



PAN AMERICAN ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

—2026-2027—

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A Message from our CEO/Principal

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to a new and exciting school year at Pan American Academy Charter School! We are delighted to have you as part of our school community and are looking forward to a year filled with growth, learning, and achievement.

At Pan American Academy Charter School, we believe every child has the ability to thrive in a caring, bilingual, internationally minded learning community. Together with our families, we strive to develop compassionate, accountable, respectful, and engaged students who are prepared for success in school and beyond.

This handbook serves as a guide to school policies, procedures, expectations, and available resources. While it addresses many common questions, it cannot anticipate every situation. The school reserves the right to interpret, revise, or update procedures as necessary to comply with applicable law and Board policy.

Inside this handbook, you will find details on:

- **Academic Policies:** Guidelines on grading, homework, and academic integrity.
- **Code of Conduct:** Expectations for student behavior and disciplinary procedures.
- **Support Services:** Resources available to support student well-being and academic success.
- **Health and Safety Protocols:** Procedures to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

We encourage you to read through this handbook carefully and discuss its contents as a family. Understanding these guidelines will help create a positive and productive school environment for everyone.

Our school's success is built on the active involvement and support of our students, parents, and staff. We value your partnership and look forward to collaborating with you to deliver an exceptional educational experience.

Thank you for your commitment to our school community. Let's make this year a remarkable one!

Warm regards,

Dr. Darcy Russotto
Chief Executive Officer/Principal
Pan American Academy Charter School

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About Us

Pan American Academy Charter School is an independent, free, public K-8 charter school serving approximately 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 cultivating the next generation of strong, internationally minded, bilingual leaders in our community.

A unique feature of Pan American Academy is our 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 offer a biliterate, bicultural, academically enriched program in English and Spanish, enabling students to maximize 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 3 and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in grades 4 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.

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 foster a supportive school community culture that promotes well-being and enables all students to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

C.A.R.E. and the IB Learner Profile

At Pan American Academy, we believe in achieving our goals through **C.A.R.E.:** Compassionate, Accountable, Respectful, and Engaged.

Our students will strive to be:

⌘ Inquirers	⌘ Principled	⌘ Balanced
⌘ Knowledgeable	⌘ Open-minded	⌘ Reflective
⌘ Thinkers	⌘ Caring	

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

GOVERNANCE

Board of Trustees

Nelson Flores, Ph.D., Board Chair
Ashley Feuer-Edwards
Derek Coffman
Tiffany Delgado-Bickley

Jake Becker, Treasurer
Hector Nuñez
Nelbaluz Reyes, Parent Representative
Jessika Garcia, Parent Representative

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 outlines the school's Code of Conduct, which aims to inform students, parents, and school personnel about the expected conduct and behavior of all students, thereby ensuring 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.

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 generally held via Zoom, with links provided upon request by the school board liaison.

Public Participation

The Board of Trustees welcomes public participation and recognizes the importance of hearing from families, employees, taxpayers, and community members regarding matters that are or may come before the Board.

PAACS Board meetings are conducted in accordance with Pennsylvania's Sunshine Act. A reasonable opportunity for public comment will be provided at advertised regular and special meetings before the Board takes official action on matters under consideration. The Board may establish reasonable rules regarding the time, place, manner, and length of public comment to maintain an orderly and efficient meeting.

Individuals who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit a Public Comment Request at least 24 hours before the meeting so the Board Liaison can coordinate participation. Requests may be submitted:

- through the school's website;
- by U.S. mail; or
- by hand delivery to:

Pan American Academy Charter School
ATTN: Board of Trustees Public Comment Request
2830 N. American Street
Philadelphia, PA 19133

Advance registration is encouraged for planning purposes but does not eliminate any right to participate that may otherwise be provided under applicable law or Board policy.

The following procedures apply to public comment:

- The total public-comment period is generally limited to 30 minutes.
- Each speaker is generally limited to three minutes.
- Speakers should identify themselves by name and state the topic they wish to address. A speaker may be asked to provide their municipality or place of residence for the meeting record.

- Comments must be directed to the Board Chair rather than individual Board members, employees, students, or members of the audience.
- Board members and administrators generally do not respond to questions or engage in discussion during public comment. Concerns may be referred to the appropriate administrator for follow-up.
- The Board Chair may interrupt or end comments that are disruptive, threatening, obscene, excessively repetitive, unrelated to Board business, or that improperly disclose confidential student or personnel information.
- Written comments may be submitted for distribution to the Board. Submission of written comments does not guarantee that the comments will be read aloud during the meeting or reproduced in full in the meeting minutes.
- When the number of speakers exceeds the available time, the Board Chair may adjust individual speaking time or use another reasonable procedure to provide an opportunity for participation.

Public comment is not the appropriate forum for discussing confidential student information, individual employee matters, pending disciplinary proceedings, or other information protected by law. Such concerns should be addressed through the appropriate administrative, grievance, or complaint process.

COMPLIANCE AND LEGAL NOTICES

Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination

Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, equitable, and inclusive learning and working environment. Discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation are prohibited in all school programs, activities, services, educational opportunities, admissions practices, and employment practices.

PAACS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy or related conditions, age, religion, creed, disability, marital or familial status, veteran or military status, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

This prohibition applies to conduct involving students, employees, applicants, families, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and other members of the school community. It also applies to school-sponsored activities, transportation, digital platforms, and off-campus conduct when the conduct affects access to the school's programs or substantially disrupts the school environment.

PAACS prohibits retaliation against any person who:

- reports discrimination or harassment;
- participates in an investigation or grievance process;
- requests an accommodation or supportive measure; or
- exercises a right protected by civil-rights law.

Retaliation is a separate violation of this policy, regardless of whether the original complaint is ultimately substantiated.

Reports will be reviewed promptly and addressed through the applicable civil-rights, Title IX, Section 504, employee, or student disciplinary procedure. Appropriate supportive measures may be offered while a report is reviewed. Violations may result in corrective or disciplinary action consistent with applicable law, Board policy, employee procedures, and the Student Code of Conduct.

Additional nondiscrimination notices, complaint procedures, and coordinator information are available through the school's website and main office.

Title IX and Civil Rights Contacts

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. PAACS also complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination Act, and other applicable civil-rights requirements.

Questions, concerns, or reports regarding discrimination, harassment, retaliation, Title IX, or other civil-rights matters may be directed to:

Civil Rights and Title IX Coordinator

Lisandra Kelly, Chief Operating Officer
Pan American Academy Charter School
2830 N. American Street
Philadelphia, PA 19133
Telephone: (215) 425-1212
Email: lkelly@panamcs.org

Questions or requests related to disability discrimination, accessibility, or Section 504 accommodations may also be directed to the school's designated Section 504 Coordinator. PAACS will publish the names and contact information of its Title IX and Section 504 coordinators in its annual notices and on its website. Pennsylvania guidance recommends that nondiscrimination notices identify the persons responsible for coordinating Title IX and Section 504 compliance.

A complaint may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Information about OCR's complaint process and current contact information is available through the U.S. Department of Education.

Civil Rights Grievance Procedure

Students, parents, guardians, employees, applicants, and other members of the school community may report discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, or retaliation verbally or in writing.

A report may be made to the Civil Rights and Title IX Coordinator, the CEO/Principal, or another school administrator. Reports may be submitted through the school's grievance form, by email, by telephone, in person, or through another reasonable method made available by PAACS.

A report should include, when known:

- the name and contact information of the person submitting the report;
- the name of the person affected;
- a description of the conduct;
- the date and location of the incident;
- the names of individuals involved or witnesses; and
- any supporting information or documents.

PAACS will respond promptly and equitably. Depending on the nature of the allegation, the school may:

1. conduct an initial assessment;
2. provide supportive measures;
3. notify the appropriate coordinator or administrator;
4. conduct an impartial investigation;
5. provide the parties with an opportunity to share information;
6. issue findings or determine appropriate next steps; and
7. take corrective action when warranted.

Information will be shared only with individuals who need it to review the matter, provide support, comply with law, or protect the school community. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because the school may need to investigate and respond.

No person will be subjected to retaliation for making a good-faith report, participating in an investigation, requesting support, or exercising a protected right.

Some complaints, including allegations of sex discrimination or sexual harassment, may be subject to a separate Title IX procedure. Complaints concerning special education or Section 504 services may also be subject to separate procedural safeguards or dispute-resolution processes.

A person may file a complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights without first completing the PAACS grievance process. OCR generally requires complaints to be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination, although a waiver may be available in some circumstances.

Annual Legal Notices and Student Privacy

PAACS provides families with annual notices regarding students' and families' rights under applicable federal and state laws. These notices may address:

- student education records and privacy under FERPA;
- surveys and protected information under PPRA;
- nondiscrimination and Title IX;
- Section 504 and disability accommodations;
- special education rights and procedural safeguards;
- Title I programs and family engagement;
- services for students experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act;
- English Learner services and language access;
- student health, safety, and mandatory reporting requirements; and
- other notices required by law.

Current notices, applicable coordinator information, and complaint procedures are available on the school's website or from the main office.

Language Access

PAACS provides meaningful access to school programs, services, and information for parents and guardians who have limited English proficiency.

The school will provide interpretation or translated information, without charge, when needed to help families participate meaningfully in their child's education. Language assistance may be provided for matters including:

- enrollment and registration;
- academic progress and parent-teacher conferences;
- attendance and discipline;
- special education and Section 504 meetings;
- health and safety information;
- emergency communications;
- complaint and grievance procedures; and
- other important school notices or meetings.

PAACS will use qualified interpreters or appropriate translation resources for essential communications. Children, other students, or untrained individuals should not ordinarily be relied upon to interpret important or confidential school matters.

Families may request language assistance by contacting the main office at (215) 425-1212. Requesting interpretation or translation will not affect a student's enrollment, services, or educational opportunities.

Right-to-Know Requests

Pan American Academy Charter School complies with Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law (65 P.S. §§ 67.101–67.3104), which provides the public with the right to request access to certain public records maintained by the school, subject to applicable exemptions.

Requests for public records must be submitted in writing to the school's designated Right-to-Know Officer. Requests should clearly describe the records being requested to help the school identify and locate the appropriate documents.

Right-to-Know Officer
Pan American Academy Charter School
2830 N. American Street
Philadelphia, PA 19133
Telephone: (215) 425-1212
Email: lkelly@panamcs.org

The school will respond to Right-to-Know requests within the timeframes established by Pennsylvania law. Certain records may be exempt from disclosure, and applicable fees may be charged for copies in accordance with the Office of Open Records fee schedule.

Additional information, including the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records Standard Right-to-Know Request Form, is available at www.openrecords.pa.gov.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

Pennsylvania law identifies school employees and certain contractors as mandated reporters. A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse must make an immediate and direct report to Pennsylvania ChildLine. The employee does not investigate the allegation or wait for confirmation before reporting.

Mandated reporters may submit a report electronically through Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Portal or contact ChildLine at **1-800-932-0313**. ChildLine is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

After making the direct report, the employee will notify the CEO/Principal or the school administrator designated to receive internal notice, consistent with Pennsylvania law and PAACS procedures. Internal notification does not replace or delay the employee's direct report to ChildLine.

School personnel do not determine whether abuse occurred. ChildLine, county child protective services, and law-enforcement agencies are responsible for screening, assessing, and investigating reports.

Signs or circumstances that may create concern include, but are not limited to:

- unexplained injuries or concerning patterns of injury;
- a student's disclosure of physical or sexual abuse;
- serious or persistent neglect of a child's basic needs;
- inadequate supervision that places a child at risk;
- sexual exploitation or inappropriate sexual conduct involving a child;
- threatening, degrading, or harmful treatment;
- a caregiver appearing unable to safely supervise a child because of intoxication or impairment;
- concerning changes in a child's behavior, emotional condition, or school participation; or
- other information creating reasonable cause to suspect child abuse.

A report is based on reasonable suspicion; proof is not required.

Reports and related information will be handled in accordance with confidentiality requirements. PAACS will not promise complete confidentiality to a student who discloses suspected abuse because the school may be legally required to make a report. Parents or guardians may not be informed before or after a report when doing so could place the child at greater risk, interfere with an investigation, or conflict with instructions from child-protection or law-enforcement authorities.

Any person, not only a mandated reporter, may report suspected child abuse or neglect to ChildLine. In an immediate emergency, call **911**.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & STUDENT RECORDS

Title I School-Parent Compact

We value your role in helping your child achieve high academic standards through the Title I Program. The following is an outline of some ways you and school staff can build and maintain a partnership to share responsibility for supporting your child's learning.

School Responsibilities

- Provide high-quality standards-based curriculum, technology, and instructional materials
- Strive to address the individual needs of each child
- Provide parents with Title I program resources and training
- Provide opportunities for ongoing communication between you and the staff through:

- annual Title I Parent/Staff Meeting
- ongoing program updates regarding your child's progress in the Title I program
- various opportunities to communicate with administration and instructional staff via phone, web, Classroom Dojo, mailings, email blasts, conferences, etc.

Parent Responsibilities

- Create a home environment that supports learning
- Read with my child for at least 15 minutes each day
- Send my child to school regularly
- Monitor homework assignments, giving help and support when needed
- Monitor television watching and computer usage, and encourage positive use of your child's extracurricular time
- Review all school communication and respond promptly
- Actively participate in decisions relating to the education of my child

Student Responsibilities

The student realizes education is important. The student is the one responsible for their own success. Therefore, the student agrees to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of his/her ability:

- Get to school on time every day
- Develop a positive attitude toward school
- Be responsible for completing homework on time
- Be cooperative by carrying out the teacher's instructions and asking for help when needed
- Do daily work that is neat and reflects the student's best effort
- Be respectful to all school members and to school property

Please review this Compact with your child. Please contact our main office or your child's classroom teacher if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support and involvement in your child's education.

Parent Code of Conduct

At Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS), we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for all students, staff, and families. We expect all parents/guardians to model behavior that reflects courtesy, decency, and respect at all times, both on and off school grounds.

General Expectations: Parents/guardians must maintain **control over their behavior** and interactions at all times. Interactions with staff, students, and other families should be **professional and constructive**, even when conflicts or differences of opinion arise.

