountability

If students do not meet their responsibilities for completing homework as directed by the teacher, the consequences will be immediate and meaningful. For example:

- Parents will be informed about missed assignments.
- Students may be required to stay after school.
- Students may receive a grade of Incomplete until the work is completed because failure is not an option.
- Students will work with teachers to establish a plan for work completion.

## Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is the academic standard for all IB students. Each student must develop and turn in his /her own original work for all assignments. Many times, it is necessary to mention—or reference—the work of someone else. In these cases, credit must always be given to the original source or author, as that information is their “intellectual property.” This includes all forms of student work including handwritten, typed, and other digitally created work. All students should take accurate notes, and keep drafts of papers, projects, assignments, etc., to ensure that one's submitted work is academically honest. Acceptable forms of official documentation of sources include but are not limited to MLA style citations.

Each student is expected to participate and give credit to the source referenced within their work. We believe that in order to achieve this, it is important that we focus on educating our students to be principled, to recognize and celebrate authentic student work, and to take pride in promoting student learning through inquiry that includes responsible use of information and communication of original work.

### **Works Cited**

In an effort to educate our school community and promote the proper ways to cite work, students will use MLA style. MLA (Modern Language Association) style is commonly used to write papers and cite sources. With the support of all teachers the ELA/SLA teacher will introduce and continue to support students in using the appropriate format.

### **Technology**

Students are provided with a school issued iPad in order to grow 21st Century skills and reinforce concepts learned in the grades and across the curriculum. Teachers also use school approved programs and Apps to enhance their lesson plan preparation and teaching. All students will be assigned an iPad for use throughout the school day. Students will be responsible for the care and proper use of their iPad. Students are expected to bring their iPads to school daily fully charged.

All school devices are for use in school and at home to complete school-based assignments. Families should have access to reliable internet for all students. Reliable internet is defined as: 1) not a mobile phone, 2) unlimited in the household without having to pay more each month, 3) a speed that allows 2-3 people to watch videos at the same time on more than one computer, 4) accessible to students five days a week even if they attend school from different locations. If families do not have reliable internet, parents should contact the school.

### **No Expectation of Privacy**

The computers and computer accounts given to student users are to assist them in their performance of their schoolwork and for academic purposes. Students do not have an expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer system. The computer system belongs to Pan American Academy Charter School and should be used primarily for Pan American Academy Charter School educational purposes.

### **Monitoring the Online Activities of the Users**

Network monitoring tools, such as Securly, are used to monitor usage and report misconduct or unsafe behavior while students are using school issued devices regardless of where they are using their device. Home usage is monitored as well as in class usage. It is important not to let other family members use school issued devices for internet searching or streaming of any kind.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

Student Services are programs that support the overall mission of the School by ensuring that students have or attain competencies necessary to benefit from the instructional program. Student Services staff can identify and remove barriers in order for a student to benefit from instruction. Examples of student services staff are school psychologists, behavior analysts, school counselors, social workers, school nurses, and behavior support assistants.

We assist in providing developmental services through counseling, psychological, and health that support students in addressing academic, behavioral, health, personal, and social developmental issues. We provide diagnostic, intervention, and referral services to identify barriers that limit a student's success in school, engage in activities to limit/eliminate those barriers, refer to school-based professionals or community-based assistance. We also consult and coordinate services in partnerships with parents, families, staff, community resources to address barriers to educational objectives.

## Group & Individual Counseling

Group and Individual counseling is provided to students who need more extensive support than cannot be provided in a classroom setting. School social workers and counselors will not become involved in extended therapy sessions. They will, however, work to assist the students and the parents to secure the needed assistance in the community.

**Confidentiality:** Information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents, the principal or other appropriate authority where the health, safety, or welfare of the student or other person is clearly in jeopardy.

## Agency and Community Referrals

Many obstacles to a child's learning are not school oriented and they require specialized treatment. Counselors work with parents in seeking appropriate services in the community. They are also available to coordinate the services of the agency/private practitioner with that of the school.

## Universal Supports

Universal supports are interventions that are given to students who display the school-wide expectations and are provided to each student throughout the day. The three main forms of universal support are Classroom Contingencies rewards, PAACS School Store and Super Cheetah Rewards, which are driven by ClassDojo Points. ClassDojo is an online resource that helps track when students follow the school-wide expectations and IB learner profiles. Teachers use ClassDojo to give students points to acknowledge when they have met the C.A.R.E. behavior expectations.

## Special Education

Children with disabilities who need special education are entitled to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Under Pennsylvania and federal law, eligible children have a right to special education and related services provided at public expense. Pan American Academy Charter School complies with all laws governing students with disabilities and offers a wide range of support to eligible students.

You are permitted, at any time and up to once per academic year, to request that your student be evaluated to determine whether he/she has a disability and requires specialized services.

PAACS believes that all students can learn and should be supported to reach their potential. We take the necessary measures to meet the needs of individual students and to ensure that they receive a rigorous education regardless of disability. To this end, we have certified special education teachers who provide on-going support to students who have been identified as needing special education services. Our special education program complies with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), and other federal and state laws that impact student education.

### Step 1: Identification

PAACS identifies and refers students who might be eligible for special education services for evaluation using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS is a framework that uses data to help match academic, social-emotional, and behavioral assessment and instructional resources to each and every student's needs. In this tiered, data-informed framework, educators work to ensure that the majority of students respond to core instruction. Students who need additional support for enrichment or remediation are identified by data and provided that support with the right focus and intensity. Whenever a student is referred by the MTSS Team for a multi-disciplinary evaluation, PAACS must obtain written consent from a parent/guardian before the evaluation can be conducted. Please note that, if a parent/guardian consents to the evaluation of their student, they are agreeing to an evaluation of their student's eligibility for services, not to the implementation of special education services.

If parents/guardians think that their child might be eligible for special education services, they should contact the Principal/ When they make a request for an evaluation, the school will provide them with an evaluation request form to complete within ten (10) calendar days. Upon receiving the evaluation request form, the school will either issue a formal Permission to Evaluate or recommend a tiered support plan. If a formal Permission to Evaluate is recommended, the evaluation will occur within sixty (60) calendar days of the School's receipt of the signed Permission to Evaluate form. Following the completion of the evaluation,, the psychologist and team will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss the findings.

In order to qualify as a "student with a disability" under the IDEA, a Student must be found to: (1) have one or more of the following physical and/or mental disabilities: autism; deaf-blindness; deafness; emotional disturbance; a hearing impairment; an intellectual disability; multiple disabilities; an orthopedic impairment, other health impairments (e.g. ADD or ADHD); a speech or language impairment; a traumatic brain injury; a visual impairment; and/or a specific learning disability in the following areas: basic reading skills, reading comprehension, math calculations, math reasoning, listening comprehension, written expression, and/or oral expression; and (2) require specially designed instruction and/or related services as a result of his/her disability(ies).

### **Step 2: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process**

If a child is identified as having a disability and in need of special education services, the next step in the process is to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This document describes the child's needs and explains the specific services that PAACS will provide to assist them in achieving academic and/or social-emotional progress in school. The IEP details the special education, related services, specially designed instruction, accommodations/modifications, and other supports the child needs to maintain steady and ongoing progress. The IEP can be amended at any time in order to reflect the needs of the child, which may change from time to time. Either a parent/guardian or the school can initiate the process for reconvening the IEP team to amend the plan.

