

River Rock Academy



Sinking Spring Campus

PA Private Licensed Academic
Secondary Special Education

Student Handbook



change...effect...improve

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Statement on Bullying Prevention

No one should suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to his/her own suffering and that of other potential targets.

For the protection of the students and staff, River Rock Academy has created and maintained a learning atmosphere which is respectful and supportive. Providing a safe school environment where all students and staff are treated with respect and dignity, and are free from bullying, intimidation and harassment is one of our highest priorities. This freedom is fundamental to our program and is extended to everyone without exception. This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the education environment. We expect our students to refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying and report to a staff member any witnessed or suspected instance of bullying to help prevent further instances.

Our school setting provides an opportunity to teach students that cooperation and respect of others are key values at River Rock Academy. Our school setting includes:

- the school building and school grounds
- school vehicles
- any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school
- any virtual environment which would reach a student or students inside the school and interfere with the student(s)' education and learning

For the purpose of our school policy, bullying is defined as a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. Bullying may be premeditated or a sudden activity. It may be subtle or easy to identify, done by one person or a group. Bullying includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- **Power imbalance** – occurs when a bully uses his/her physical or social power over a victim, such as offensive notes or graffiti, demeaning social media posts, texts, pictures, or emails (cyber bullying), teasing, spreading rumors, name calling
- **Intent to harm** – the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity, such as stealing, hiding or damaging another student's property, physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another student, exclusion that is severe or persistent and interferes with a student's education and creates a threatening environment
- **Threat of further aggression** – the bully and the victim believe the bullying will continue.
- **Terror** – when any bullying increases, it becomes a "systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance."

(Barbara Coloroso, The Bully, The Bullied & The Bystander, 2003)

Bullying is a violation of our company norms and will not be tolerated. River Rock Academy condemns all forms of bullying. No one should be fearful of being bullied or harassed. The actions of any one person or group of individuals which threaten the health and safety of students and/or staff must be addressed promptly. Early intervention, reinforcement of a consistent message and follow-through from students, parents, staff and administration can ensure that everyone's right to learn and work in a safe environment is respected.

Information on the full River Rock Academy, Incorporated Bullying Prevention Policy can be provided upon request.

River Rock Academy

Vision, Mission & Core Values

The vision of River Rock Academy is to be the premier provider of alternative education services.

Our mission is to provide our students with the power to change, effect and improve their lives.

Our guiding core values:

- **Commitment**
- **Stewardship**
- **Integrity**
- **Excellence**



The three behavioral norms of River Rock Academy guide all students and staff:

- 1. No student has the right to hurt, intimidate or ridicule another student.**
- 2. Education and the classroom are sacred.**
- 3. Our school is sacred and we will always protect its property and belongings.**

Program Expectations

I, _____ understand that violation of this Educational Program may ultimately result in removal from River Rock and placement in another facility.

I, _____ understand that I am expected to attend daily. Unexcused absences are unacceptable. If they become excessive, a doctor's excuse will be required. A note from my parent/guardian is required upon returning to school following any absence.

I, _____ understand that I will be expected to submit to searches of my person and my belongings in order to prevent access of drugs or weapons in the program area.

I, _____ understand that any major violation such as possession of a weapon, possession of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, attending school under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, or acting in an aggressive manner that violates others' safety, will result in River Rock Academy contacting the police and pressing charges.

I, _____ understand if behavior and/or actions warrant it, Safe Crisis Management may be used.

I, _____ understand that I am responsible through acts of community service to care for our facilities. Damaging or defacing school property will result in disciplinary actions being taken, including police involvement.

I, _____ understand that cell phones, CD players, IPOD's, MP3 players, or any other electronic devices are not permitted to be used during school. All items will be confiscated by staff and secured until dismissal.

I, _____ understand that time spent on the van(s) is an extension of school. Any behavior not permitted in school is not permitted on the van and will result in disciplinary actions.