Prohibited Behaviors

- Threats of any kind toward an employee, student, parent, or any adult associated with PAACS are strictly prohibited. **Any threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and may result in temporary or permanent restriction from school grounds.**
- Corporal punishment (physical discipline) is not permitted on school property. While verbal reprimands of your own child may be appropriate, verbal abuse is not tolerated.
- Disciplining or correcting another child (not your own) is strictly prohibited.

Addressing Concerns

- If a parent has concerns about another child's behavior, they should direct those concerns to the classroom teacher, Assistant Principal, or Principal, not the other child's parent.
- Parents may not approach or confront another parent regarding their child's behavior. All concerns must be directed to the school staff, who will handle the matter appropriately.
- While parents may wish to know the outcome of reported concerns, the school cannot share details with other students due to confidentiality policies. Likewise, we will never discuss your child's behavior with another parent.

Conflict Resolution

If a conflict arises, the Assistant Principal or Principal will arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss concerns and find solutions. Parents are encouraged to work collaboratively with teachers to address behavior or disciplinary questions in a positive and respectful manner.

Failure to follow these expectations may result in restricted access to school property, modified meeting arrangements, or other reasonable measures necessary to maintain a safe and orderly school environment.

Parent Concerns Resolution

PAACS values open communication with families and seeks to address concerns promptly, respectfully, and at the level closest to where the concern arose.

Whenever possible, parents and guardians should first contact the teacher, employee, or administrator most directly involved. Many concerns can be resolved through a conversation, conference, or clarification of school procedures.

A parent or guardian may also complete a **Parent Concern Form**, available in the main office or on the school's website. After receiving the form, the Principal, Assistant Principal, or other appropriate administrator will review the concern, gather relevant information, and determine the appropriate next steps.

A conference or response will generally be provided within five school days after receipt of the form, or as soon as practicable when additional review is necessary. The school may extend this timeframe when the concern involves multiple individuals, requires a detailed investigation, or occurs during a school closure or other unusual circumstance.

The school will protect student and employee confidentiality throughout the review process. As a result, PAACS may not be able to share disciplinary actions, personnel information, or details involving another student or family.

If the concern remains unresolved after administrative review, the parent or guardian may:

1. request further review by the CEO/Principal or appropriate senior administrator;
2. use any applicable formal grievance, special education, Section 504, Title IX, or civil-rights complaint procedure; or
3. communicate with the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Board's public-comment and complaint procedures.

Public comment provides an opportunity to address the Board, but it is not an appeal hearing or a substitute for a legally required grievance, due-process, or complaint procedure. The Board generally will not discuss or decide an individual concern during the public-comment period.

Student Records and FERPA

Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS) recognizes the rights of parents and eligible students to inspect and review student education records in accordance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** and applicable Pennsylvania law.

Requesting Student Records

Parents or guardians may request to inspect or obtain copies of their child's education records by contacting the Main Office during regular business hours.

Requests may be submitted in person, by email, or in writing.

PAACS will make education records available for inspection within the time required by law, generally within **45 days** of receiving the request. Whenever possible, the school will respond more promptly.

School staff may be available to review records with parents or guardians, explain information contained in the records, and assist in correcting factual inaccuracies through the procedures established by FERPA.

Questions regarding student records may be directed to the Main Office.

Co-Parents, Guardians, and Custodial Arrangements

Unless otherwise limited by a legally binding court order, both parents have equal rights to inspect and review their child's education records under FERPA, regardless of custody arrangements.

Parents are responsible for providing PAACS with copies of any court orders or legally binding documents that restrict parental access to educational records or limit educational decision-making authority.

When the school has received documentation restricting access, PAACS will comply with the terms of the applicable court order.

If no court order restricting access has been provided, both parents will be afforded access to their child's education records in accordance with applicable law.

Student Record Amendments

Parents or eligible students who believe that information contained in an education record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise violates the student's privacy rights may request that the school amend the record in accordance with FERPA procedures. Information regarding this process is available from the Main Office.

Media Consent

Parents or guardians may choose whether to authorize PAACS to use their child's photograph, video, voice, artwork, or schoolwork in school publications, on the school website, on social media, in newsletters, in promotional materials, or in other school-sponsored communications that celebrate student learning and school activities.

Media authorization is indicated through the school's enrollment or annual registration process and remains in effect until the parent or guardian submits a written request to change or revoke their consent.

Parents or guardians may update or withdraw their media consent at any time by contacting the Main Office or emailing information@panamcs.org. Revocation of consent will apply to future publications and communications and cannot be applied retroactively to materials already published or distributed.

Additional information regarding student privacy rights under FERPA, directory information, inspection of records, and annual notifications is available in the Annual Legal Notices & Student Privacy section of this handbook and on the school's website.

Enrollment & Withdrawal

Pan American Academy Charter School ("PAACS") serves students in kindergarten through grade 8. Admission is open to eligible students residing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, subject to available space, lawful enrollment preferences, and the Pennsylvania Charter School Law.

PAACS does not discriminate in admissions or enrollment on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, ethnic origin, religion, disability, intellectual or athletic ability, academic achievement or aptitude, English-language proficiency, immigration or citizenship status, political affiliation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

PAACS participates in the Apply Philly Charter common application, lottery, offer, and waitlist process. When the number of eligible applicants for a grade exceeds the number of available seats, admission is determined through a random lottery administered through Apply Philly Charter.

Applicants who do not receive an offer are placed on a waitlist in the order established by the School's lawful enrollment-priority structure and the applicant's random lottery number. Waitlists remain in effect only for the school year for which the application was submitted. Families seeking admission for a later school year must submit a new application during the applicable application period.

Enrollment capacity is determined annually based on grade-level availability and the School's approved enrollment limits.

How to Apply

Families may apply through Apply Philly Charter by:

- Visiting **ApplyPhillyCharter.org**; or
- Calling **1-800-891-3999**.

Families needing assistance may visit the School's main office during regular business hours. School staff will provide reasonable assistance with the application process and, when available, access to a computer or tablet.

Interpretation, translation, disability-related accommodations, and other reasonable assistance are available upon request. No interview, school tour, information session, fee, test, essay, or recommendation is required to apply.

Submitting an application does not guarantee admission.

Lottery and Enrollment Preference

Consistent with the Pennsylvania Charter School Law and the School's approved charter, PAACS applies lawful enrollment preferences through its lottery priority structure.

Preferences include, as applicable:

- **Sibling Preference:** Eligible siblings of students currently enrolled at PAACS. Families must identify the sibling relationship on the Apply Philly Charter application by the application deadline.
- **Founding-School Preference:** Children of individuals who qualify for the founding-school preference under Pennsylvania law and the School's approved charter.
- **Catchment-Area Preference:** Eligible applicants residing within the School's charter-authorized catchment area, currently identified as ZIP Codes 19133 and 19134.
- **Philadelphia Residency Preference:** Applicants residing within the School District of Philadelphia receive preference over applicants residing outside Philadelphia, consistent with Pennsylvania law and the School's approved charter.

All preferences are subject to verification and are applied only as authorized by law and the School's charter.

Offers and Waitlist Notifications

Apply Philly Charter and PAACS notify families of offers and waitlist status using the contact information provided on the application.

When a seat becomes available, it is offered to the next eligible applicant in established waitlist order. The notice will state:

- How to accept the offer;
- The deadline for accepting;
- The deadline for submitting enrollment materials;
- Available submission methods; and
- Contact information for assistance.

Families should keep their telephone number, email address, and mailing address current in Apply Philly Charter.

Deadlines may be extended when appropriate because of extenuating circumstances, disability-related needs, language-access needs, technology barriers, homelessness, foster-care placement, or other legal protections.

Required Documentation for Enrollment and Timeline

After accepting an enrollment offer, families are ordinarily asked to submit the following five enrollment items:

1. Proof of the student's age;
2. Proof of residency;
3. Immunization records or an authorized exemption;
4. Parent Registration Statement, also known as the Act 26 form; and
5. Home Language Survey.

The School will provide the applicable submission deadline and instructions with the enrollment offer. Materials may be submitted through the methods identified by the School, including in person, by mail, or through a secure electronic method when available.

PAACS will accept any form of residency documentation authorized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The School will not require a specific residency document when another authorized document is available. A driver's license, vehicle registration, or Pennsylvania Department of Transportation identification card is not required as proof of residency.

Academic records, special education records, disciplinary records, English Learner records, custody documents, Social Security information, and immigration or citizenship documents are not conditions of enrollment unless a particular document is specifically authorized or required by law.

Information needed to provide special education, English Learner, McKinney-Vento, foster-care, or other educational services may be requested after enrollment. The absence of those records will not delay enrollment.

Immediate Enrollment Protections

Students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, and other students entitled to immediate enrollment under state or federal law will be enrolled promptly even when ordinarily requested records are unavailable.

For students experiencing homelessness, PAACS will:

- Waive proof-of-residency and other documentation requirements that create an enrollment barrier;
- Accept alternative contact information when a family does not have a permanent address, telephone number, or email address;
- Waive or adjust application, acceptance, and document-submission deadlines when required;
- Ensure that the student is not disadvantaged in the lottery, waitlist, offer, or enrollment process; and
- Provide assistance through the School's McKinney-Vento liaison.

PAACS does not deny or delay application, admission, or enrollment based on the immigration or citizenship status of a student or family member.

A student is considered enrolled when the applicable enrollment process has been completed or when immediate enrollment is required by law.

Student Records

Upon enrollment, PAACS will request educational records from the student's previous school in accordance with Pennsylvania law. Parents and guardians are encouraged to promptly notify the student's previous school to facilitate the transfer of records.

Withdrawal from School

If a student will no longer attend PAACS, the parent or legal guardian should notify the school as soon as possible and complete a Student Withdrawal Form available through the school's main office. Whenever possible, families are encouraged to provide at least two weeks' advance notice to assist with the transition.

Prior to withdrawal, all school-issued property, including iPads, chargers, textbooks, library materials, identification cards, and any other school equipment, must be returned.

Upon confirmation of enrollment in another educational program or school, PAACS will transfer the student's educational records in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

Once the withdrawal process is complete, the student will no longer be enrolled at PAACS and will no longer be eligible to receive educational services from the school.

McKinney-Vento Support (Families Experiencing Homelessness)

Pan American Academy Charter School is committed to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to a free, appropriate public education in accordance with the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**.

Students experiencing homelessness or housing instability have the right to immediate enrollment and continued participation in school, even if they are unable to provide the typically required enrollment documents at the time of enrollment.

If your family is experiencing homelessness or housing instability, our **School Social Worker (McKinney-Vento Liaison)** is available to assist with enrollment, transportation coordination (when applicable), access to school services and community resources, and other supports to help your child remain engaged in school. For assistance, please contact the **School Social Worker** at **(215) 425-1212** or email socialworker@panamcs.org.

Emergency Contacts, Custody, and Address Changes

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the office of any changes to emergency contacts, address, phone number, or child custody status to ensure the school has accurate, 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. Please visit/call the main office or email information@panamcs.org to update information.

STUDENT HEALTH & NUTRITION

School Health Services

Pan American Academy Charter School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the health and well-being of every student. Our Wellness Center, open Monday through Friday during the school year, is staffed daily by a health room aide and/or licensed practical nurse (LPN), under the supervision of a registered nurse (RN). The goal of the Wellness Center is to promote student health, respond to illness and injury during the school day, support chronic health conditions, and reduce barriers to learning so that every student is healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

Immunization Requirements

In accordance with Pennsylvania State Law (28 PA Code §§ 23.81–23.87), all students attending Pan American Academy Charter School are required to provide documented proof of immunizations prior to the first day of school. Students must meet all immunization requirements established by the Pennsylvania Department of Health for their age and grade level.

Students who do not have up-to-date immunization records may be granted a provisional enrollment period of up to five school days to provide documentation. After this period, they may be excluded from school until their records are complete.

Medical or religious exemptions (including strong moral or ethical convictions similar to a religious belief) are permitted; however, unvaccinated students may be excluded from school during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, as directed by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

Parents/guardians are responsible for submitting updated immunization records, including booster information, to the Wellness Center as soon as they are administered.

Health Records

The Wellness Center maintains health records for each student. Parents/guardians must promptly inform the school of:

- Changes in health status,
- Current medications or long-term medication therapy,
- Medications that have been discontinued,
- Recent hospitalizations, medical treatments, or surgeries,
- Immunizations or booster updates.

Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping all emergency contact information up to date throughout the school year.

Medication at School

School policy prohibits students from carrying prescription or over-the-counter medications at school. Students may not carry or self-administer medication unless authorized in accordance with applicable law, school procedures, and written medical and parental authorization. All medication administered to students at school may only be given under a valid order from a physician and the written consent of the student's parent or guardian (except in cases of life-threatening emergency). Any student who requires medicine to be administered at school must complete a Medical & Parental Consent Form, signed by a parent and the student's physician.

Medication Requirements:

- Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home.
- If medication must be given during school hours, a Medical & Parental Consent Form (signed by the parent and the student's physician) is required. Forms are available online or in the main office.
- Medication must be provided to the school nurse by the Parent, and must be provided in its original container (with safety cap), and properly labeled with the student's name, dosage, pharmacy address and phone number, prescription date, expiration date, instructions for administration, and name of the prescribing health care provider.
- Medication shall be stored in the Wellness Center.

Required Health Screenings & Examinations

Pan American Academy adheres to Pennsylvania Public School Code §1402 and 28 PA Code §§ 23.1–23.45 for health screenings and exams.

- **Physical Exams:** Physical examinations are required upon initial school entry and again in 6th grade. Students entering PAACS from another school may also be required to provide documentation consistent with Pennsylvania requirements.
- **Dental Exams:** Required at school entry, 3rd grade, and 7th grade.
- **Screenings:**
 - **Vision, height, weight, and BMI:** All grades.
 - **Hearing:** Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th
 - **Scoliosis:** 6th and 7th grades.

Parents/guardians will be notified if screenings reveal potential concerns. Students lacking required documentation may be provisionally admitted for up to 5 school days; after this period, exclusion may occur if the records remain incomplete (per 28 PA Code §23.85).