The IEP is written by a team of qualified professionals, and parents/guardians are critical members of the team. Parents/guardians are invited to attend all IEP meetings. Parent input is valued as it allows the team to devise an IEP that will meet the student's individual academic and/or social-emotional needs. When the student turns fourteen (14) years of age within an IEP term, they will be invited to the IEP meeting to discuss post-secondary goals and transition needs.

After the IEP is written, parents/guardians are asked to sign a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). By signing this document, the parent/guardian indicates his/her approval of the proposed program and services included in the IEP. Services will start once the NOREP is signed by the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are not required to sign the NOREP at the IEP meeting. PAACS encourages families to think deeply about the proposed services before signing the NOREP. We request that families indicate their approval of services or present clarifying questions and/or changes to the IEP/NOREP within 48 hours of the IEP meeting.

### **Step 3: Start Services and Progress Monitoring**

After the NOREP is signed, indicating approval of proposed services, the student will begin receiving the services outlined in the IEP. PAACS uses data to monitor the academic and social-emotional/behavioral growth of all students in order to determine progress towards meeting the goals outlined in their IEP. Progress monitoring reports are sent home quarterly, along with the report cards.

### **Step 4: Transition Services**

PAACS wants to ensure that all students are able to transition to secondary and post-secondary opportunities. Consideration of transition needs is required annually for all students once they reach fourteen (14) years of age.



## 504 Plan

School age children who have a disability but do not meet the eligibility criteria for an IEP may be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is an Act that prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. It assures that persons with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students. The act defines a person with a disability as anyone who: (1) has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working); (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, PAACS recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices at PAACS.

PAACS has specific responsibilities under Section 504, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and, if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational accommodations. Children who are eligible may receive a Section 504 Education Plan that details these accommodations.

## English Language Learners

PAACS is committed to provide equal educational opportunities to every student. The PAACS English Language Learners (“ELL”) program accelerates English language acquisition whose first language is not English and further assists them in becoming successful learners in the regular classroom. For more information about PAACS’s ELL program, please contact the Dean of Language.

# STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

## Purpose of the Student Code of Conduct

Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS) has high expectations for all students. In order for students to reach their potential, school should be a safe and orderly place where everyone is responsible for their conduct at all times. PAACS will not tolerate any actions from students that in any way interfere with the delivery of instruction or jeopardize the health, safety and well-being of any member of our school community. School is a place where students are expected to learn.

The Code of Conduct applies to school community members while they are in school and/or at any school sponsored activity such as a class trip or a sporting event. The Code of Conduct also applies to all students while they are traveling to and from school, using any mode of transportation (walking, school bus, SEPTA, etc.). Additionally, the Code of Conduct applies to off-grounds (virtual learning) and after-hours (including weekends) behavior if the incident impacts the school community.

## Student Uniform and Dress Code

School is a place where learning takes place. Dress can positively or negatively affect a student’s attention to the educational process. It is expected that all students will be dressed in full uniform at all times, starting on the first day of school, until the last day of classes. Full uniform must be worn for all school events unless otherwise indicated. No outside jackets, hoodies, accessories are permitted to be worn in school as part of the uniform. In an effort to prevent loss

or theft of sweaters and Pan American hoodies, it is recommended that each student write their name on the inside using a permanent marker.

Students who fail to dress for school as required by this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include a disciplinary write-up, parent notification and a detention. Chronic uniform violations may result in further disciplinary actions. It is expected the parent will make every effort to resolve the matter to the best of their ability. The following is a list of uniform items that must be worn on a daily basis:

**GRADES K-4 UNIFORM**

Boys	Girls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Navy blue pants</li> <li>● White polo shirts (Spring/Fall)</li> <li>● White button-down shirt with sweater vest, cardigan or hoodie</li> <li>● Black or Navy Socks</li> <li>● Black Shoes or ALL Black Sneakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jumper</li> <li>● Navy blue pants</li> <li>● White polo shirts (Spring/Fall)</li> <li>● White button-down shirt with sweater vest, cardigan or hoodie</li> <li>● Black or Navy Socks</li> <li>● Black Shoes or ALL Black Sneakers</li> </ul>

**GRADES 5-8 UNIFORM**

Boys	Girls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Navy blue pants</li> <li>● White polo shirts (Spring/Fall)</li> <li>● White button-down shirt with Pan Am logo sweater vest, Pan Am logo cardigan or Pan Am logo zip up hoodie</li> <li>● Black or Navy Socks</li> <li>● Black Shoes or ALL Black Sneakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Skirt</li> <li>● Navy blue pants</li> <li>● White polo shirts (Spring/Fall)</li> <li>● White button-down shirt with Pan Am logo sweater vest, Pan Am logo cardigan or Pan Am logo zip up hoodie</li> <li>● Black or Navy Socks</li> <li>● Black Shoes or ALL Black Sneakers</li> </ul>

**ALL GRADES - GYM UNIFORM**

Navy blue sweatpants or navy blue gym shorts with Pan Am logo, green t-shirt with Pan Am logo, and ALL black sneakers.

Please visit: [Shop by School \ Charter Schools M - Z \ Pan American - cramer-uniforms](#)

The following standards will help ensure that each student meets the personal appearance guidelines:

- Inappropriate jewelry or excessive jewelry. Earrings that dangle or are larger than a quarter will not be permitted for safety reasons
- Pants must be worn at waist level
- Leggings or skinny pants are not permitted
- Head coverings may only be worn for cultural, ethnic, religious, health or other meritorious reasons
- Scarves may not be worn during the day
- No coats, jackets and non-uniform sweaters or hoodies may be worn during the school day

**Uniform Donations**

Pan American Academy collects clean and gently used school uniforms. If you wish to donate your child’s uniforms, please send your donation to the school with your child’s name and homeroom. For more information, feel free to email [information@panamcs.org](mailto:information@panamcs.org).

## Dress Down Days

These days are designed to give students a day when they can be out of uniform and to celebrate school spirit by dressing down in a theme or school colors. These days will be announced in advance. Hats, sunglasses or other accessories are not permitted unless approved by the principal. **In keeping with the personal appearance and dress code, the administration reserves the right to enforce style, color and length.** Shoes, even on Dress Down Days, must be safe. All shoes must be school appropriate and may not interfere with safety (stairwells, evacuations). Shoes must cover the entire foot. For this reason, flip-flops, heels, house slippers, sandals, Clogs or Crocs may **NOT** be worn.

**Special Note to Parents:** You have the final decision in allowing your child to participate in Dress Down Days. If you prefer that your child not participate we will support your decision and ask that your child follow the regular school uniform dress code.

Dress Down DOs	Dress Down DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Appropriate fitting jeans</li><li>● Shirts with sleeves (short or long)</li><li>● Shirts covering midriff (waist) /upper body (cleavage)</li><li>● Sneakers or shoes (must cover entire foot)</li><li>● Sweatshirt</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No tight-fitting pants/leggings, shorts or dresses</li><li>● No sagging pants/no underwear may show</li><li>● Any clothing with holes and rips</li><li>● Sheer/see-through clothing</li><li>● Sleeveless or off-the-shoulder tops/dresses</li><li>● Any articles of clothing with advertising, logos, symbols, pictures or wording that is disruptive, (i.e., alcoholic beverages, drugs, lewd or inappropriate references or innuendos).</li><li>● Flip flops, slippers, crocs, any shoes that expose the foot</li></ul>

## Use of Technology

Pan American Academy Charter School students engaging in digital learning will be provided with a healthy, safe, and positive learning environment. To promote these conditions, school community members will be held to the expectations and responsibilities that are outlined below.