Chronic Health Conditions

Parents/guardians should notify the Wellness Center if their child has asthma, diabetes, seizures, severe allergies, or another chronic medical condition requiring monitoring or emergency intervention during the school day. An Individual Health Plan or Emergency Action Plan may be developed when appropriate. In accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code, students with proper written authorization and demonstrated competency may carry and self-administer inhalers and/or epinephrine auto-injectors.

Student Mental Health

PAACS recognizes that emotional wellness is an important part of student success. Students experiencing emotional, behavioral, or mental health concerns may be referred to school-based support services. Families are encouraged to contact the Student Services Team if they believe their child may benefit from additional support.

Medical Emergencies

All student injuries must be reported to school staff for first aid and documentation. In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called immediately, and parents/guardians and emergency contacts will be notified. Please ensure that your contact information is up to date. When parents or guardians cannot be reached, the school will act in the student's best interest and authorize emergency medical treatment as recommended by emergency medical personnel.

Illness & Return to School

To protect the health of all students and staff, children should stay home when they are sick and return only when their symptoms have resolved. Students may not attend school if they have:

- A fever of **100.4°F or higher**,
- Vomiting or diarrhea,
- Persistent coughing or difficulty breathing,
- An unexplained or contagious rash,
- Any contagious illness (e.g., strep throat, pink eye, flu) until cleared by a healthcare provider.
- or any illness that prevents the student from safely participating in school activities or places others at risk of illness.

Return-to-school Rule

Students must be fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours and have improving symptoms before returning to class.

Head Lice and Bed Bugs

Parents should check their child's hair regularly, especially after vacations or sleepovers, and notify the school if lice are detected. Consistent combing and treatment are the most effective solutions. Pan American Academy follows the guidelines of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and the CDC for lice management. Students may return to school once treatment has begun and consistent with current Philadelphia Department of Public Health guidance.

Bed bugs do not spread disease, but prompt action is required. Parents should inspect bedding and personal items if bed bugs are suspected and inform the school immediately. The school will work with families to address the issue discreetly and in line with public health recommendations.

Nutrition, Allergies, and Meals

PAACS understands that good nutrition is essential to a student's health and development. We encourage our students to eat nutritious school meals, enabling them to concentrate and learn effectively. 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 encouraging healthy eating habits, good hygiene, and regular 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 breakfast and lunch menus are available on the school's website. Menus may change without notice due to product availability.

Food Allergies/Special Dietary Needs

PAACS strives to provide a nut-aware learning environment. Families **SHOULD NOT** send foods containing peanuts or tree nuts due to student allergies. Because allergens can be inadvertently brought into the building, PAACS cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment.

Parents are required to inform the school nurse and the classroom teacher of any food allergies and dietary restrictions their children may have. If special dietary needs are required, a written request must be provided by the physician.

Lunches and Snacks from Home

- Families are encouraged to send nutritious lunches and snacks that support healthy eating habits. Fast food, candy, soda, and other high-sugar beverages are not recommended.
- 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 & 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. Additionally, when available, the school will offer the opportunity to participate in athletic clubs or other extracurricular activities. Participation in extracurricular athletics is subject to eligibility requirements established by the school, including academic, behavioral, attendance, and health expectations.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

School and Office Hours

School Day Start Time	School Day End Time
8:05 AM	3:15 PM

The main office will be open from 8:30 AM until 2:30 PM daily.

Communication Channels

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

1. School Messenger (schoolwide notifications via phone, texts and emails)
2. Student Attendance Notifications via KiINVOLVED (texts)
3. Class Dojo (school and classroom communication app)
4. School Website (panamcs.org)
5. Social Media - [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/panamcs2008) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/panamcs2008) @panamcs2008

Additionally, teachers will provide parents with their school-issued phone numbers to assist with communication. Calls or texts received before or after business hours or during instructional time will not be answered immediately. 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.

Parents/guardians must schedule an appointment to meet with their child's teacher. To request a conference, parents can send an email or a note (via your child) indicating their preferred day and time. The teacher will confirm or propose a new time. Meetings during school hours are available only if both staff and parents agree.

The CEO/Principal is available before or during the school day to meet with parents who request an appointment. Appointments may be requested in writing, by email, or by phone. The CEO/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 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 love for Pan American Academy Charter School and let other families know about our wonderful school!

Student Arrival and Dismissal

Students are expected to attend school every day, arrive on time, and be picked up promptly at the end of the school day. Student safety is our highest priority during arrival and dismissal. Families are expected to follow all school procedures to ensure a safe, orderly, and efficient process for everyone.

Morning Arrival

School gates open for student arrival at 7:50 AM Staff supervision begins at this time.

Students who arrive before 7:50 AM must remain under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian outside the school gates, as the school does not provide supervision before gates open.

Parents and guardians are not permitted to enter through the gates during morning arrival unless authorized by school staff.

Arrival Locations

Kindergarten	• Enter through the 3rd Street Gate and proceed to the Main Building. • Only kindergarten students and their siblings may enter through this gate.
Grades 1-4	• Enter through the American Street Gate and proceed to the Annex. • Kindergarten students may not enter through this gate.
Grades 5-8	• Enter through the American Street Gate and proceed directly to the Student Cafeteria.

Car Drop-off

Families arriving by vehicle must use the designated drop-off lane on American Street, identified by orange traffic cones.

For the safety of students and to maintain traffic flow:

- Follow all directions provided by school staff.
- Pull forward as directed before stopping.
- Students should exit only from the passenger side of the vehicle onto the sidewalk.
- Have backpacks and personal belongings ready before entering the drop-off lane.
- Drivers must remain in their vehicles.
- Parking, standing, or leaving a vehicle unattended in the drop-off lane is prohibited.

PAACS utilizes a "**Kiss and Go**" procedure to promote a safe and efficient arrival. Families should say goodbye quickly so vehicles can continue moving and minimize traffic congestion.

Late Arrival

School gates close PROMPTLY at **8:15 AM**.

Students arriving after 8:15 AM are considered late and must enter through the **Main Entrance on American Street**, where they will:

- Check in with school staff;
- Receive a late pass; and
- Report directly to class.

Repeated tardiness may result in attendance interventions or referral to Student Services in accordance with the school's attendance procedures.

End-of-Day Dismissal

The instructional day ends at **3:15 PM**.

Students will report to their designated dismissal locations. Families are expected to arrive on time to ensure an orderly dismissal process.

Kindergarten	• Students will be dismissed through the 3rd Street Gate. • Parents or authorized adults will report to the Kindergarten Schoolyard, where teachers will release students individually. Families should exit through the gate closest to the corner of 3rd Street and Cambria Street.
Grades 1-4	• Students will be dismissed through the American Street Gate. • Parents or authorized adults must enter the schoolyard and report to their child's class line. • Teachers will release students only after visually confirming the authorized adult or approved sibling. Students will not be released to adults waiting in vehicles or outside the schoolyard. • Before leaving the dismissal line, each student will acknowledge the authorized adult with their teacher to ensure a safe and accurate release.
Grades 5-8	• Students are dismissed through the Front Entrance or Small Gate and are released independently unless alternate dismissal arrangements have been made with the school.

Inclement Weather Dismissal

When dismissal procedures are modified due to severe weather, families should expect additional time to ensure a safe and orderly release.

Kindergarten	Parents or authorized adults will enter through the 3rd Street Entrance and proceed to their child's designated classroom for dismissal.
Grades 1-4	Parents or authorized adults will enter through the American Street Gate and report to the Annex for student pickup.
Grades 5-8	Students will be dismissed through the Front Entrance unless otherwise directed by school administration.

For safety reasons, students may not remain on school grounds after dismissal unless they are under the direct supervision of school personnel or participating in a school-sponsored activity.

Early Student Pick-Up

Students being dismissed before the end of the school day must be signed out by a parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact through the Main Office. Early dismissals after the designated afternoon cutoff time (for example, 2:45 p.m.) may not be permitted, except in emergencies, to avoid disrupting end-of-day dismissal procedures.

Changes to Dismissal Plans

The main office and faculty begin preparing for student dismissal at 2:30 PM. During dismissal preparation, staff availability is limited due to supervision and safety responsibilities. **Therefore, early dismissals will only be granted before 2:30 PM.** Students will only be released to individuals and daycares listed on the child's emergency contact form.

If your child needs to go home with someone not on the emergency contact list, written permission is required. Photo identification may be requested for anyone other than the parent/guardian picking up a child. We cannot release students based on verbal permission (phone calls).

Changes to daycare pickup **MUST BE** communicated to the main office by 2:30 PM.

Late Pickup Policy

Pan American Academy Charter School dismisses students promptly at **3:15 PM**. Families are expected to arrange for students to be picked up on time each day. We understand that unexpected delays may occur and encourage families to develop backup transportation plans and maintain current emergency contact information.

If a parent or guardian anticipates arriving late, they should notify the Main Office as soon as possible.

Late Pick-Up Procedures

If a student has not been picked up after dismissal:

1. School staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian using the contact information on file.
2. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, school staff will contact the student's authorized emergency contacts.
3. Students will remain under adult supervision in a designated location until they are picked up by an authorized adult.

Parents or authorized adults arriving after dismissal must enter through the Main Entrance and sign the Late Pick-Up Register before the student is released.

If the school is unable to reach a parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact within a reasonable period of time, or if circumstances raise concerns regarding the student's safety or welfare, PAACS may contact the appropriate authorities, including law enforcement or child protective services, consistent with applicable law and school procedures.

Repeated Late Pick-Ups

Repeated late pick-ups may result in:

- a conference with school administration;
- referral to the Student Services Team to identify and address transportation or family support needs;
- development of a transportation improvement plan; or
- other appropriate administrative action.

When repeated late pickups create ongoing concerns about a student's safety or well-being, PAACS may be required to report to the appropriate child welfare agency in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

After-School Programs

Families are encouraged to consider enrolling their child in a school-sponsored after-school program or extracurricular activity when appropriate. Participation is subject to space availability, eligibility requirements, and completion of the required registration process.

Students who receive a SEPTA fare card and are not participating in a supervised school-sponsored activity are expected to leave campus promptly at dismissal using their regular transportation arrangements.

SmartPass (Digital Hall Pass System)

To promote student safety, accountability, and maximize instructional time, Pan American Academy Charter School uses **SmartPass**, a digital hall pass system, to manage student movement throughout the school day.

Students must obtain teacher approval before leaving any classroom or instructional area. When approved, a digital pass is created in SmartPass identifying the student's destination and the time the pass was issued. Staff members can verify active passes throughout the building to help ensure students are where they are expected to be while minimizing classroom disruptions. SmartPass maintains a digital record of student movement during the school day and allows the school to manage hallway traffic, room capacities, and other safety measures. SmartPass does not use GPS or location tracking; it records only authorized school passes created within the system.

Students are expected to:

- Obtain teacher permission before leaving class.
- Travel directly to and from their approved destination.
- Return to class promptly when their business is complete.
- Follow all teacher and administrator directions regarding hallway expectations.
- Use SmartPass honestly and appropriately. Creating, altering, using another student's pass, or attempting to circumvent the system is prohibited.

Failure to follow SmartPass procedures or misuse of the system may result in the loss of hallway privileges and/or disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Student Transportation

Transportation services for eligible students are provided by the School District of Philadelphia in accordance with applicable laws and School District transportation policies.

Generally, students in Grades 1-6 who meet eligibility requirements are assigned school bus transportation. Eligible students in Grades 7-8 receive SEPTA Fare Cards for transportation to and from school.

Families needing transportation assistance or information regarding eligibility should contact the Main Office.

Parents and guardians are responsible for informing the school of their child's regular dismissal arrangement (school bus, SEPTA, walking, or parent pick-up). For student safety, dismissal plans should remain consistent whenever possible.

Changes to a student's regular transportation or dismissal arrangements must be communicated to the Main Office no later than 2:30 PM. The school cannot guarantee that transportation changes received after this time can be accommodated.

School Bus Transportation

Bus routes, stop locations, schedules, and transportation eligibility are established and managed by the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Transportation. For transportation questions or concerns, families may contact the School District's Transportation Dispatch Office at (215) 400-4350.

Dispatch representatives are available beginning at 5:30 AM until the last student has safely completed their route. Additional transportation information is available through the School District of Philadelphia's website.

Bus Safety Expectations

Students riding school buses are expected to demonstrate the same positive behavior as throughout the school day and to follow all directions from the bus driver and School District transportation personnel.

Students are expected to:

- Remain seated and face forward while the bus is in motion.
- Speak respectfully to the bus driver and other passengers.
- Keep hands, feet, and personal belongings inside the bus at all times.
- Follow all bus safety instructions.
- Keep aisles and emergency exits clear.
- Refrain from fighting, bullying, harassment, profanity, or disruptive behavior.
- Refrain from eating or drinking on the bus unless authorized for medical reasons.

Failure to follow bus expectations may result in disciplinary action, including parent conferences, detention, temporary suspension of transportation privileges, or other consequences consistent with School District transportation procedures and the PAACS Student Code of Conduct.

Students Using SEPTA

Students issued SEPTA Fare Cards are expected to:

- Travel directly to and from school.
- Follow SEPTA rules and regulations.
- Demonstrate respectful and responsible behavior while using public transportation.
- Carry and use their fare card responsibly.

Students who receive SEPTA Fare Cards and are not participating in a supervised school-sponsored activity are expected to leave campus promptly at dismissal.

Student Walkers

Families who authorize their child to walk to and from school are encouraged to review safe walking routes and pedestrian safety with their child.

Students should:

- Cross only at designated crosswalks whenever possible.
- Follow traffic signals and crossing guard directions.
- Walk directly to and from school.
- Demonstrate safe and respectful behavior while traveling to and from school.

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring the school has accurate information regarding their child's transportation arrangements. Transportation changes should be reported promptly to the Main Office.

Breakfast, Lunch & Recess

PAACS believes that nutritious meals, physical activity, and opportunities for social interaction are essential to student health, wellness, and academic success.

Breakfast and lunch are served daily in the student cafeteria. Breakfast is available each school day 7:50 AM to 8:10 AM.

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 participate in daily outdoor recess, weather permitting. During inclement weather, recess activities are held indoors under staff supervision.

Lunch and recess schedules are determined annually and communicated to students and families at the beginning of each school year. Schedules may be adjusted throughout the year to meet instructional or operational needs.

Lunch and Recess Expectations

Lunch and recess are opportunities for students to eat, socialize, recharge, and practice the PAACS C.A.R.E. expectations in a safe and respectful environment.

Students are expected to:

- Use respectful language and appropriate voice levels.
- Remain seated during lunch unless given permission to leave their seat.
- Follow directions from all school employees promptly and respectfully.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship and include others during recess activities.
- Keep hands, feet, and personal belongings to themselves.
- Respect school equipment, playground equipment, and cafeteria furniture.
- Clean up after themselves and dispose of trash properly.
- Help maintain a clean cafeteria, schoolyard, and restroom environment.
- Wait quietly for dismissal and leave the cafeteria only when directed by staff.

Classes demonstrating positive behavior during lunch and recess may earn **ClassDojo points, classroom rewards, Super Cheetah recognition, or other schoolwide incentives** as part of the PAACS positive behavior support program.

Student Safety During Recess

Student safety is our highest priority during recess. Students are expected to:

- Stay within designated supervision areas.
- Use playground equipment safely and appropriately.
- Report injuries, unsafe conditions, or conflicts to an adult immediately.
- Follow all playground rules and staff directions.

Unsafe play, horseplay, fighting, or behavior that may result in injury is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Extracurricular Programs & Athletics

Pan American Academy Charter School offers a variety of extracurricular opportunities that enrich the educational experience and encourage students to develop new interests, leadership skills, teamwork, and school pride. Programs may include academic clubs, performing arts, student leadership, tutoring, athletics, enrichment activities, and other school-sponsored events.

Participation in extracurricular programs is considered a privilege that carries additional responsibilities. Students are expected to represent PAACS by demonstrating positive behavior, regular attendance, academic effort, and good sportsmanship.

To participate in after-school programs, students and their parents or guardians must complete all required registration and permission forms before participation.

Students participating in interscholastic athletics must also comply with the rules and eligibility requirements established by the Metropolitan Philadelphia Athletic Association (MPAA). A current athletic physical examination, completed on the official MPAA form and dated after June 1, is required before participating in practices or competitions.

Eligibility Requirements

Students participating in extracurricular activities are expected to demonstrate:

- satisfactory academic progress;
- regular school attendance;
- positive behavior;
- compliance with the Student Code of Conduct; and
- commitment to the expectations of the individual or team activity.

Participation eligibility is reviewed periodically throughout the school year

Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to attend scheduled practices, tutoring sessions, rehearsals, meetings, competitions, and events.

Students who are absent from school on the day of a scheduled extracurricular activity generally may not participate that day unless the absence is excused and approved by the school administration.

Repeated absences or failure to attend scheduled activities may result in temporary or permanent removal from the activity.

Academic Expectations

Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress while participating in extracurricular activities. When a student experiences academic difficulty, the school's first priority is to provide support and encourage improvement. Depending on the student's academic performance, participation may include:

Academic Standing	Participation
Satisfactory academic progress	Full participation
Academic concerns identified	Continued participation with academic monitoring and support
Continued academic difficulty despite interventions	Limited participation until academic progress improves
Significant academic concerns	Temporary suspension from extracurricular participation until eligibility requirements are met

School administration may develop an academic improvement plan before restricting participation whenever appropriate.

Behavioral Expectations

Students participating in extracurricular activities are expected to demonstrate positive behavior both during the school day and at school-sponsored activities.

Behavioral concerns that may affect participation include, but are not limited to:

- suspension from school;
- fighting or violent behavior;
- repeated office discipline referrals;
- repeated detentions;
- unsafe conduct;
- violations of the Student Code of Conduct; or
- behavior that reflects negatively on the activity or school community.

Consequences may include:

- parent conferences;
- behavior improvement plans;
- temporary suspension from practices, performances, competitions, or activities; or
- removal from an extracurricular program.

Each situation will be reviewed individually, taking into consideration the nature of the behavior, the student's disciplinary history, and any applicable disability protections.

Financial Responsibilities

Families may be responsible for the repair or replacement of school property, technology, uniforms, instruments, or equipment that is intentionally damaged, lost, or not returned. Students will not be excluded from extracurricular participation solely because their family is unable to pay immediately for damaged or lost property. When appropriate, the school may establish a reasonable payment plan, alternative restitution arrangement, or other resolution.

Participation in Multiple Activities

Students wishing to participate in more than one extracurricular activity during the same season or time period must receive approval from school administration and the activity sponsors to ensure participation does not interfere with academic responsibilities or create scheduling conflicts.

Student Conduct During Activities

All school rules remain in effect during extracurricular programs, athletic competitions, field trips, performances, practices, and other school-sponsored events, whether held on or off campus.

Students are expected to demonstrate the PAACS **C.A.R.E.** expectations by being:

- **Compassionate**
- **Accountable**
- **Respectful**
- **Engaged**

while representing Pan American Academy Charter School.

School Trips, Special Events & Volunteers

Pan American Academy Charter School offers educational field trips, school-sponsored events, performances, and other learning experiences that extend classroom instruction and enrich students' educational experiences.

School Trips & Special Events

Participation in school trips and special events requires a completed and signed permission form from a parent or guardian. Additional medical or emergency information may be required for certain activities.

PAACS is committed to providing equitable access to educational opportunities. **No student will be excluded from participating in a school-sponsored educational field trip because of a family's inability to pay.** Families who need financial assistance are encouraged to contact the Main Office or school administration confidentially.

Student participation in field trips and special events is contingent upon compliance with the Student Code of Conduct. When a student's behavior poses a safety risk to the student or others, the school may require a parent or guardian to accompany the student or make other reasonable arrangements to ensure the student's safety and the successful operation of the activity.

All school rules and expectations remain in effect during school-sponsored trips and events, whether they occur on or off campus.

Parent Volunteers & Chaperones

PAACS values the partnership of parents, guardians, and community volunteers in supporting student learning and school activities.

Individuals serving as volunteers or field trip chaperones who have direct contact with students must comply with all applicable Pennsylvania volunteer requirements, including submitting required background clearances before participating in school activities. Required clearances may include:

- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Clearance;
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance; and
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal History Clearance, when required by Pennsylvania law.

The school reserves the right to approve or deny volunteer and chaperone requests based on applicable laws, school procedures, and the needs of the activity.

Transportation

For the safety of students, transportation for school-sponsored trips is arranged or approved by the school. Parents, guardians, volunteers, and staff may not transport students in private vehicles unless specifically authorized by the school in accordance with applicable law, Board policy, and school procedures.

Birthday Celebrations

To ensure safety and inclusivity, Pan American Academy Charter School does not celebrate student birthdays with food or drinks, as this may cause allergies or dietary restrictions.

Families may send non-food items for the entire class (e.g., pencils, bookmarks, small party favors); however, balloons are not permitted.

Teachers may recognize birthdays through simple classroom activities.

Invitations to parties outside of school may not be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited, and the school cannot share or forward personal contact information between families.

Emergency School Closures

PAACS monitors announcements from the School District of Philadelphia regarding weather-related closures, delays, and early dismissals. If closures or delays occur, families will be notified through automated messaging, local media outlets, and updates posted on the school website.

If the school closes after the day has started, students will be dismissed according to our pick-up procedures. Students will follow their regular transportation plan unless the school is notified otherwise. For example, if early dismissal occurs on a Tuesday and your child typically takes the bus on Tuesdays, they will be sent on the bus unless the office receives alternate instructions.

It is essential that parents have an emergency plan in place for unexpected early dismissals. Parents must keep contact information (phone numbers and email addresses) up to date. Students should be familiar with their family's emergency plan.

SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY

Commitment to Safety

The safety and well-being of every student, employee, volunteer, and visitor is a top priority at Pan American Academy Charter School. PAACS maintains comprehensive safety and security procedures designed to provide a safe, welcoming, and orderly learning environment. School administrators regularly review safety procedures, conduct emergency drills, collaborate with local emergency responders, and continuously evaluate campus security practices to support student success and well-being.

Campus Security Measures

To promote a safe learning environment, PAACS utilizes multiple security measures, including:

- Controlled building access
- Locked exterior doors during the school day
- Visitor identification procedures
- Security cameras throughout the campus
- School Safety & Security personnel
- Emergency communication systems
- Monthly emergency drills
- Classroom intruder lock systems
- Staff emergency response training

Security procedures may be adjusted whenever necessary to protect students and staff.

Visitor Identification & Screening

All visitors must:

- Enter through the Main Entrance.
- Present a valid government-issued photo identification.
- Check in through the school's visitor management system.
- Receive visitor approval before entering the building.
- Wear a visitor badge while on campus.
- Return the visitor badge when leaving.

Visitors may be denied access if they do not comply with school security procedures

Video Surveillance

To help maintain a safe school environment, PAACS utilizes video surveillance cameras throughout the school building, campus grounds, entrances, hallways, common areas, and other appropriate locations.

Video surveillance is used to:

- Protect students, staff, and visitors
- Support emergency response
- Investigate incidents
- Protect school property
- Promote a safe learning environment

Video recordings remain the property of PAACS and may be reviewed by authorized school personnel. Access to recordings is governed by applicable federal and state laws, including FERPA.

Emergency Response and Drills

PAACS maintains a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan that addresses a variety of emergencies, including:

- Fire
- Medical emergencies
- Severe weather
- Hazardous materials
- Building evacuation
- Shelter-in-place
- Lockdown
- Secure
- Reunification

Students participate in age-appropriate emergency drills throughout the school year as required by Pennsylvania law.

Emergency Reunification

If an emergency requires students to be released from a location other than their normal dismissal area, families will receive instructions through the school's emergency communication system.

Students will only be released to:

- Parents or legal guardians; or
- Individuals listed on the student's Emergency Contact Form.

A valid photo identification will be required before a student is released.

Student Searches

To protect students and maintain an orderly learning environment, school officials may search school property or student belongings when authorized by law and school policy. The complete Search and Seizure Policy appears in the Student Code of Conduct.

Weapons Prohibited

Weapons and dangerous instruments are strictly prohibited on school property, at school-sponsored activities, and while traveling to or from school. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Firearms
- Knives
- BB guns
- Pellet guns
- Tasers
- Brass knuckles
- Explosives
- Fireworks
- Pepper spray
- Any object used or intended to cause bodily injury

Possession or use of a weapon will be addressed under the Weapons Policy in the Student Code of Conduct and may result in emergency removal, suspension, expulsion proceedings, and referral to law enforcement.

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. 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 any other information unless you choose 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 the next steps. Do you think someone is going to harm themselves? Have you come across something online that concerns you? 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 that they will never know who 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.safe2saypa.org>
- Crisis center reviews, assesses, and processes all submissions
- The crisis center sends all submissions to the school administration and/or law enforcement for intervention
- If needed, the crisis center may contact tipsters anonymously through the app

Substance-Free Campus

Pan American Academy is committed to maintaining a completely substance-free campus. Smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs, and cannabis products are strictly prohibited within any area of the school building or on campus at all times. This includes all forms of smoking, such as vaping products.

Traffic Safety

Your cooperation is essential for maintaining a safe environment during arrival and dismissal. Please slow down when entering and exiting campus and pay close attention to the guidance and direction of our Security Team. To ensure smooth traffic flow and the safety of our students, please refrain from double-parking on American Street and avoid parking in the bus lane on Cambria Street. **Vehicles found double-parked or in the bus lane will be issued a ticket.** Please park in legal parking spaces on American, Somerset, or Cambria Streets.

If your child walks to and from school, please reinforce the importance of obeying all pedestrian traffic rules. This includes walking on sidewalks, using crosswalks, and obeying all stop signs and traffic lights.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

At Pan American Academy Charter School, we are dedicated to fostering student success through a rigorous curriculum, a global perspective, and a supportive learning environment. As an IB World School, we encourage students to think critically, act with integrity, and develop the skills needed to make meaningful contributions to a diverse and interconnected world. Our Student Services Department works closely with families and teachers to ensure the academic, social, behavioral, and emotional well-being of every student.

Dual Language Program

Our Dual Language Program follows a 50/50 model, with equal instruction in English and Spanish. This bilingual approach not only develops strong language proficiency but also enhances cognitive growth and cultural understanding. By immersing students in two languages, we prepare them for academic excellence and the ability to thrive in a global society.

International Baccalaureate Program

Pan American Academy Charter School is an IB World School, offering both the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students in Grades 6 through 8. Through an inquiry-based curriculum delivered in English and Spanish, students develop critical thinking, global awareness, and essential life skills. The IB framework nurtures internationally minded individuals who value their shared humanity and work to create a better, more peaceful world.

Assessments & Testing

At PAACS, assessments play a crucial role in monitoring student progress, guiding instruction, and ensuring that all students meet Pennsylvania's academic standards. We use a combination of classroom-based, benchmark, and state-mandated assessments to track learning, measure growth, and provide targeted support. All of our assessments are completed online. Students will use their iPads to complete assessments during school hours. It is essential that students bring their charged iPads to school every day.

Classroom-Based Assessments: Teachers regularly assess student understanding through quizzes, essays, projects, and other assignments. These assessments help identify each student's strengths and areas for growth, enabling teachers to tailor instruction and provide targeted support.

Benchmark Assessments: Students participate in benchmark assessments throughout the school year in key subjects like English Language Arts, Spanish Language Arts, and Math. Students in grades 3 through 8 will also participate in the Firefly Benchmark assessment to prepare for the PSSA. These assessments provide valuable data for monitoring progress over time and for designing appropriate interventions or enrichment activities.

State Assessments: As required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), students in grades 3–8 take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in English Language Arts and Mathematics, with Science testing administered in grades 5 and 8. English Language Learners (ELLs) complete the WIDA ACCESS assessment to measure English language proficiency.

The annual testing schedule, including windows such as the PSSA testing window, is shared at the start of the school year and posted on the website calendar. School Dojo messages will also be sent in advance of testing dates. Additional updates and reminders will be communicated through newsletters, teacher announcements, and the school website.

Opt-Out and Test Review: Parents/guardians with religious objections to state assessments may request to review the test materials in person at the school and submit a written opt-out request to the CEO or Principal, in accordance with PDE guidelines.