### Guidance for Parents

As always, support from parents/guardians is essential for our students to succeed. Parents/guardians can contact the school via Class Dojo, email, or a telephone call to communicate with teachers about student academic progress. The safety of our students is of the highest priority to PAACS. We encourage parents and guardians to review responsible and safe usage of technology with their children. For example, remind your child(ren) not to share their passwords, their location, or any personal information on the internet. Additionally, some internet sites have content that is inappropriate for children so we encourage parents/guardians to regularly monitor the websites their children are visiting. If you identify a security and/or safety problem with the school's computers and/or educational platform, please notify a school administrator (i.e. principal, director) immediately. Parents/guardians should ensure that students can participate in digital learning in a space that is conducive for learning and success.

### Guidance for Students

Students can help to make digital learning a success by following rules and expectations carefully such as:

- Always using their device in a way that shows consideration for and respect. It is not acceptable to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language.

- Taking integrity and authenticity of student work very seriously. Students should not cut, copy or plagiarize internet content or the work of other classmates.
- Never saying, writing or recording anything that will result in a disciplinary action.
- Protecting passwords.

## Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, Games and Toys

Use of cell phones or other personal electronic devices are not permitted at Pan American Academy Charter School. If a student must bring a cell phone or personal electronic device to school, they are required to turn it off **PRIOR TO ENTERING SCHOOL GROUNDS** and keep their cell phone or personal electronic device in their school bag.

Students who have lockers for storage, all bookbags should be stored in lockers during the school day. If a cell phone/personal device is used, visible or heard at any time in the school building, the phone/personal device will be confiscated from the student.

Students are not allowed to bring toys or games to school. This includes dolls or stuffed animals. If such items are to be brought for show-and-tell, arrangements must be made between the parent and teacher as to the appropriate time to bring the game or toy. The following protocols will take place in the event cell phones/devices, games or toys, etc. are confiscated:

**First offense:** Item(s) will be released **ONLY** to the parent. Parents will receive a call from an administrator or designee to arrange pickup.

**Second offense:** Item(s) will be held for **ONE WEEK**. Parents must schedule a meeting with an administrator or designee to retrieve the confiscated item.

**Repeated offenses:** Item(s) will be held for **TWO WEEKS**. Parents must schedule a meeting with an administrator to retrieve the confiscated item. The student may also face disciplinary action for continued violation.

Pan American Academy Charter School will take all the necessary precautions to secure all confiscated items, however, it is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## Locker Use

6th-8th grade students will get their own locker to use for the school year.

5th grade - each student will carry materials class to class.

- Each student will be given a [locker contract](#)
- Once the locker contract is signed and returned, they will be assigned a locker and lock with code

### Locker Contract

- All locker contracts will be given out during Back to School events, home visits, and/or the first day of school.
- Contracts must be signed and returned by the end of the first week of school
- Locker assignments and locks will be distributed on the first day of the following week
  - Once assignments have been given, teachers will practice locker use and review expectations

### Locker Expectations

1. Students with assigned lockers should be patient and careful in trying to open lockers with combination locks. Overloading and kicking of lockers, as evidenced by black marks and dents, will not be tolerated. Students will be charged for damages.

2. Students are responsible for remembering the combination to their locker. Students should not tell other students their locker combination. Locker doors should be closed gently without slamming. Garments and books should be kept clear.
3. Students may go to their lockers without special passes at these times:
  - Immediately upon arriving before morning homeroom period.
  - Each team will designate specific locker stops.
  - Before leaving school.
4. Students should make locker visits as orderly and quietly as possible, taking care not to block the corridors.
5. If a locker is damaged or will not work properly, please report it before/after school or during your lunch period.
6. Lockers are the property of the school and **may** be searched by an administrator at any time.
7. All non-school uniform items (hats, jackets, sunglasses, etc.), backpacks, and personal devices (phones, etc.) must be placed in the locker.
8. Theft of personal property is the student's responsibility if the locker is not being used properly.

## Search and Seizure Policy

To maintain order and discipline at PAACS, and to protect the safety and welfare of students and staff members, PAACS administrators reserve the right to conduct a search of a student's property, person, or personal effects (including without limitation, purse, bookbags, athletic bag, lockers, desks, computers, cell phones, other electronic devices, etc.). Administrators may perform such a search if the administrator has a reasonable suspicion that a student has violated or is violating state or federal laws, state laws, city codes, or school policies. Administrators may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered. Students do not enjoy an expectation of privacy in their lockers, in the items that they bring to school, or the items that they bring to school-sponsored events.

Law enforcement may be contacted in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding between PAACS and the Philadelphia Police Department and applicable laws.

## Damage to School Property

1. **Books** - School books are owned by the school and loaned to students. If a student loses a book or damages it, he/she will be required to pay a prorated amount. Identify your books (place your full name in the space provided inside the front cover).
2. **Equipment and Facilities** - Students found damaging school property of any kind will be required to make financial restitution.
3. **Damage to Computers** - The use of the computer/Internet is a privilege. Any damage to the device, chargers, cases, or other components or loss of any property will incur a fine for restitution.
4. **Personal Well-being** - Students may be held financially responsible for any physical injury inflicted, or damage to, another's personal property.

## Attendance Expectations & Responsibilities

Students enrolled at Pan American Academy Charter School are required to attend school daily in accordance with the compulsory attendance laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Under this law, parents and guardians are required to make sure their children attend school every day that school is in session and arrive at school on time.

### Absences

An absence is the non-attendance of a student on those days and half days when school is in session. Attendance need not always be within school facilities. A student will be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session; the student is receiving approved instruction, or health or therapeutic services; or the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.

## What is an excused absence?

The school understands that there are some days when a student is prevented from attending school for medical or other urgent reasons. An absence will be considered excused if the absence was due to one or more of the following reasons:

- Illness and injury (if longer than two days, a note from a doctor is **REQUIRED**)
- Death of a family member
- Medical or dental appointments that could not be scheduled outside of school hours
- Religious holidays observed by the student's immediate family – prior written notice to the school is required
- Religious instruction, not to exceed 36 hours per school year
- Required court attendance
- Other urgent reasons approved by CEO or Principal

## What is an unexcused absence?

All absences are considered unexcused until the school receives the required information documenting a valid reason for the absence, as detailed above. Some examples of unexcused absences are:

- Absence due to parental neglect
- Missing the bus
- Oversleeping
- Parent personal appointments
- Inclement weather when the school is open
- Family vacation trips: *Family vacations during the school year will be coded as unexcused absences. Please schedule family vacations to occur outside of our regularly scheduled school year. Please do not schedule doctor's appointments during standardized testing periods. Excessive absences and tardies negatively impact your child's ability to get accepted to a special admission high school.*

## Tardiness

Punctuality is directly linked to a student's success in school. Please be mindful that students must arrive on time to maximize their learning and avoid class disruptions. School officially begins at 8:00am. Students arriving after 8:15am will be marked late. Lateness may be excused with a note from a doctor if medical appointments or emergencies have occurred. Excessive lateness patterns will be treated the same as excessive absences.