Test Results and Reporting: Assessment results, including PSSA and benchmark data, are shared with families through mailed score reports and Parent-teacher conferences. These results provide families with a clear understanding of their child's progress and identify areas that require additional support.

Participation Requirements: State law mandates that at least 95% of eligible students participate in PSSA and Keystone Exams. Schools with lower participation rates may face penalties that impact their performance ratings. Parents are encouraged to ensure their child is present on test days, as some selective Philadelphia schools consider these results in their academic placement decisions.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Service Plans will receive all necessary accommodations as outlined in their plans. All testing is conducted in accordance with PDE's Handbook for Assessment Coordinators and Secure Test Administration procedures.

Grading Practices and Scale

At Pan American Academy Charter School, our grading practices are designed to provide clear, consistent, and transparent learning goals for students, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators. Grades reflect what a student is expected to know and be able to do to master a course's content.

These common grading practices, established to ensure consistency across all teachers and subject areas, are based on best practices and educational research. This approach ensures fairness and accuracy, providing clarity for students and families regarding grading criteria and academic expectations.

The chart below outlines the letter grade assigned to each percentage, applied consistently across all subject areas.

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

Promotion and Retention

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

A student shall be promoted when they have successfully:

- Completed the course requirements at the presently assigned grade.
- Achieved the academic standards established for the current grade level, based on their teachers' professional judgment and assessment results.
- Demonstrated the foundational skills required for the next grade level.
- Demonstrated proficiency to advance to the next level of the educational program.
- Demonstrated the degree of social, emotional, and physical maturation necessary for a successful learning experience at the next learning level.
- Demonstrated consistent attendance. Students who are chronically absent/truant may be required to repeat their current grade level.

A student who has not substantially achieved one or more of the factors above may be subject to retention. The classroom teacher's recommendation shall be given significant weight when determining whether a student is promoted or retained. Parents shall be informed well in advance of the possibility of a student's retention. Principals will have the final authority to determine whether each student is promoted or retained.

Homework

Homework at Pan American Academy Charter School reinforces classroom learning, builds strong study habits, and includes a daily quiet reading period to foster a love of books. It is generally assigned from Monday through Thursday, with occasional weekend assignments. Homework completion impacts student grades, and parents can track assignments through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. If students fail to complete homework, parents will be notified, and students may stay after school, receive an Incomplete, or work with teachers to create a completion plan.

Academic Honesty

Pan American Academy Charter School expects all students to submit original work and properly credit any sources they reference. Academic honesty applies to all assignments, projects, and digital creations. Students are taught to use MLA-style citations, take accurate notes, and maintain drafts to ensure the authenticity of their work. Through the IB framework, we encourage students to be principled learners who value integrity, celebrate their own work, and use information responsibly.

PowerSchool Parent Portal

PAACS' Parent Portal enables parents to view 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.](#)

DIGITAL LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology & Devices

PAACS provides each student with a school-issued iPad to support instruction, collaboration, creativity, communication, and responsible digital learning. School-issued technology is intended to enhance educational opportunities while preparing students to become responsible digital citizens.

Students and families share responsibility for ensuring that school-issued devices are properly cared for, remain in good working condition, and are used appropriately for educational purposes at school and at home.

Daily Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Bring their school-issued iPad to school every day.
- Ensure the iPad is at least **75% charged** upon arrival.
- Bring all assigned accessories, including the case, charger, keyboard, stylus, or other equipment provided by the school.
- Use the device only for educational purposes as directed by school staff.
- Handle all school-issued equipment carefully and responsibly.
- Report lost, stolen, or damaged devices immediately.

Students who fail to bring a charged iPad or required accessories may be considered unprepared for instruction.

Families are encouraged to establish a designated charging station at home so devices are charged and ready for school each day.

Guidance for Parents & Guardians

Parents and guardians play an important role in supporting responsible technology use. Families are encouraged to:

- Monitor their child's use of technology at home.
- Communicate regularly with teachers through ClassDojo, email, or telephone.
- Discuss responsible digital citizenship, online safety, and appropriate internet behavior.
- Encourage students to protect passwords and personal information.
- Provide a distraction-free learning environment when students complete schoolwork at home.
- Report damaged devices, technical concerns, or online safety issues to the school promptly.
- Ensure school-issued devices are used only by the student to whom they were assigned.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Use technology respectfully and responsibly.
- Follow teacher directions regarding technology use.
- Protect passwords and login credentials.
- Respect copyright and intellectual property.
- Complete their own work and maintain academic honesty.
- Use appropriate language and communication online.
- Treat all school-issued equipment with care.
- Report damaged devices, safety concerns, or inappropriate online activity to a trusted adult.

Repair & Replacement Fees

Parents and students should report any damage or technical concerns immediately. School-issued devices should **never** be taken to an outside repair service. Repair and replacement fees are subject to change based on current replacement and repair costs. Costs resulting from intentional damage, negligence, or loss may include:

Charger	\$20.00
Screen Repair	\$50.00
Apple Pencil/Stylus	\$50.00
iPad/Keyboard Case	\$140.00
Full iPad Replacement	\$299.00

Payment arrangements may be available for families when appropriate.

Monitoring & Privacy

All school-issued technology remains the property of Pan American Academy Charter School.

Students should have **no expectation of privacy** when using:

- school-issued iPads
- school email accounts
- school-managed applications
- cloud storage
- school internet access
- school networks

To promote student safety and comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), PAACS utilizes internet filtering and monitoring software, including Securly, to monitor activity on school-issued devices.

Monitoring may occur both at school and at home whenever a student is using a school-issued device.

School-issued devices are assigned exclusively to the individual student. Family members and other individuals should not use school-issued technology for personal purposes.

Digital Citizenship

PAACS is committed to preparing students to become ethical, responsible, and respectful digital citizens. Technology should be used to support learning, collaboration, creativity, and positive communication. Students are expected to demonstrate the same respect, integrity, and responsibility online as in the classroom.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Use technology safely, respectfully, and responsibly.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in all digital work.
- Respect the privacy and rights of others.
- Protect usernames, passwords, and personal information.
- Think carefully before posting or sharing online content.
- Maintain a positive digital footprint.
- Report inappropriate online behavior or safety concerns to a trusted adult.

Students May Not

Students may not use technology to:

- bully, harass, intimidate, threaten, or discriminate against another person;
- impersonate another individual or create fake accounts;
- create, distribute, or share altered images, videos, audio recordings, or deepfakes intended to deceive or harm others;
- record, photograph, livestream, or distribute images, audio, or video of students, staff, or visitors without authorization;
- post or share school incidents, fights, confidential information, or other content that disrupts the school environment;
- access another person's accounts or confidential information;
- misuse school technology or violate another person's privacy;
- engage in cyberbullying or other online conduct that substantially disrupts the educational environment.

Violations may result in disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Acceptable Internet Use

PAACS provides students with access to technology and the internet to support learning, research, communication, and educational opportunities.

Students are expected to use school technology only for educational purposes.

Students May Not

- access websites unrelated to school assignments without permission;
- play online games or stream entertainment unrelated to instruction;
- install or download unauthorized software or applications;
- bypass internet filters or security systems;
- use VPNs, proxies, or other methods to circumvent school security;
- alter device settings or operating systems;
- attempt to access restricted files, accounts, or networks;
- use personal email accounts unless authorized;
- download or print materials without teacher permission;
- access or distribute obscene, offensive, illegal, or inappropriate material;
- use technology to threaten, harass, intimidate, or discriminate against others;
- engage in hacking, unauthorized access, or other activities that compromise school technology.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in the loss of technology privileges and disciplinary action.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Emerging Technologies

Pan American Academy Charter School recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are becoming increasingly common in education, the workplace, and everyday life. AI tools may enhance learning when used responsibly, ethically, and under teacher guidance.

Artificial intelligence tools include, but are not limited to, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, Grammarly AI, translation tools, coding assistants, image generators, and other applications capable of generating text, images, audio, video, or other content.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- complete assignments using their own thinking and original work unless AI use is specifically authorized;
- follow teacher expectations regarding AI use;
- acknowledge or cite AI assistance when required;
- use AI to support learning rather than replace learning;
- respect copyright, intellectual property, and privacy.

Academic Integrity

Work submitted for academic credit should accurately reflect each student's own knowledge, understanding, and effort.

Unauthorized use of AI may constitute academic dishonesty and result in academic and disciplinary consequences.

Prohibited Uses

Unless specifically authorized by a teacher, students may not:

- submit AI-generated work as their own;
- use AI to complete assignments intended to measure individual learning;
- use AI during quizzes, tests, or assessments;
- generate answers during classroom discussions or oral presentations;
- use AI to impersonate another individual;
- create fake emails, messages, photographs, audio recordings, videos, or deepfakes;
- generate or distribute misleading, harmful, offensive, or inappropriate content;
- upload photographs of students, staff, classroom activities, assessments, or confidential school documents into public AI platforms;
- enter confidential student information, passwords, or school information into public AI systems;
- use AI to bypass school security measures or technology filters.

Teacher-Directed Use

Teachers may incorporate AI into instruction when it supports curriculum, inquiry, creativity, research, critical thinking, or digital literacy. Teachers will communicate expectations regarding acceptable use of AI for individual assignments and classroom activities.

Privacy and Digital Safety

Students should never upload confidential information or personally identifiable information into public AI platforms. Students are expected to protect both their own privacy and the privacy of others when using emerging technologies.

Consequences

Violations of this policy may result in:

- parent or guardian notification;
- conferences with school staff;
- academic consequences consistent with teacher expectations;
- loss of technology or AI privileges;
- disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; and
- additional consequences for repeated or serious violations.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, PAACS encourages students to become thoughtful, principled, and responsible users of technology. Artificial intelligence should enhance inquiry, creativity, communication, and critical thinking while reinforcing honesty, integrity, respect, and responsible digital citizenship.

STUDENT SERVICES

Pan American Academy Charter School is committed to supporting the academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and mental well-being of every student. Our Student Services Department works collaboratively with families, teachers, administrators, and community partners to identify student needs, remove barriers to learning, and ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.

The Student Services Team includes school counselors, the school social worker, school-based therapists, the school psychologist, behavior support staff, school nurses, special education personnel, and other educational specialists. Together, these professionals provide prevention, intervention, counseling, health services, behavioral supports, and connections to community resources to help students thrive.

School Counseling Services

School counselors provide short-term individual and small-group counseling to support students experiencing academic, social, emotional, or behavioral challenges that affect their success in school.

School counseling services may address topics such as:

- friendship and peer relationships;
- conflict resolution;
- emotional regulation;
- coping skills;
- stress or anxiety;
- school adjustment;
- attendance concerns; and
- academic success strategies.

School counselors do not provide long-term therapy. When ongoing counseling or specialized treatment is needed, families will be connected with appropriate community providers.

Student information is handled confidentially and shared only as permitted or required by law, including when necessary to protect a student's safety, comply with mandatory reporting requirements, or support the student's educational program.

Community and Agency Referrals

Some student needs extend beyond the services available within the school setting.

When appropriate, the Student Services Team collaborates with families to identify community agencies and outside providers that can offer additional medical, behavioral health, counseling, or social service support. With appropriate consent, school staff may coordinate with outside providers to help ensure continuity of services and student success.

Universal Supports

PAACS believes that every student benefits from positive relationships, proactive support, and recognition for demonstrating appropriate behavior.

Universal support is available to all students and is designed to promote positive school culture, encourage responsible decision-making, and reinforce the PAACS C.A.R.E. expectations and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile.

Schoolwide recognition programs include:

- Classroom Contingency Rewards
- PAACS School Store
- Super Cheetah Rewards

These programs utilize **Class Dojo** to recognize students who consistently demonstrate positive behavior, responsibility, kindness, leadership, perseverance, and respect.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

PAACS utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to identify and respond to students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs through increasingly targeted levels of support.

MTSS is a problem-solving framework that helps ensure students receive interventions early before learning difficulties become more significant.

Supports may include:

- academic interventions;
- behavior interventions;
- attendance supports;
- social-emotional interventions;
- progress monitoring; and
- collaboration with families.

MTSS is **not** a special education program and does not determine disability eligibility. However, information gathered through MTSS may assist in determining whether a student should be referred for a comprehensive special education evaluation, with the parent's or guardian's consent.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a Pennsylvania statewide initiative that helps identify students experiencing barriers to learning related to behavioral health, mental health, substance use concerns, family challenges, or other personal difficulties.

Anyone in the school community, including parents, guardians, students, teachers, or staff, may submit a SAP referral.

The SAP Team works collaboratively with families to determine appropriate supports and, when necessary, may recommend community-based services or behavioral health evaluations.

SAP does not diagnose students or provide treatment.

Special Education Services

PAACS is committed to providing every eligible student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Pennsylvania special education regulations.

Parents or guardians who believe their child may have a disability may request a multidisciplinary evaluation at any time by submitting a written request to the Director of Special Education.

Identification & Evaluation

Students may be referred for a multidisciplinary evaluation through MTSS, by school staff, or at the parent's request. A comprehensive evaluation is conducted only with written parental consent.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

If a student is determined eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed by the IEP Team. Parents and guardians are important members of the IEP Team and are encouraged to participate fully throughout the planning process.

The IEP identifies:

- present levels of performance;
- annual goals;
- specially designed instruction;
- related services;
- accommodations and modifications; and
- progress-monitoring procedures.

Services & Progress Monitoring

Once parents approve the IEP, services begin. We track each student's progress toward their goals and send progress reports home every quarter.

Transition Planning

Beginning no later than age 14, transition planning becomes part of the IEP process to prepare students for post-secondary education, employment, independent living, and adult life.

Section 504 Services

Some students have disabilities that substantially limit one or more major life activities but do not qualify for special education services under IDEA. These students may be eligible for accommodations and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

A Section 504 Plan may provide accommodations, supports, or services that allow students equal access to educational programs and activities.

Families who believe their child may qualify for Section 504 accommodations should contact the Director of Special Education.

English Learner (EL) Services

PAACS is committed to ensuring that students who are developing English proficiency have equitable access to rigorous academic instruction.

English Learner (EL) services are provided in accordance with federal and Pennsylvania requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education's English Language Development Standards (WIDA).

Students receive language development instruction and classroom support designed to promote English language proficiency while providing access to grade-level academic content.

Families seeking additional information regarding English Learner services may contact: studentservices@panamcs.org

Student Health Services

School nurses and health personnel support students' physical health and wellness by providing first aid, managing medications, responding to illness and injury, monitoring chronic health conditions, conducting required health screenings, and coordinating care with families and healthcare providers.

Additional information regarding health services is available in the Student Health & Nutrition section of this handbook.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction & Purpose

At Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS), we believe that all students deserve a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment. The Student Code of Conduct establishes clear expectations for behavior, enabling every student to reach their full potential. All members of the school community are expected to demonstrate respect, responsibility, and integrity at all times on campus, during school-sponsored events, on transportation, and in any off-campus situations that impact the school community.

Student Expression

Pan American Academy Charter School is committed to maintaining an inclusive, respectful, and nondiscriminatory school environment for transgender and gender-nonconforming students. This policy shall be implemented in accordance with applicable nondiscrimination requirements, including Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations Regulation No. 9.

Names and Pronouns

Students have the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns with which they identify. The School will use a student's identified name and pronouns in school interactions and written communications, including class rosters, report cards, correspondence, transfer documents, and student identification, to the extent permitted by applicable recordkeeping requirements.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Faculty and staff shall not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender identity or gender nonconformity to other staff members, students, parents or guardians, or members of the public unless the student has authorized the disclosure. School personnel shall protect the confidentiality of this information in verbal, written, and electronic communications.

Prohibited Language and Conduct

Derogatory, offensive, or demeaning language directed toward or used when referring to a transgender or gender-nonconforming individual is prohibited. School personnel shall take reasonable steps to prevent and promptly correct such language when used by students, employees, or other members of the school community. Violations will be addressed in accordance with the School's applicable disciplinary policies and procedures.

Gender-Expansive Activities

The School will reduce or eliminate the unnecessary segregation of students by gender. When students must be separated by gender for an activity, students shall be assigned and permitted to participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

Gender-Neutral Language

Wherever possible, the School will use gender-neutral language in written communications, forms, policies, notices, and other school materials.

Restroom Access

Students shall have access to restrooms that correspond with their gender identity. Any student who needs or desires increased privacy, regardless of the reason, shall be offered access to a single-stall restroom or another appropriate option. No student shall be required to use a separate or alternative restroom against the student's wishes.

Locker and Dressing Room Access

Students shall have access to locker rooms and dressing areas that correspond with their gender identity. A student who

needs or desires additional privacy shall be offered an alternative arrangement that is agreeable to the student and protects the confidentiality of the student's gender identity. No student shall be required to use an alternative arrangement solely because the student is transgender or gender nonconforming.

Dress Code and Uniforms

Students may wear clothing and otherwise present themselves in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression, including maintaining a gender-neutral appearance. The School's dress code and uniform requirements shall be applied consistently and shall not restrict a student's ability to express their gender identity or gender expression.

Staff Training

The School shall regularly provide training to employees regarding their responsibilities under applicable nondiscrimination laws, Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations Regulation No. 9, and this policy. Training shall include the appropriate use of names and pronouns, confidentiality requirements, prevention of discriminatory language and conduct, access to facilities and activities, and implementation of gender-inclusive practices.

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 from 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, and/or accessories are permitted to be worn in school as part of the uniform. In an effort to prevent loss or theft of uniform items, it is recommended that garments are labeled with the student's name.

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. Uniform violations shall not be grounds for exclusionary discipline unless accompanied by additional conduct that substantially disrupts the educational environment. 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	GRADES 5-8 UNIFORM
• Navy blue pants or a Plaid Jumper • White polo shirts (Spring/Fall) • White button-down shirt with Pan Am logo sweater vest, Pan Am logo cardigan, or Pan Am logo zip-up • Black or Navy Socks • Black Shoes or all-black sneakers	• Navy blue pants or a Plaid Skirt • White polo shirts (Spring/Fall) • White button-down shirt with Pan Am logo sweater vest, Pan Am logo cardigan, or Pan Am logo zip-up • Black or Navy Socks • Black Shoes or ALL Black Sneakers

GRADES K-8 GYM UNIFORM
Navy blue sweatpants or gym shorts with Pan Am logo, green t-shirt with Pan Am logo, and ALL black sneakers. (Gym uniform may only be worn on Gym days and Field Trips)

Uniforms are available for purchase at [Cramer's Uniforms](#).

Personal Appearance Standards

Our dress code is designed to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. It ensures that all students can focus on learning without unnecessary distractions while respecting cultural, religious, and personal identities. The following standards outline expectations for student appearance while maintaining fairness and equity for all:

- **Jewelry:** Jewelry should be simple and safe for school activities. The following items are not permitted due to safety or appropriateness: earrings that dangle or are larger than a quarter; jewelry with sharp edges, spikes, or unsafe designs; jewelry featuring profanity, offensive language, inappropriate symbols, or images.
- **Tops:** Shirts with large graphics, logos, slogans, or images that are distracting, inappropriate, or non-school-related are not allowed. Sleeveless shirts, crop tops, or tops with low necklines are not permitted. Sheer or see-through tops are not permitted.
- **Pants and Bottoms:** Must be worn at the waist and should fit appropriately, meeting modesty length requirements. Shorts, jeggings, leggings, or tight-fitted pants are not permitted. Bottoms must be free of large logos, designs, or distracting graphics.

- **Head Coverings and Accessories:** Head coverings are allowed for cultural, ethnic, religious, health, or other approved reasons. Scarves may be worn outdoors for warmth, but are not part of the indoor uniform unless for cultural or religious purposes.
- **Outerwear:** Coats, jackets, non-uniform sweaters, or hoodies may not be worn inside the school during the school day. Approved uniform sweaters and Pan American pullovers should be clearly labeled with the student's name to prevent loss.
- **Inclusivity and Enforcement:** These guidelines apply equally to all students, regardless of gender. Students who are not in compliance will be given an opportunity to adjust their attire. Persistent issues will be addressed through the disciplinary process outlined in the Uniform Policy. Our dress code will never be enforced in a way that shames students for their bodies, cultural identity, or personal expression within the uniform guidelines.

Uniform Donations: PAACS collects clean, 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.

Dress Down Days: These special opportunities allow students to step out of their uniforms and celebrate school spirit. These days may include a specific theme or encourage students to wear school colors, and they will always be announced in advance. Parents/guardians have the final say on whether their child participates in Dress Down Days. If you prefer that your child not participate, we will fully support your decision. Your child should then follow the regular school uniform policy for that day.

Guidelines for Dress Down Day	Footwear Requirements
• Students must continue to follow the personal appearance and dress code standards. • Hats, sunglasses, or other accessories are not permitted unless approved by the Principal for the day's theme. • The administration reserves the right to enforce guidelines related to style, color, and length to ensure appropriateness.	• Shoes must always be safe and school-appropriate. • All shoes must cover the entire foot to ensure safety, particularly in stairwells or during emergency evacuations. For this reason, flip-flops, heels, house slippers, slides, sandals, clogs, or Crocs are not allowed, even on Dress Down Days.

NOTE: Failure to comply with the policy will result in loss of dress-down privileges.

Electronic Devices, Wearable Technology, Games & Toys

Electronic Devices

To support a safe, focused, and distraction-free learning environment, students may bring personal electronic devices to school **ONLY** in accordance with this policy. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- Smartphones
- Smartwatches
- Wireless earbuds or headphones
- Tablets
- Gaming devices
- Electronic readers
- Bluetooth-enabled devices
- Any device capable of calling, texting, recording, photographing, or accessing the internet

Electronic devices MAY NOT be used during the school day unless expressly authorized by a school administrator or staff member for an educational or emergency purpose.

PAACS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.

Daily Device Procedures

Kindergarten - Grade 3

Upon entering the classroom each morning, students who bring a phone or wearable communication device must place the device in their assigned classroom phone locker. Devices remain secured throughout the instructional day. Students retrieve their devices immediately before dismissal.

Grades 4-8

PAACS utilizes the Yondr Program to safely secure student electronic devices during the school day. BEFORE entering the building:

- Phones must be powered off.
- Smartwatches must be placed in Airplane Mode.
- Wireless earbuds and similar devices must also be secured.

During arrival:

- Students receive a Yondr Pouch.
- Students place all personal electronic devices inside the pouch.
- The pouch is locked in the presence of school staff.
- Students keep the locked pouch with them throughout the day.
- Before dismissal, students return the pouch to unlock and retrieve their devices.

Students arriving late or leaving early will check in and out through the Main Office or Security Desk.

Emergency Communication

If parents or guardians need to communicate with their child during the school day, they should contact the Main Office. Students needing to contact a parent or guardian during the school day may do so through the Main Office with staff assistance.

Toys, Games & Personal Items

Students should not bring toys, games, trading cards, stuffed animals, laser pointers, fidget toys (unless required by an IEP, Section 504 Plan, or approved accommodation), or other personal entertainment items to school. Exceptions may be approved by the classroom teacher for educational activities, classroom celebrations, or designated Show-and-Tell activities. Unauthorized items may be confiscated.

Confiscated Toys or Personal Items

1st Offense	2nd Offense	Repeated Offenses
The item will be held in the Main Office and released only to a parent or guardian.	The item will be held for one week. A parent or guardian must schedule a meeting with an administrator to retrieve the item.	The item will be held for two weeks. Repeated violations may result in additional school disciplinary consequences

Electronic Device Violations

Students are expected to comply with all procedures for securing electronic devices upon arrival. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Using a phone during the school day
- Using a smartwatch to communicate or access applications
- Using wireless earbuds or headphones
- Failing to secure a device during arrival
- Possessing an unsecured device
- Opening a Yondr Pouch without authorization
- Damaging a Yondr Pouch
- Attempting to bypass the electronic device procedures
- Refusing to surrender a device when directed by staff

Failure to Secure a Device

1st Violation	2nd Violation	Repeated Violations
The device will be confiscated and held in the Main Office until dismissal. The parent or guardian will be notified.	The device will be confiscated and held in the Main Office. The student may receive detention or another appropriate disciplinary consequence. The parent or guardian will be notified.	The student will be subject to progressive disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, which may include parent conference, loss of privileges, detention, or suspension, depending on the nature and frequency of the violations

Yondr Pouch Damage or Loss

Students are responsible for maintaining their assigned Yondr Pouch in good condition. Damage includes, but is not limited to:

- Rips or tears
- Holes
- Writing or drawing
- Stickers
- Frayed edges
- Broken magnets
- Bent locking pins
- Intentional tampering

Students who lose or intentionally damage a pouch will be charged a **\$30 replacement fee**.

Until the replacement fee is paid:

- The student's electronic device will be collected each morning and stored securely in the Main Office during the school day.
- The student may lose participation privileges in extracurricular activities, dances, or special events as determined by school administration.

Repeated intentional damage or tampering may result in additional disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Artificial Intelligence and Recording Devices

Students may not use personal electronic devices to create, access, or share AI-generated content, audio recordings, photographs, or videos during the school day unless specifically authorized by a teacher for an instructional activity. Unauthorized recording or photographing of students, staff, or visitors, as well as the creation or distribution of AI-generated images, audio, or video depicting members of the school community, may result in disciplinary action.

School Property & Safety

Locker Use Policy

Students in Grades 6 through 8 will be assigned individual lockers for the school year. Lockers provide students with a secure space to store personal belongings and school materials, helping them stay organized and focused during the school day.

Locker Contract: All students will receive a Locker Contract during back-to-school events, home visits, or on the first day of school. Contracts must be signed and returned by the end of the first week of the school year. Once returned, students will be assigned a locker and receive a combination lock. Teachers will review locker expectations and support students in learning how to use their lockers effectively.

Locker Use Expectations: To ensure safety, respect for school property, and efficient hallway traffic, students are expected to follow these locker guidelines:

Access and Use

- Students will have three (3) designated locker visits per day, determined by their grade-level team.
- Students may not visit their locker outside of these designated times unless they have an approved hall pass.
 - Students found at their lockers outside of the designated times will be addressed by staff and may face consequences.

Behavior and Responsibility

- Students are expected to use their lockers respectfully and responsibly:
 - Open and close lockers gently.
 - Do not kick, slam, or overload lockers.
 - Keep the area around lockers clear of personal belongings.
- Students must remember their combination and should never share it with others.
- Damage to lockers, such as dents, black marks, and broken parts, will result in the student being held financially responsible.

Lost Lock Fee

- Students are responsible for the lock assigned to them.
- A **\$10 replacement fee** will be charged for any lost or damaged combination lock.

Security and Searches: Lockers are school property and may be searched by administration at any time. Students must store the following items in their lockers upon entering the building:

- Non-uniform apparel (hats, jackets, sunglasses, etc.)
- Backpacks

Malfunctions or Issues: If a locker is not working properly, students should report the issue to a staff member before or after school, or during lunch.

Personal Responsibility: Students are responsible for securing their belongings. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items if a locker is misused or left unsecured.

Proper locker use is a privilege. Misuse may result in disciplinary action or loss of locker access.

Care for School Property

Students are expected to show respect for all school-owned materials and facilities. Any damage, loss, or vandalism may result in financial responsibility and disciplinary consequences.

Books: All textbooks and library books are owned by the school and loaned to students. Students are responsible for keeping books in good condition. Lost, stolen, or damaged books will require payment of a prorated replacement cost (based on age and condition). To prevent loss, students should write their full name in the designated area on the inside of the front cover.

Equipment and Facilities: Students must treat all school equipment (classroom furniture, sports equipment, lab materials, etc.) with care. Deliberate damage or vandalism will result in full payment for repair or replacement and may lead to disciplinary action.

Computers and Technology: The use of school-issued computers, tablets, and Internet access is a privilege. Students are responsible for maintaining all devices, chargers, cases, and accessories in good condition. Any damage or loss will incur a fine for repair or replacement. Repeated misuse may result in restricted access to technology.

Personal Property and Well-being: Students may be held financially responsible for any physical injury they cause to others or for damage to another person's personal property due to negligence or misconduct.