## Early Dismissal

Whenever possible, doctor, dentist, and other appointments should be made outside of school hours. However, if it is necessary to be excused during the school day, the student is asked to bring a note from a parent/guardian stating the exact time for leaving and the reason. This is for the safety of all students. If you plan to remove your child from school during the day, we ask that you pick the child up in the office. **Early dismissals begin at 11:30am and end at 2:30pm. No student will be dismissed as a result of a phone call.** All students must be checked out at the office by a parent/guardian or emergency contact, and identification **must** be verified. There are no early dismissals on half days. There are no early dismissals during state testing.

## If the student is going to be absent...

Please contact the school before the morning start time of the day your student will be absent from school. Voicemail will be available to leave a message as to the reason for your student's absence. The parent will receive an automated call informing them of their child's absence. This is to ensure that every student is accounted for and for his/her safety. The parent/guardian must provide a note of explanation as to the reason for the absence upon the student's return to school. For convenience, parents/guardians can complete absence notes electronically on our website:

<https://panamcs.org/parents/resources/>

If a parent or guardian fails to provide a note to the school within three (3) school days of an absence, the absence will be **permanently** counted as unexcused. After three (3) school days, only a note from a doctor or other official will be

accepted. A maximum of ten (10) absences per year can be excused based on a parental note. Any absences beyond three (3) cumulative days requires a physician’s note.

**Makeup Work**

If a student is absent for any reason, the student is required to make up all missed course work. Upon returning to class, the student must obtain assignments from his or her teachers. The teacher will work with the student to make up any tests, homework, or other work that was missed due to absence.

**Truancy**

In Pennsylvania, truancy is defined as when a child of compulsory age has three (3) or more unexcused absences in the current school year.

Pan American Academy Charter School will notify the parent/guardian within ten (10) school days of the child's third unexcused absence that the child has been "truant". The notice may include the offer of a school attendance improvement conference, and shall be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the parent/guardian.

**Habitual Truancy**

Habitual truancy is defined as a child subject to compulsory school laws “having six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.” Therefore, a child is habitually truant once he or she accumulates six unexcused absences during the course of the school year. These absences do not need to run consecutively. If a child is habitually truant, the school must either:

- (1) refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or the Philadelphia Department of Human Services for services or possible disposition as a dependent child, or
- (2) file a citation against the parent in a magisterial district court.

Habitual truancy has a direct impact on student success. Students who are classified as habitually truant may be recommended for grade-level retention.

**Consequences and Interventions for Truancy**

Excessive unexcused absences constitute misconduct and will be handled in the following ways:

# of total unexcused absences	# of total lateness and/or early dismissals	<b>Consequences &amp; Interventions</b> [Suspension from school is not a permissible consequence for truancy]
0-2	X	Automated phone call home. This will be repeated for each additional absence.
3-5	10	School support will consist of the following: ▸ An A-31 letter will be sent home to notify the parent/guardian of the truancy detailing the unexcused days, ▸ Generating an attendance contract, ▸ The school will schedule a school-family attendance conference where the attendance concerns can be discussed with next steps/actions.

6-7	X	<p>The student is considered “habitually truant” by the state. The following will occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Student Attendance Improvement Plan* is created detailing supports and strategies to support the family,</li> <li>▸ 1st District Attorney Referral for Project Go</li> </ul> <p>Not applicable for lateness or early dismissal. The school may also file a citation against the parent in magisterial district court.</p>
8+	X	<p>The student continues to be “habitually truant”. The following will occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Student Attendance Improvement Plan review</li> <li>▸ PAACS administration/parent conference</li> <li>▸ 2nd District Attorney Referral for a Project Go-Family Conference Meeting</li> <li>▸ Possible grade-level retention</li> </ul> <p>Not applicable for lateness or early dismissal. The school may also file a citation against the parent in magisterial district court.</p>

*\*A Student Attendance Improvement Plan conference is where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are reviewed with the intent to improve attendance. There is no legal requirement that the child or parent/guardian attend the conference, and the conference shall occur even if the parent/guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference after advance written notice and attempts to communicate by telephone.*

Students who are truant cannot be disciplined for exhibiting truant behavior. However, if a student is considered absent-unexcused for ten (10) consecutive school days, the student will be dropped from the rolls at the school and the matter will be referred to the School District of Philadelphia. (Note: in the event of a student with an IEP or Section 504 Service Plan who is absent-unexcused for ten (10) consecutive school days, the School will comply with all applicable procedures required by IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, such as conducting a Manifestation Determination meeting to determine whether the student’s absences are a manifestation of the student’s disability.)

## Behavioral Expectations & Responsibilities

At Pan American Academy, we **C.A.R.E.** As an IB World School, we have adopted a school-wide essential agreement built on the foundation of the IB learner profile. Our essential agreement defines the expectations for positive social interaction in our school. The elements of our essential agreement are as follows:

### ***Compassionate***

At Pan American we are compassionate by...

- Caring for others through our positive acts that make a difference in the lives of others
- Communicating with each other using appropriate language
- Being open minded and accepting the values and traditions of others
- Balancing different aspects of our lives to achieve well-being for ourselves and others

### ***Accountable***

At Pan American we are accountable by...

- Showing our knowledge of conceptual understandings through a range of disciplines
- Developing skills for inquiry independently and with others
- Communicating effectively with individuals and groups
- Reflecting on strengths and weaknesses to support learning and personal development
- Balancing our interdependence with other people and the world we live in
- Being principled and taking responsibility for our actions and their consequences



## ***Respectful***

At Pan American we are respectful by...

- Caring about others through service and positive acts that help to make a difference
- Communicating effectively and listening carefully to others perspectives
- Being principled in our approach to the dignity and rights of people everywhere
- Being open-minded as we critically appreciate our own cultures and the traditions of others
- Balancing the different aspects of our lives to achieve well-being for ourselves and others

## ***Engaged***

At Pan American we are engaged by...

- Displaying our knowledge of conceptual understandings and exploring a range of disciplines
- Thinking critically and creatively to analyze and take responsible action
- Nurturing curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research
- Communicating with others confidently and creatively in more than one language
- Being risk-takers that work to explore new ideas and innovative strategies

The school-wide expectations are behaviors that every member of the school community is expected to display.

### **Expectations for Students**

- Be principled by acting with integrity and honesty.
- Approach problems with reason, use ethical decision-making strategies.
- Care about others by showing empathy, compassion, and respect.
- Reflect on choices and decisions.
- Communicate with parents and staff in a respectful manner.
- Comply with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Expectations for Parents**

- Treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect. All school personnel have been carefully selected and directed to act in the best interest of all of our students at all times.
- Understand and uphold all policies and procedures at Pan American Academy, setting a good example for your child
- Use respectful and appropriate language when attending school meetings or events and communicating with Pan American staff
- Approach school staff in a positive manner if you are in need of assistance or have a concern.

Failure to comply with these expectations may result in exclusion from our school campus.

### **Expectations for staff**

- Understand and uphold all policies and procedures at Pan American Academy.
- Model and employ consistent, respectful and equitable treatment of all members of the school community.
- Maintain open communication and collaboration with parents/guardians.

## **Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)**

### **What is PBIS?**

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. PBIS is a prevention-oriented way for school personnel to:

- (a) organize evidence-based practices;
- (b) improve their implementation of those practices; and
- (c) maximize academic and prosocial behavior outcomes for students. PBIS supports the success of *ALL* students.