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 conduct such a search if they have 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 have an expectation of privacy in their lockers, the items they bring to school, or the items 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, as well as applicable laws and regulations.

Restraint and Seclusion Policy

PAACS does not use seclusion. Physical restraint is used only in emergency situations to protect students or others, and where applicable, restraints are conducted in compliance with IDEA and its implementing Federal and State regulations. Parents will be notified promptly if a restraint occurs.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is defined as physically punishing a student for an infraction of the Code of Conduct or school discipline policy. The use of corporal punishment by school staff is prohibited. Teachers and school authorities may, however, use reasonable force under the following circumstances: to quell a disturbance; to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects; for the purpose of self-defense; for the protection of persons or property.

Weapons Policy

If a student is found to be in possession of an item that meets the definition of "weapon" under Article XIII-A of the Pa. Public School Code may result in expulsion under Act 26 of 1995. Act 26 of 1995 requires the expulsion for at least one year for any student who is found to have possessed a weapon on school property, at a school function, or on transportation to/from school and school activities. For purposes of Act 26, a "weapon" is defined as "any knife, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and [any other item] capable of inflicting serious bodily injury." Act 26 requires that the police be notified and the student is entitled to a formal expulsion hearing. The CEO may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis, and shall take all steps necessary to comply with the IDEA.

The school will also report all incidents involving the possession of a weapon to local law enforcement officials and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, as well as all incidents relating to expulsions for possession of a weapon on school grounds.

Attendance Expectations

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 ensure their children attend school every day school is in session and arrive on time.

Absences: An absence is a student's non-attendance on days and half-days when school is in session. Attendance does not always need to be within school facilities. A student will be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session, receiving approved instruction, or health or therapeutic services, or receiving approved homebound instruction. NOTE: Excessive absences and tardiness can negatively affect your child's chances of admission to a special-admission high school.

What is an excused absence? The school understands that there are days when a student is unable to attend school due to 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 (*Please do not schedule doctor's appointments during standardized testing periods.*)
- 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 the CEO/Principal

What is an unexcused absence? All absences are considered unexcused until the school receives the required documentation, which must detail a valid reason for the absence, as outlined above. Some examples of unexcused absences are:

- Absence due to parental neglect
- Missing the bus
- Oversleeping
- Parent's personal appointments
- Inclement weather when the school is open
- Family vacations are not an excused reason for absence. Families are expected to schedule vacations during school holidays and breaks. Any school days missed due to a family vacation will be recorded as **unexcused absences**.

Tardiness: School begins promptly at 8:05 AM. Students arriving after 8:15 AM will be marked tardy. Tardiness may be excused for medical appointments with appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's note) or in the event of an emergency. Students are expected to arrive at school on time each day. *Repeated tardiness may interfere with a student's academic progress by reducing instructional time and will be addressed by the school in partnership with parents through appropriate attendance interventions.*

Early Dismissal: Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours. If an early dismissal is necessary, it should occur between 11:30 AM and 2:30 PM. Parents or guardians should provide a written note stating the reason for the early dismissal. For the safety of all students, children must be signed out in the school office by a parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact. A valid photo ID is required. Requests for early dismissal by telephone will not be accepted. Early dismissals are strongly discouraged on half days and during state testing. *Repeated early dismissals may interfere with a student's academic progress by reducing instructional time and will be addressed by the school in partnership with parents through appropriate attendance interventions.*

Reporting an Absence: If your child will be absent, please contact the main office. Parents/guardians will also receive an automated call to confirm the absence, this is part of our safety procedures to ensure every student is accounted for.

Excuse Notes: A written excuse explaining the reason for the absence must be submitted within **three (3) school days** of the student's return to school. Excuse notes may be submitted in writing or electronically through the school's website. Absences for which an excuse is not received within three (3) school days will be permanently recorded as **unexcused**.

After **three (3) consecutive absences**, only a physician's note or other official documentation, as determined by the school, will be accepted to excuse additional absences.

Parents/guardians may excuse up to **ten (10) cumulative absences** during the school year by submitting a written excuse. Beginning with the **11th cumulative absence**, a physician's note or other acceptable official documentation is required for the absence to be considered excused.

Makeup Work: Students are responsible for completing all assignments missed during an absence. Upon returning to school, students and, when appropriate, their parents/guardians should contact teachers to obtain missed assignments and arrange to make up any tests, quizzes, homework, projects, or other classwork. Teachers will provide reasonable opportunities and an appropriate amount of time for students to complete missed coursework in accordance with classroom expectations.

Truancy

Under Pennsylvania law, a student of compulsory school age is considered truant after accumulating **three (3) unexcused absences** during the current school year.

Within **ten (10) school days** of a student's third unexcused absence, Pan American Academy Charter School will notify the parent/guardian that the student has been identified as truant. The notice will be provided in the parent's/guardian's preferred mode of communication and language, when known, and may include an invitation to participate in a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC).

Habitual Truancy

Under Pennsylvania law, a student is considered **habitually truant** after accumulating **six (6) or more unexcused absences** during the current school year. These absences do not have to be consecutive. When a student is habitually truant, the school will respond in accordance with applicable Pennsylvania law, which may include additional attendance interventions, referrals to appropriate support services or attendance improvement programs, or other actions authorized by law.

Habitual truancy has a direct impact on student success. Excessive absenteeism may negatively affect academic progress and may be considered as part of the school's promotion and retention process in accordance with Board-approved promotion and retention policies.

Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) and School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)

Before referring a student's truancy matter to a court or other legal authority, Pan American Academy Charter School will offer and document a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) with the student and the student's parent/guardian in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

The purpose of the conference is to identify barriers to regular attendance, discuss available supports and interventions, and develop a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) designed to improve the student's attendance.

Attendance at the School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) is encouraged but is not legally required. The conference will proceed even if the parent/guardian declines to participate or fails to attend after receiving advance written notice and after the School has made reasonable attempts to communicate by telephone. The School will document the conference and the resulting School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

Students shall not be suspended, expelled, transferred, or otherwise excluded from educational programming solely because of truant behavior.

For students who become habitually truant, the School will continue implementing the School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) and may refer the student to **Project GO**, another school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, or pursue other remedies authorized by applicable Pennsylvania law.

Project GO is the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office School Attendance Support Program. When appropriate, students and families may be referred to Project GO to receive additional attendance support, identify barriers to regular school attendance, and connect with community resources.

Cyber Charter Transfer Restriction

Pursuant to Act 47 of 2025, a student who is habitually truant may not transfer to a cyber charter school during the school year unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the student's best interest.

All truancy notices issued by the School shall include information regarding available attendance supports, academic recovery opportunities, and community resources available to assist families in improving student attendance.

Addressing Truancy: Interventions & Next Steps

The School is committed to working collaboratively with students and families to improve attendance. As unexcused absences accumulate, attendance interventions will increase to identify barriers to attendance, provide appropriate supports, and promote regular school attendance.

Unexcused Absences	Attendance Status	School Interventions
0-2	Attendance Concern	Parents/guardians are notified of each unexcused absence. The School monitors attendance and may communicate with the family regarding attendance expectations and available supports.
3-5	Truant	Within ten (10) school days of the third unexcused absence, the parent/guardian will receive written notice that the student has been identified as truant. The School will offer a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) to identify barriers to attendance and develop a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) . Additional attendance supports, including an attendance contract when appropriate, may also be implemented.
6-7	Habitually Truant	The School will continue implementing and monitoring the SAIP and work collaboratively with the student and family to improve attendance. When appropriate, the student may be referred to Project GO or another school-based or community-based attendance improvement program. The School may pursue additional attendance interventions and other remedies authorized under Pennsylvania law, when appropriate.
8 or More	Continued Habitual Truancy	The School will review and update the SAIP, continue attendance interventions and parent/guardian conferences, and may make additional referrals to Project GO or other appropriate support services. Academic progress may also be reviewed in accordance with the School's Board-approved promotion and retention policy. The School may pursue additional remedies authorized by Pennsylvania law, when appropriate.

Attendance interventions are intended to support students and families in overcoming barriers to regular school attendance and may be adjusted based on the individual needs of the student and the requirements of applicable law.

Administrative Withdrawal

A student who is absent without excuse for ten (10) consecutive school days may be administratively withdrawn from Pan American Academy Charter School and reported to the School District of Philadelphia in accordance with applicable Pennsylvania law and School District procedures.

For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Service Plan, the School will comply with all applicable federal and state laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, before taking any action affecting the student's enrollment, educational placement, or the provision of special education or related services.

Hallway Expectations

Students are expected to remain in their assigned instructional area unless they have permission to leave. While in the hallways, students must travel quietly, proceed directly to their approved destination, and follow all directions from staff. **Students are expected to use the most direct route and report promptly to their destination.** Loitering, visiting unauthorized areas, or being in the hallway without an approved **SmartPass** or staff authorization is prohibited.

Behavioral Expectations

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)

PBIS is a school-wide framework that promotes positive behavior and academic success through proactive strategies and consistent expectations. At Pan American, PBIS focuses on our four key behavioral expectations: **Compassionate, Accountable, Respectful, and Engaged (C.A.R.E.)**.

Teachers use **Classroom Dojo points** to recognize students who demonstrate C.A.R.E. Students can use their points to "shop" at the PanAmazon school store. Additional rewards include **Super Cheetah tickets** for weekly prize drawings and the **C.A.R.E. Champion** recognition for students who consistently model these attributes.

For more information on PBIS, visit www.pbis.org or www.papbs.org.

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 who 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 need assistance or have a concern.
- Comply with Parent Code of Conduct.

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.

Bullying / Cyberbullying & Harassment

At Pan American Academy Charter School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for all students and staff. The Board of Directors, school staff, and broader community expect every member of our school to treat others with dignity and to take a firm stance against all forms of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment.

Bullying & Cyberbullying: Bullying creates an environment of fear and intimidation, interferes with student learning, and can lead to more serious acts of violence. Our school does not tolerate any form of bullying.

Definition: Bullying is defined as any intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act, or series of acts, directed at a student or group of students, that:

- Occurs in a school setting or significantly impacts the school environment (e.g., cyberbullying), **and**
- Is **severe, persistent, or pervasive**, and has the effect of:
 - Substantially interfering with a student's education,
 - Creating a threatening or hostile environment, or
 - Substantially disrupting the school's orderly operation.

Key Characteristics of Bullying

Bullying is typically characterized by:

1. Intentional aggression or harm
2. Repeated behaviors occurring over time
3. An imbalance of power, such as differences in physical strength, mental capacity, popularity, or social skills.

Harassment: Pan American Academy maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy for all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and acts of bias.

Definition: Harassment is defined as verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity or expression (known or perceived), national origin/ethnicity, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs. Harassment does not require an intent to harm, repetition, or a specific target to be considered a violation of this policy.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, such as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Reporting Procedures & Disciplinary Actions

Students who believe they have been bullied or harassed should report the incident promptly to the principal or their designated representative. All reports will be handled with confidentiality and urgency, in accordance with legal and investigative guidelines. Retaliation or reprisal against students who report incidents in good faith is strictly prohibited.

Violations of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary measures, as outlined in the school's Code of Conduct. Possible consequences may include, but are not limited to:

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

Discipline Framework

Positive Classroom Management Approach: At Pan American Academy Charter School (PAACS), we utilize a Multi-Tiered approach focused on building a 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 to set students up for success while preventing problematic behaviors.

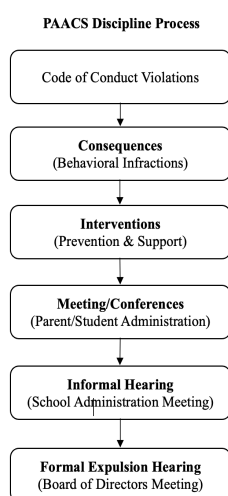
Structure for Success | Teach Expectations | Observe | Interact Positively | Correct Fluently

Dealing with Problem Behavior: Our staff is committed to fostering positive interactions with students across all settings. Our approach emphasizes recognizing and reinforcing desired behaviors, which supports the development of a respectful, safe, and engaging learning environment. While students will be provided with frequent opportunities to learn, practice, and be acknowledged for demonstrating expected behaviors, staff must also be equipped to respond appropriately when problem behaviors arise. The most effective response to problem behavior is proactive, calm, measured, strategic, and reflective.

To ensure that behavior interventions are both effective and equitable, staff adhere to the following principles when implementing corrective consequences:

1. They are immediate. Consequences are most effective when administered as soon as possible after the behavior occurs.
2. They are fair. Consequences should be reasonable and appropriate, taking into account the severity of the behavior, the context in which it occurred, and the student's developmental level and needs.
3. They are consistent. Consequences should be applied consistently across staff, settings, and students to build trust and promote accountability.

Disciplinary Process & Definitions



At PAACS, we believe in prevention-based strategies that are focused on student success. The discipline process below outlines the steps we take to ensure success and learning opportunities when behavioral infractions occur.

Level I Violations can often be remediated with simple redirection to avoid the behavior becoming a Level II offense and/or the teacher submitting an office disciplinary referral. It is expected that students respond to the adult's remediation efforts and cease the inappropriate behavior. Disregarding these directions or being disrespectful will result in the behavior escalating to a higher level with more severe consequences. Possible consequences: teacher conference with the student, teacher-directed consequence, parent contacted by the teacher, office discipline referral (ODR), after-school detention, lunch detention, and/or time outside the classroom with the administration.

Level II Violations are behaviors whose frequency or seriousness disrupts the school's learning climate or safety. 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: Level I, reinstatement parent meeting, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension.

Level III 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 the scope of redirection by teachers and staff and require an office disciplinary referral and an 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 an expulsion hearing with the Board of Trustees or a 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

Note:

1. Consequence Levels are not mutually exclusive. If a student is referred for a possible expulsion hearing/review, that student may also be suspended from school for 1 to 10 days.
2. Repeated school violations will result in an escalation to the next consequence level.
3. Repeated Level III School Violations will result in an Expulsion Committee Review.

*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.

^Students will not be suspended, expelled, or otherwise excluded from educational programming solely because of truant behavior.

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.