To help motivate our students, Pan American's PBIS team created a system of acknowledgements to support our four key areas of behavioral expectations: *Compassionate, Accountable, Respectful* and *Engaged*. Teachers use Classroom Dojo points to acknowledge students' demonstration of the learner profile and demonstration of C.A.R.E. Students are then able to "purchase" items from the PanAmazon school store based on their weekly Dojo point total. Students who exemplify C.A.R.E. can also earn Super Cheetah tickets, which can be turned in for our weekly random school-wide drawing. Students also have the ability to become C.A.R.E. Champions, which recognize students who demonstrate C.A.R.E. attributes in the classroom.

For more information on PBIS, visit <https://www.pbis.org> or <http://www.papbs.org>

## Bullying / Cyberbullying & Harassment

### **Bullying/Cyberbullying**

The Pan American Academy Staff, Board of Directors and community is committed to making our school a safe and caring environment for all students and staff. It is expected that we will treat each other with respect and refuse to tolerate bullying of any kind. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence.

#### Definition

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting or where the behavior directly impacts the school setting (cyberbullying), that is severe, persistent or pervasive, and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantial interference with a student's education;
2. Creation of a threatening environment; or
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is further characterized by the following three (3) criteria:

1. It is aggressive behavior or intentional harm doing.
2. It is carried out repeatedly over time.
3. It occurs between people where there is an imbalance of power (e.g. physical strength, mental capacity, popularity, or social skills).

### **Harassment**

It is our policy to maintain an educational environment in which harassment and sexual discrimination (including sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence) in any form is not tolerated.

#### Definition

Harassment means verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin/ethnicity, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

## Reporting & Discipline

Students who have been bullied should promptly report such incidents to the building principal or his/her designee. Complaints will be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties will be maintained, consistent with the school's legal and investigative obligations. Reprisal or retaliation that occurs as a result of good faith reports of bullying will not be tolerated. A student who violates this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Conduct, which may include, but not be limited to:

1. Counseling within the school.
2. Parental conference.
3. Loss of school privileges.
4. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
6. Detention.
7. Suspension.
8. Expulsion.
9. Referral to law enforcement officials.

## Behavioral Infractions & Consequences

### Positive Classroom Management Approach

At Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS), we utilize a Multi-Tiered approach focused on building positive classroom culture to prevent problem behaviors. The **STOIC** framework empowers general educators, special educators, and related services professionals with behavior improvement strategies for the whole school. The focus of the STOIC framework is on establishing effective Classroom Management in order to set students up for success, while preventing problematic behaviors.

**S**tructure for Success | **T**each Expectations | **O**bserve | **I**nteract Positively | **C**orrect Fluently

### Dealing with Problem Behavior

The staff at Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS) is dedicated to making interactions with students, regardless of setting, a positive one that acknowledges when students are engaged in desired behaviors. Despite the many opportunities for staff to reinforce expected behaviors and the many acknowledgements to which students will have access, staff must always be prepared to address problem behavior. The most efficient way for staff to address problem behavior is to anticipate and plan for the behavior, stay calm, implement the intervention strategies, and evaluate the impact at a later time.

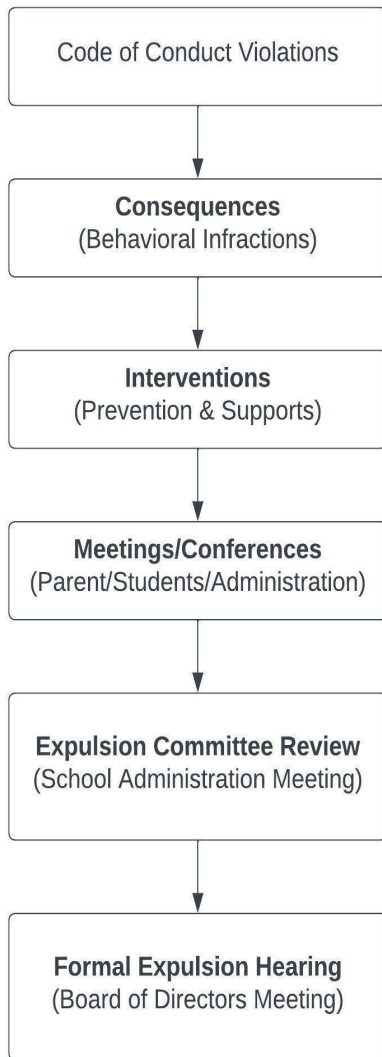
#### Corrective consequences for behavior are effective when:

1. *They are immediate.* Consequences are most meaningful when they occur as soon as possible after the behavior takes place.
2. *They are fair.* The consequence is fair and appropriate based on the information available and the misbehavior.
3. *They are consistent.* Consequences should be administered consistently the same way, regardless of student or location.

## Disciplinary Process & Definitions

At Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS), we believe in prevention based strategies that are focused on student success. The PAACS discipline process below describes the overall steps we take to provide success and opportunities for learning when behavioral infractions occur.

## PAACS Discipline Process



### Level I Violations

Level I school violations can often be remediated with simple redirection to avoid the behavior becoming a level II offense and/or teacher submitting an office disciplinary referral.

It is expected that students respond to the remediation efforts of the adult and cease the inappropriate behavior. Disregarding these directions or becoming disrespectful will result in the escalation of the behavior to a higher level with more severe consequences.

Possible consequences: teacher conference with student, teacher directed consequence, parent contacted by teacher, office discipline referral (ODR), after-school detention, lunch detention, and/or time outside of the classroom with administration.

### Level II Violations

Level II school violations are behaviors whose frequency or seriousness disrupts the learning climate or safety of the school. Students engaging in level II behaviors are typically beyond redirection from teachers and/or staff and require an office disciplinary referral for possible investigation by Administration. **Repeated level II school violations will be escalated to a level III offense.**

Possible consequences: Consequences listed under Level I, reinstatement parent meeting, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension.

### Level III Violations

Level III school violations are behaviors that may threaten the health, safety, or welfare of a member of the school community. Students engaging in level III behaviors are beyond re-direction from teachers and staff and require an office disciplinary referral and investigation by the Administration. **Repeated level III school violations will trigger an expulsion committee review.**

Possible consequences: Consequences listed under Level I and/or Level II and/or expulsion hearing with the Board of Trustees or designated hearing examiner.

## Consequences

Disruptive Behaviors	Possible Consequence Levels*		
	Level I: In-school interventions (including In-school suspension)	Level II: Out-of-School Suspension	Level III: Possible Expulsion Hearing/Committee Review
Defiance	X		
Disrespect	X		

Disruption	X		
Dress Code Violation	X		
Inappropriate Language or Gesture	X		
Truancy	X		
Tardy	X		
Property Misuse	X		
Repeated Violations (Minor)	X	X	
Abusive and/or Threatening Language	X	X	
Physical Contact/Aggression – (Property/Person)	X	X	
Plagiarism	X	X	
Forgery	X	X	
Inappropriate Displays of Affection	X	X	
Skip Class	X	X	
Technology Violation	X	X	
Other Behavior-Minor (not listed above)	X	X	
Arson	X	X	X
Physical Aggression-(Assault)	X	X	X
Bomb Threat/False Alarm	X	X	X
Bullying/Harassment	X	X	X
Gang Affiliation Display	X	X	X
Fighting	X	X	X
Property Damage/Vandalism	X	X	X
Theft	X	X	X
Other Behavior-Major (not listed above)	X	X	X
Use/Possession of Alcohol		X	X
Use/Possession of Combustible		X	X
Use/Possession of Drug		X	X
Use/Possession of Tobacco		X	X

Use/Possession of Weapon		X	X
<p>Note:</p> <p>1. Consequence Levels are not mutually exclusive. If a student is referred for a possible expulsion hearing/review, that student may also be suspended out of school for some period between 1-10 days.</p> <p>2. Repeated school violations will result in an escalation to the next consequence level.</p> <p>3. Repeated Level III School Violations will result in an Expulsion Committee Review.</p> <p>*The possible consequences above are suggestions and school administration, at their discretion, has the right to escalate or deescalate the level of an offense based on circumstance.</p>			

**Office Discipline Referral (ODR) Definitions:** The following chart defines disruptive behaviors and is used by Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS) to determine the appropriate level of consequences for behavior infractions.

**Office Discipline Referral (ODR) Definitions**

Minor Infraction (problem behavior)	Offense Level	Definition	Examples
<b>Defiance</b>	1	Student engages in refusal to follow directions or talks back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Refusal to do work</li> <li>● Doing the opposite of what is being asked</li> <li>● Argue with teacher about tasks/homework/directions</li> </ul>
<b>Disrespect</b>	1	Student acts in a manner that is rude, impolite, and/or offensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student insults a teacher’s appearance</li> <li>● Walks away from a teacher</li> </ul>
<b>Disruption</b>	1	Student engages in a behavior that causes an interruption in a class or activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Loud talking</li> <li>● Yelling</li> <li>● Screaming</li> <li>● Noise with materials</li> <li>● Horseplay, roughhousing &amp; play fighting</li> <li>● Out of seat behavior, walking around room</li> </ul>
<b>Dress Code Violation</b>	1	Student fails to comply with the established dress code policy as stated in the Parent and Student Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wearing Sandals</li> <li>● Ripped Jeans (During dress down)</li> <li>● Wearing boots/heels</li> </ul>
<b>Derogatory Language, Profanity, and/or Inappropriate Language</b>	1	Verbal or written statements intended to offend or insult someone or something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curse words</li> <li>● Name calling</li> <li>● Words intended to demean a group of people (Race, Gender, Ethnicity, Sexuality...)</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Contact/ Aggression- (Property/Person )</b>	1 / 2	Student uses inappropriate physical contact due to a negative reaction with or against property. Student engages in physical contact using one’s body or an object where physical, emotional, or psychological harm <b>MAY</b> occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kick/hitting an object due to anger or frustration</li> <li>● Flipping furniture</li> <li>● Breaking clocks, soap dispensers</li> <li>● Breaking walls, fountains, doors</li> <li>● Misuse of others’ property</li> <li>● Inappropriate physical gestures/contact</li> <li>● Pushing</li> <li>● Gestures to harm ex. finger across the neck</li> </ul>

<b>Property Misuse</b>	1	Student uses an object inappropriately in a way that disrupts learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using an iPad to disrupt the teachers lesson</li> <li>Throwing iPad back and forth</li> <li>Throwing school books</li> </ul>
<b>Tardy</b>	1	Student arrives late (within 5-minutes) to assigned area or activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Returning to class on their own</li> <li>Arriving to destination 5-minutes late</li> </ul>
<b>Truancy</b>	1	A child of compulsory age has three (3) or more unexcused absences in the current school year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Returning from an absence without an excuse note</li> <li>Vacation without school notice</li> </ul>
<b>Technology Violation-(Minor )</b>	1	The use of technology in a manner that can cause damage or is not following the guidelines given by teachers and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watching Youtube or other inappropriate videos</li> <li>Watching movies</li> <li>Filming or taking pictures in school for fun</li> <li>Playing games instead of working</li> </ul>
<b>Other Behavior</b>	1 / 2	Behavior that is not categorized by any of the other minor infractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climbing trees in the school yard</li> <li>Student playing on stairwell banister</li> <li>Repeated minor violations</li> </ul>
<b>Major Infraction</b> (problem behavior)	<b>Offense Level</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Abusive and/or Threatening Language</b>	2	Student(s) makes verbal, written, physical, or gestural threats that include swearing, name calling, or using words in an inappropriate way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intimidation - To induce fear or a sense of inferiority in another student and/or school community member.</li> <li>Gun or knife hand signal</li> <li>Aggressive posturing</li> <li>Threatening to use a weapon</li> <li>Intimidating in order to receive items</li> <li>Writing inappropriate language</li> </ul>
<b>Arson</b>	3	Attempting to start or starting a fire in or around school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting a Fire</li> <li>Using a combustible to start a fire (lighter)</li> </ul>
<b>Bomb Threat/ False Alarm</b>	3	Student(s) delivers a message of possible explosive materials being in school, near school, and/or pending explosions. Pulling or tampering with fire alarms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calling in a bomb threat</li> <li>Pulling fire alarms</li> <li>Threats of having a weapon</li> </ul>
<b>Bullying/ Cyber-bullying</b>	3	<p>Student(s) are involved in unwanted aggressive hostile behavior that involves a power imbalance and the aggressive behavior is repeated over time.</p> <p><u>Bullying</u>: Bullying occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g., one person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker, or socially more powerful). The conduct may be physical, psychological, verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic.</p> <p><u>Cyber-bullying</u>: Bullying that occurs through electronic communication device</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student(s) forces another student to give up his/her own lunch</li> <li>Making fun of a student's weight, looks/ appearance as to cause harm or belittle that student</li> <li>Using social media to make threats or harass a student(s)</li> <li>Creating images or videos of a student(s) to make fun of them</li> <li>Creating a fake social media account about someone</li> </ul>

		messages, tweets, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, dash boards, or web sites.	
<b>Harassment</b>	3	<p>Student(s) are involved in behavior that creates intense environments for students. Instances of harassment can occur through intimidation or abuse between students. Much like bullying, there is tension related to the display of power between individuals or a group. However, harassment is assigned to a specific category including but not limited to; race, religion, sexuality, etc. and does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.</p> <p><u>Harassment</u> - Unwelcome verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to a student or school community member's gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status, and/or political beliefs.</p> <p><u>Sexual Harassment</u> - Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwanted, unwelcome physical contact, such as touching, bumping, grabbing, or patting</li> <li>• Sexually insulting remarks about race, gender, ability, or class</li> <li>• Bragging about sexual prowess for others to hear</li> <li>• Intimidating hallway behavior, which can include demeaning nicknames, homophobic name calling, cat calls, rating, or embarrassing whistles</li> <li>• Graffiti with names written on walls or desks; a common example is: "for a good time, call..."</li> <li>• Being followed around by another student / being stalked</li> </ul>
<b>Fighting</b>	3	Two or more students engaged in a physical confrontation that may cause harm or injury regardless who started the fight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fist fights</li> <li>• Multiple students fighting</li> </ul>
<b>Forgery</b>	2	Producing a copy of a document or signature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signing a permission slip</li> <li>• Creating an excuse note</li> <li>• Using fake hallpasses</li> </ul>
<b>Gang Affiliation Display</b>	3	Any verbal, nonverbal, written, physical, or gestural threats or insignia that could be associated with a gang or group from inside or outside of the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wearing of specific known gang colors/paraphernalia</li> <li>• Bringing members from a gang on school grounds</li> </ul>
<b>Inappropriate Displays of Affection</b>	2	<p>Wanted or unwanted verbal or non-verbal gestures that are intended to promote affection or feelings toward a person or thing</p> <p>Student engages in inappropriate, consensual verbal and/or physical gestures/contact, of a sexual nature to another student/adult</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kissing</li> <li>• Fondling</li> <li>• Sexual contact of any kind</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Aggression (Assault)</b>	2 / 3	Student engages in physical contact using one's body or an object where physical,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate physical gestures/contact that is sexual in nature</li> <li>• Slapping</li> </ul>