Minor Infraction (problem behavior)	Offense Level	Definition	Examples
Defiance	1	Student engages in refusal to follow directions or talks back	• Refusal to do work • Doing the opposite of what is being asked • Argue with the teacher about tasks/homework/directions
Disrespect	1	Student acts in a manner that is rude, impolite, and/or offensive	• Student insults a teacher's appearance • Walks away from a teacher
Disruption	1	Student engages in a behavior that causes an interruption in a class or activity	• Loud talking • Yelling • Screaming • Noise with materials • Horseplay, roughhousing & play fighting • Out of seat behavior, walking around the room

Dress Code Violation	1	Student fails to comply with the established dress code policy as stated in the Parent and Student Handbook	- Wearing Sandals - Ripped Jeans (During dress down) - Wearing boots/heels
Derogatory Language, Profanity, and/or Inappropriate Language	1	Verbal or written statements intended to offend or insult someone or something	- Curse words - Name calling - Words intended to demean a group of people (Race, Gender, Ethnicity, Sexuality...)
Physical Contact/ Aggression- (Property/Person)	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 MAY occur.	- Kick/hitting an object due to anger or frustration - Flipping furniture - Breaking clocks, soap dispensers - Breaking walls, fountains, doors - Misuse of others' property - Inappropriate physical gestures/contact - Pushing - Gestures to harm (e.g., finger across the neck)
Property Misuse	1	Student uses an object inappropriately in a way that disrupts learning	- Using an iPad to disrupt the teacher's lesson - Throwing the iPad back and forth - Throwing school books
Tardy	1	Student arrives late (within 5 minutes) to the assigned area or activity	- Returning to class on their own - Arriving at the destination 5 minutes late
Technology Violation-(Minor)	1	The use of technology in a manner that can cause damage or does not follow the guidelines given by teachers and staff	- Watching YouTube or other inappropriate videos - Watching movies - Filming or taking pictures in school for fun - Playing games instead of working
Other Behavior	1 / 2	Behavior that is not categorized by any of the other minor infractions	- Climbing trees in the school yard - Student playing on the stairwell banister - Repeated minor violations
Major Infraction (problem behavior)	Offense Level	Definition	Examples
Abusive and/or Threatening Language	2	Student(s) make verbal, written, physical, or gestural threats that include swearing, name-calling, or inappropriate use of language.	- Intimidation - To induce fear or a sense of inferiority in another student and/or school community member. - Gun or knife hand signal - Aggressive posturing - Threatening to use a weapon - Intimidating in order to receive items - Writing inappropriate language
Arson	3	Attempting to start or starting a fire in or around school property	- Starting a Fire - Using a combustible to start a fire (a lighter)
Bomb Threat/ False Alarm	3	Student(s) report possible explosive materials in or near the school and/or pending explosions. Pulling or tampering with fire alarms	- Calling in a bomb threat - Pulling fire alarms - Threats of having a weapon

Bullying/ Cyber-bullying	3	Student(s) are involved in unwanted aggressive, hostile behavior that involves a power imbalance, and the aggressive behavior is repeated over time. <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. <u>Cyber-bullying</u>: Bullying that occurs through electronic communication devices, messages, tweets, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, dashboards, or websites.	• A student(s) forces another student to give up his/her own lunch • Making fun of a student's weight, looks/ appearance to cause harm or belittle that student • Using social media to make threats or harass a student. • Creating images or videos of a student(s) to make fun of them • Creating a fake social media account about someone
Harassment	3	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, tension arises from the display of power between individuals or groups. However, harassment is defined as conduct that targets a specific category, including but not limited to race, religion, and sexuality, and does not require intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. <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. <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.	• Unwanted, unwelcome physical contact, such as touching, bumping, grabbing, or patting • Sexually insulting remarks about race, gender, ability, or class • Bragging about sexual prowess for others to hear • Intimidating hallway behavior, which can include demeaning nicknames, homophobic name-calling, cat-calls, rating, or embarrassing whistles • Graffiti with names written on walls or desks; a common example is: "for a good time, call..." • Being followed around by another student / being stalked
Fighting	3	Two or more students engaged in a physical confrontation that may cause harm or injury, regardless of who started the fight	• Fist fights • Multiple students fighting
Forgery	2	Producing a copy of a document or signature	• Signing a permission slip • Creating an excuse note • Using fake hall passes
Gang Affiliation or Group Intimidation Display	3	Any verbal, nonverbal, written, physical, or gestural threats, symbols, insignia, or behaviors that are associated with gang affiliation or are intended to intimidate, provoke, or organize family members, individuals or groups on school grounds.	• Displaying symbols, clothing, colors, or paraphernalia known to be associated with gangs or other organized groups. • Making statements or gestures that communicate affiliation with or support

			from a gang or group for the purpose of intimidation or conflict. - Bringing or encouraging individuals or groups (including family members, peers, or other community members) to come onto school grounds to confront, threaten, or escalate a conflict involving a student or staff member. - Coordinating or participating in group actions that create an intimidating or unsafe environment for members of the school community.
Inappropriate Displays of Affection	2	Wanted or unwanted verbal or non-verbal gestures that are intended to promote affection or feelings toward a person or thing Student engages in inappropriate, consensual verbal and/or physical gestures/contact of a sexual nature to another student/adult	- Kissing - Fondling - Sexual contact of any kind
Physical Aggression (Assault)	2 / 3	Student engages in physical contact using one's body or an object where physical, emotional, or psychological harm HAS occurred	- Inappropriate physical gestures/contact that is sexual in nature - Slapping - Punching another student - Pushing another student to the ground, causing harm
Property Damage / Vandalism	3	Student engages or attempts to engage in destruction, disfigurement, or permanent damage to property	- Writing/drawing or attempting to write/draw words or images in a bathroom - Throwing or attempting to throw wet paper products on walls/ceilings - Breaking walls by either kicking or punching them - Breaking bathroom stall doors - Breaking a door or window - Breaking/damaging iPads/technology
Skip Class	2	Student arrives late (more than 5 minutes) to the assigned area or activity, leaves, or misses class without permission	- The student must be escorted to the assigned area or activity - Student misses the lesson in its entirety - The student was in the bathroom for longer than 10 minutes
Technology Violation-(Major)	2 / 3	The use of technology in a manner that can cause damage or is not following the guidelines given by teachers and staff	- Recording a fight - Looking at or uploading pornographic images - Watching pornographic videos - Viewing inappropriate online videos during instructional time
Theft	3	Student is in possession of, having passed on, or being responsible for removing someone else's property	- Taking teachers' belongings (ex., money, phone, iPad, purse/wallet, etc.) - Taking another student's property (ex., phone, money, lunch, etc.) - Taking school property (e.g., soap dispenser)
Plagiarism	2 / 3	Taking and/or using intellectual property and presenting it as your own.	- Cheating - Copying homework from a peer or a source - Claiming another student's work as their own

Use/Possession of Alcohol	3	Student(s) are in possession, use, or distribution of any substance that is alcoholic. Whether on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.	• Bringing in beer or liquor
Use/Possession of Combustible	3	Student(s) are in possession of, using, or distributing a substance that is able to catch fire and burn easily on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.	• Lighter • Gasoline • Matches • Lighter fluid • Firecrackers
Use/Possession of Drugs	3	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. 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.	• Prescription drugs • Smoking pipes • E-pipe • Rolling papers • Needles • Marijuana • Flour/Sugar in a sandwich bag
Use/Possession of Tobacco	3	Student(s) are in possession of, using, or distributing any tobacco products on their person, among their belongings, or in any storage space.	• Cigarettes • Chewing tobacco • Lighters • E-cigarette • Matches • Vape Pens
Use/Possession of Weapon	3	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.	• Bullets / Blunt object / Bat • any firearms, whether loaded or unloaded / cap guns • simulated guns/pellet guns or BB guns • Knives / box cutters / cutting instruments • nunchaku • mace • simulated weapons • laser pointers
Other Behavior	2 / 3	Behavior that is not categorized by any of the other major infractions but may cause harm to self, students, or adults.	• Jumping from a flight of steps • Climbing on or over gates • Repeated major violations

Suspensions

Suspension is considered a last resort, used only when other interventions have been unsuccessful or when a student commits a serious violation of the Code of Conduct. A suspension is an exclusion from school for 1 to 10 consecutive school days and cannot exceed 10 days consecutively.

Procedures for Out-of-School Suspensions:

- When a potential suspension is warranted, PAACS will conduct an **investigation**. Students involved are expected to provide an **accurate and truthful account** of the incident.
- Following the investigation, parents/guardians will be notified of the incident and any consequences.
- Suspensions may be issued by the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, or other school leaders.
- Students will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- **Immediate suspensions** may occur without prior notice if the **health, safety, or welfare** of the school community is at risk.

Suspensions for 1 to 3 days: A student may be suspended for up to 3 days without a hearing. After an incident occurs, the student will be given an opportunity to discuss it with the 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. The School will make reasonable efforts to schedule a reinstatement conference with the parent/guardian and student following an out-of-school suspension. During this reinstatement meeting, an action plan will be developed to prevent such behavior from recurring.

Suspensions for 4 to 10 days: The student and parent will have the right to an informal hearing with the School Administration. The requirements listed below will govern the informal hearing.

- The informal hearing is meant to encourage the student's parents/guardian to meet with the school administration to discuss ways to avoid future offenses.
- 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 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.

Where **In-School Suspension** is identified as a consequence for a student's behavior:

- In-School Suspension is an exclusion from a classroom for disciplinary purposes that allows a student to remain under the direct supervision of school personnel.
- A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.
- Communication to the student's Parents or Guardians shall follow the suspension action taken by the school.
- When the in-school suspension exceeds ten (10) consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the school Principal shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th day in accordance with the procedures set forth in 22 Pa. Code §12.8.

For all suspensions, students shall be responsible for making up any exams and work missed while disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within the guidelines established by the Code of Conduct.

Interventions - At PAACS, we use a range of interventions to provide both prevention and correction for students who have violated the Code of Conduct. We utilize a tiered approach that 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, administrative meetings, reinstatement meetings, and formal hearings, to address students' problematic concerns. During these meetings, action plans are created with a focus on supporting students in addressing problematic behaviors.

The School will make reasonable efforts to conduct a reinstatement meeting following an out-of-school suspension. A student's return to school shall not be delayed or denied because a parent or guardian is unable to attend. 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. The date and time of the reinstatement meeting will be detailed in the suspension letter.

Informal Expulsion Hearing - In some cases, students who are not responsive to consequences, interventions, or meetings/conferences may proceed to an Informal Expulsion Hearing which is conducted with School Administrators. The review is conducted to determine if the behavioral infraction warrants a Formal Expulsion Hearing with a Hearing Officer assigned by 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 hearing time and place. 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 of copies of those witnesses' statements and affidavits, if any.
 - 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 seek exclusion from school as a first resort for students who violate the Code of Conduct, particularly students with disabilities. PAACS shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 711 of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education regulations, and other applicable laws governing the discipline of students with disabilities.

When a disciplinary removal may result in a change of placement, the School shall convene a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) within ten (10) school days of the decision to change the student's placement. The MDR shall include the parent/guardian, the Local Education Agency (LEA), and relevant members of the student's IEP Team, as determined by the parent/guardian and the LEA.

A change of placement occurs when a student receiving special education services is removed from school:

- For more than ten (10) consecutive school days; or
- For more than fifteen (15) cumulative school days in a school year; or
- When a series of removals totaling more than ten (10) school days constitutes a pattern of exclusion; or
- For any period of removal that otherwise constitutes a change of placement under applicable law; or
- For even one (1) school day in the case of a student with an intellectual disability, except as otherwise permitted by law.

PAACS shall not discipline a student with a disability for conduct that is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability.

During the Manifestation Determination Review, the IEP Team shall determine:

1. Whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability; and
2. Whether the conduct in question was the direct result of the School's failure to implement the student's IEP.

If the IEP Team determines that the conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or was the direct result of the School's failure to implement the student's IEP, the conduct shall be deemed a manifestation of the student's disability. Except as otherwise permitted by law, the student shall be returned to the placement from which the student was removed.

In such cases, the proposed disciplinary action that would constitute a change of placement shall not proceed. The IEP Team shall take immediate steps to address any deficiencies in the implementation of the student's IEP. The School shall conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), unless one has previously been completed, and shall develop and implement a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP). If an FBA and PBSP have already been developed, the IEP Team shall review and revise them, as appropriate, to address the behavior.

If the IEP Team determines that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, disciplinary consequences may be imposed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and applicable law. The School shall continue to provide educational services as required by law during any period of disciplinary removal.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the Manifestation Determination Review decision, the parent/guardian may request an expedited special education due process hearing. A Commonwealth-appointed hearing officer shall review the manifestation determination in accordance with applicable federal and state law. Information regarding procedural safeguards and the process for requesting a hearing shall be provided to the parent/guardian.

School personnel may remove a student to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days, regardless of whether the conduct is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, if the student:

- Carries a dangerous weapon to school, on school premises, or to a school function, or possesses a dangerous weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- Knowingly possesses, uses, sells, or solicits the sale of illegal drugs or 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.

For purposes of this policy, a dangerous weapon means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury.

During any removal to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting, the student shall continue to receive educational services and supports necessary to participate in the general education curriculum and progress toward meeting IEP goals, as required by law.

Rights and Legal Protections

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 they are on school property, while they are present at school-sponsored activities, and while they 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.

Student Due Process Rights

Students subject to suspension or expulsion proceedings shall be afforded the following due process rights:

- Written notice of charges
- Sufficient notice of hearing
- Right to counsel
- Right to present witnesses
- Right to cross-examine witnesses
- Right to review evidence
- Right to testify
- Right to a written adjudication
- Right to appeal
- Right to a hearing record

Legal Recourse for School-related Offenses

If you believe that you or your child was a victim of a crime committed 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 system. 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 whether to bring criminal charges if the victim expresses a desire to prosecute. Such offenses 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 a disagreement between you and the school staff about 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, the District Attorney's Office issues a private criminal complaint. The telephone numbers of that unit are 215-686-9863/9864/9865.

When the accused is a juvenile (under 18 years of age), a private criminal complaint is filed with 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.

The School shall implement and maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with law enforcement agencies as required by Pennsylvania law and PDE guidance.

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