		emotional, or psychological harm <b>HAS</b> occurred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Punching another student</li> <li>● Pushing another student to the ground causing harm</li> </ul>
<b>Property Damage/Vandalism</b>	3	Student engages or attempts to engage in destruction, disfigurement, or permanent damage to property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writing/drawing or attempting to write/draw words or images in bathroom</li> <li>● Throwing or attempting to throw wet paper products on walls/ceilings</li> <li>● Breaking walls by either kicking or punching them</li> <li>● Breaking bathroom stall doors</li> <li>● Breaking a door or window</li> <li>● Breaking/damaging iPads/technology</li> </ul>
<b>Skip Class</b>	2	Student arrives late (more than 5-minutes) to assigned area or activity, leaves or misses class without permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student must be escorted to assigned area or activity</li> <li>● Student misses lesson in its entirety</li> <li>● Student was in the bathroom for longer than 10-minutes</li> </ul>
<b>Technology Violation-(Major)</b>	2 / 3	The use of technology in a manner that can cause damages or is not following the guidelines given by teachers and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recording a fight</li> <li>● Looking at or uploading pornographic images</li> <li>● Watching pornographic videos</li> <li>● Viewing inappropriate online videos during instructional time</li> </ul>
<b>Theft</b>	3	Student is in possession of, having passed on, or being responsible for removing someone else's property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Taking teachers' belongings (ex. money phone, ipad, purse/wallet, etc.)</li> <li>● Taking another student's property (ex. phone, money, lunch, etc.)</li> <li>● Taking school property (ex. soap dispenser, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Plagiarism</b>	2 / 3	Taking and/or using intellectual property and presenting it as your own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cheating</li> <li>● Copying homework from a peer or a source</li> <li>● Claiming another students work as their own</li> </ul>
<b>Use/Possession of Alcohol</b>	3	Student(s) is in possession, use, or distribution of any substance that is alcoholic. Whether on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bringing in beer or liquor</li> </ul>
<b>Use/Possession of Combustible</b>	3	Student(s) is in possession, use, or distribution of a substance that is able to catch fire and burn easily on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lighter</li> <li>● Gasoline</li> <li>● Matches</li> <li>● Lighter fluid</li> <li>● Firecrackers</li> </ul>

<b>Use/Possession of Drugs</b>	3	<p>Student(s) are in possession, use, or distribution of any drug, drug paraphernalia, or imitation on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.</p> <p>Controlled substances and illegal substances, as well as “look-alikes”, which are defined as any substance that, by appearance, representation, or manner of distribution, would lead a reasonable person to believe that the substance is an illegal drug or other controlled substance are drugs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prescription drugs</li> <li>● Smoking pipes</li> <li>● E-pipe</li> <li>● Rolling papers</li> <li>● Needles</li> <li>● Marajuana</li> <li>● Flour/Sugar in a sandwich bag</li> </ul>
<b>Use/Possession of Tobacco</b>	3	<p>Student(s) are in possession, use, or distribution of any tobacco products on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cigarettes</li> <li>● Chewing tobacco</li> <li>● Lighters</li> <li>● E-cigarette</li> <li>● Matches</li> <li>● Vape Pens</li> </ul>
<b>Use/Possession of Weapon</b>	3	<p>Student(s) are in possession of, use or distribution of any tool, instrument, implement, ammunition, or weapon capable of causing injury or death by students on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bullets / Blunt object / Bat</li> <li>● any firearms, whether loaded or unloaded / cap guns</li> <li>● simulated guns / pellet guns or BB guns</li> <li>● Knives / box cutters / cutting instruments</li> <li>● nunchaku</li> <li>● mace</li> <li>● simulated weapons</li> <li>● laser pointers</li> </ul>
<b>Other Behavior</b>	2 / 3	<p>Behavior that is not categorized by any of the other major infractions but may cause harm to self, students, or adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jumping from a flight of steps</li> <li>● Climbing on or over gates</li> <li>● Repeated major violations</li> </ul>

### Suspensions

Suspensions should only be utilized as a last resort when other interventions are not successful, or for serious violations of the Code of Conduct. Depending on the behavioral infraction, a suspension from school may be warranted. A suspension is an exclusion from school for one (1) to ten (10) consecutive days. Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10-school day period.

The following constitutes PAACS’s proposed policies for the out-of- school suspension of students:

- Once it has been determined that a student has violated the Code of Conduct, an investigation will occur. At the time of the investigation, it is the responsibility of any student who has been contacted to provide an accurate and truthful account, to the best of their ability, of what occurred. After the investigation, PAACS will notify parents of the events that occurred and the applied consequences, if any.
- Suspensions may be issued by the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean or other person in charge of school culture. PAACS will notify you of a suspension and provide the student an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.

### Suspensions for 1 to 3 days

A student may be suspended for a maximum of three days without a hearing. After an incident occurs, the student will be given an opportunity to discuss the incident with School Administration. A written notice of suspension will be prepared for the parents and given to the student. The notice will contain reasons for the suspension. A conference with the parent

will be scheduled before the student's return to school. A parent **MUST** attend the reinstatement meeting to determine an action plan to prevent such behavior from continuing in the future.

### **Suspensions for 4 to 10 days**

For suspensions of 4 to 10 days, the student and parent will have the right to an informal hearing with the School Administration. The following requirements will govern the informal hearing:

- The informal hearing is meant to encourage the student's parents/guardian to meet with school administration to discuss ways by which future offenses can be avoided.
- The steps below will be followed to ensure due process:
  1. The student and the parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the reasons for the suspension.
  2. They will be provided with sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing.
  3. A student will have the right to question any witnesses present at the informal hearing, and has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his/her own behalf.
  4. An informal hearing will be held within the first 5 days of the suspension.

For all suspensions, students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the Code of Conduct.

### **Interventions**

At PAACS, we utilize a number of interventions to provide both prevention and correction to support our students who have violated the Code of Conduct. We utilize a tiered approach, which includes a variety of supports such as School-Wide PBIS, Conflict Resolution, Check-In/Check-Out, Restorative Practices, Token economy, Peer Mediation and Behavioral planning.

### **Meetings/Conferences/Reinstatements**

At PAACS, we believe in a partnership between home and school that involves open lines of communication. In an attempt to include families, PAACS utilizes a number of methods such as student conferences, parent conferences, administration meetings, reinstatement meetings and formal hearings to communicate student problematic concerns. During these meetings, action plans are created with the focus on supporting students to address the problematic behaviors.

When the consequence of the behavioral infraction results in an out of school suspension, a restatement meeting **MUST** occur. The reinstatement will serve as a warning that the student has seriously violated PAACS's Code of Conduct. It is our hope that the student and family will realize the impact his/her behavior has had on their learning and our school community and, therefore, make all necessary changes in his/her behavior while in school. A reinstatement meeting must occur after each incident of suspension. Date and time of meeting will be detailed in the suspension letter.

### **Expulsion Committee Review**

In some cases, students who are not responsive to consequences, interventions, or meetings/conferences may proceed to an Expulsion Committee Review which is conducted with School Administrators. The review is conducted to determine if the behavioral infraction warrants a Formal Expulsion Hearing (with the Board of Directors) or if an additional action plan needs to be established. Families will receive notification of such review along with steps for participation.

### **Formal Expulsion Hearing**

The following constitutes PAACS's proposed policies for the expulsion of students:

1. Only the Board of Trustees has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion is exclusion from school for more than 10 days. All expulsions require a prior formal hearing in conformity with 22 Pa. Code § 12.8.
2. During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the Board of Trustees in an expulsion case, the student, unless serving a suspension, shall be placed in their normal class unless it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in their normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety, morals or welfare of others.

The hearing process and Board decision will be governed by the requirements of 22 Pa. Code § 12.8, including the following:

- Notification of the charges will be sent to the student's parents/guardian by certified mail.
- Parents will be provided with three days' notice of the time/place of the hearing. The hearing shall be held within fifteen (15) days of the incident giving rise to the hearing unless otherwise agreed to by the parties.
- The hearing notice shall advise the Parent/guardian of the following:
  - The hearing will be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
  - The student will have the right to be represented by counsel.
  - The student will have the right to be notified of the names of the witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits, if any, of those witnesses.
  - The student will have the right to request that any such witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
  - The student will have the right to testify and present witnesses on his/her own behalf.
  - A record will be kept of the hearing, either by stenographer or by tape recorder.
  - In the event the student is dissatisfied with the results of the hearing, an appeal may be filed in accordance with the Local Agency Law to the Court of Common Pleas within thirty (30) days of receipt of that Adjudication. Students and their parents/guardians will be apprised of these rights.

## Disciplinary Guidelines for Students with Disabilities

As detailed above, PAACS does not as a first resort seek to exclude from school students who have violated the Code of Conduct, especially students with disabilities. In the rare event that a student receiving specialized services pursuant to an IEP or Section 504 Service Plan is to be excluded from school for a duration that constitutes a change of placement, a Manifestation Determination meeting will be held.

A change of placement occurs when a student who is receiving Specialized Services is excluded from school:

- For more than 10 school days in a row; **OR**
- For more than 15 school days in any one school year; **OR**
- When days 11-15 constitute a "pattern" of exclusion; **OR**
- For even one school day, for a student with an intellectual disability.

PAACS complies with applicable laws governing students with disabilities and does not discipline students with disabilities for behaviors that are substantially related to or manifestations of their disabilities. During a Manifestation Determination meeting, a child's IEP team must answer the following questions:

1. Was the student's behavior in question caused by, or directly and substantially related to, his/her disability?
2. Was the behavior a direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP?

If the IEP team answers "yes" to either question, the IEP team has determined that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, and the proposed disciplinary action is voided and the team must immediately take steps to remedy any deficiencies in the IEP, if any. The LEA will conduct a functional behavioral assessment ("FBA") and develop and implement a positive behavior support plan ("PBSP"). In the event an FBA and PBSP have already been developed, the IEP team will review and modify them as necessary.

If the IEP team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the student's disability, the disciplinary action may be applied in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision that is made at the Manifestation Determination Meeting, they can request an expedited Special Education Hearing and the Commonwealth-appointed hearing officer will review the

manifestation determination. Directions on requesting a hearing can be found in the NOREP and must be completed within ten (10) days.

In addition to the above, PAACS personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for no more than 45-school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability if the child:

- Carries a dangerous weapon\* to or possesses a dangerous weapon\* at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function; **or**
- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; **or**
- Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

\*A "dangerous weapon" is a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury.

## Weapons

In accordance with Act 26 of 1995 and Article XIII-A of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, the school prohibits the possession of weapons and may be required to expel, for a minimum of one year, any student who is determined to have brought onto or is in possession of a weapon on any school property as required under Act 26. The school will also report all incidents involving the possession of a weapon to local law enforcement officials and to the Pennsylvania Department of Education all incidents relating to expulsions for possession of a weapon on school grounds, etc.

## Due Process

Education is a statutory right and the Board of Trustees shall establish fair and reasonable rules – including this Code of Conduct – regarding the conduct of all students at the charter school, and those offenses which may lead to exclusion from school (suspension and expulsion). The jurisdiction of these rules will extend to students at any time the students are on school property, while the students are present at school-sponsored activities, and while the students are traveling to or from school and school-sponsored activities. Students will be required to adhere to the Code of Conduct during these times.

If a student violates the Code of Conduct and such violation requires a disciplinary response that involves exclusion from school (i.e. in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion), PAACS will comply with the due process requirements set forth in Chapter 12 of the State Board of Education regulations.

Additional protections and due process measures, including Manifestation Determination Meetings, will be implemented for students who are eligible or thought to be eligible for specialized services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. Discipline measures for such students will comply with the IDEA and its implementing regulations, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations, and Chapter 711 of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education regulations.

## Legal Recourse for School-related Offenses

If you believe that you or your child were victims of a crime by a school student, school staff member, or school visitor, you have the right to pursue criminal charges by contacting the Criminal Justice, or Juvenile Court systems. The principal, their designee or the parent, may contact the Philadelphia Police to respond to any type of allegation.

In cases where the offense is against a particular person, the Police will determine if they will bring criminal charges if the victim expresses a desire to prosecute. Such include assault, threats, sexual abuse and theft of personal property. Where it

is agreed that criminal conduct has occurred, the principal or her designee will initiate an Internal School Investigation to determine appropriate disciplinary action, and notify the Philadelphia Police Department. The assistant principal or designee will provide information related to the investigation with the Philadelphia Police Department as necessary.

If there is disagreement between you and the school staff as to whether a crime has been committed, you may contact the Philadelphia Police directly through the 911 system. Depending upon the nature of the alleged criminal act, you may be referred to the private criminal complaint process.

If the alleged offender is an adult, a private criminal complaint is issued by the District Attorney's Office. The telephone numbers of that unit are 215-686-9863/9864/9865.

Where the accused is a juvenile (under 18 years of age), a private criminal complaint is issued by the Juvenile Court. The telephone number for the Juvenile Unit is 215-686-7430. Where you have been the victim of an assault and are not satisfied with the school's response, or if you wish assistance in dealing with the school, contact the Office of Safe Schools Advocate from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Safe Schools Advocate telephone number is 215-644-1277.

Note: Internal school disciplinary action shall not in any way deprive the school or an individual victim from pursuing any legal remedies available in the Criminal, Civil or Juvenile Courts of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or the United States.

## **LEGAL NOTICES/RIGHT TO KNOW**

Numerous federal laws require school districts to provide students, parents, and/or the public with notices. Please visit our website for annual notices to see additional information on child find procedures, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title I, Title IX, and Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, laws regarding child abuse and mandatory abuse reporting, provision of services to homeless students, student privacy and confidentiality, and other laws.

Please find and review these notices at [panamcs.org](http://panamcs.org). If you have any questions, please contact the School Administration.