I, _____ understand that it is my responsibility to welcome all visitors in a positive manner.



Program Overview

River Rock Academy is a Pennsylvania Department of Education approved Private Licensed Academic School providing an educational option to special education students in grades 7 through 12 who are identified as requiring additional behavioral support services in the categories of severe emotional disturbance, specific learning disability and mental retardation. River Rock Academy provides academic instruction to students in the four core subject areas—math, language arts, science and social studies. Health and physical education are incorporated into the program as well. Students participate in both Life and Social Skills classes on a daily basis. Academic instruction is focused on students reaching PA Standards and Chapter 4 requirements for grade and subject. Academic instruction is based on students' needs and grade advancement by completing IEP goals established by each student's IEP team. Our goal is to provide a temporary placement in order to provide intensive behavior support, social skills and life skills instruction and return the students to the general education setting in their own school.



Services Provided

River Rock Academy students will receive behavioral and academic counseling on a regular basis. The clinical staff is technically supervised by a clinician with MSW and LSW credentials. Intensive psychological counseling will not be provided and recommendations for professional services will be reviewed with the student, family, and school district.

SMART goals will be implemented in conjunction with therapeutic and psycho-educational groups and individual counseling to facilitate transition plans. Transition plans will assist to reintegrate students into the public school setting and community. School-to-work programs utilizing community experiences are available to eligible students.

Transportation will be provided to and from River Rock Academy by the referring school district or River Rock Academy. Any change to the regular transportation schedule needs to be approved by all parties who are involved with the students placement in the program including the parents.

Parental involvement proves vital to the success of students. Parents are invited to be involved in:

- meetings to develop/review SMART goals and transition plans
- meetings to review Individual Education Plans (IEP's)
- calls or visits to River Rock
- referrals to professional agencies
- parental advisory board

Attendance Policy

Attendance equates to success. Unexcused/illegal absences will result in disciplinary action. They will be reported to the appropriate referring agencies represented as well as the home school district. Missing the van is an unexcused/illegal absence. Attendance guidelines are as follows:

- All absences require a note from home within three days of the student's return to school.
- If a note is not received, the absence will be considered unexcused/illegal.
- If a student is absent for three consecutive days, a doctor's note must be brought in to school by a parent/guardian or faxed from the doctor's office on the third consecutive day.
- If a note is not received by the school on the third day, those absences will be considered unexcused/illegal.
- After three unexcused/illegal absences or ten cumulative absences, a doctor's note will be required for all subsequent absences.
- Students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work within the marking period that the absence(s) occurred.
- Work that is not made up will impact final grades.

STUDENTS MUST ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY TO REQUEST THEIR WORK.

Tardy Policy

Any student arriving AFTER 8:00 a.m. is considered late and must report to the office. Work missed must be requested by the student and can only be made up during the marking period in which the tardy arrival(s) occurred.



Academic Instruction

Students at River Rock Academy will have a variety of academic instruction. Both teacher-instructed and self-paced curriculum will be used. Another component will be individualized computer-aided instruction. Educational options will integrate teaching technology and strategy for maximum student achievement.

Computer Use Agreement

River Rock Academy has many computer systems available for use by its students. River Rock Academy does require that students use these computers in a responsible manner. Students should be sure that any computer activities are within the framework of instructions provided by the teacher responsible for the activity. Students may have access to a variety of Internet resources in various classes. It is expected that students follow teacher guidelines and exhibit responsible behavior in regard to these resources. Use of the computer/Internet is a privilege and not a right. Students acknowledge that all aspects of computer use are subject to monitoring and review without cause and without notice. Students understand that any conduct that is in conflict with these responsibilities is inappropriate and may result in termination of the use of River Rock Academy's computer/Internet privileges. Our school setting includes any virtual environment which would reach a student or students inside the school and interfere with the student(s)' education and learning. Students further acknowledge that disciplinary action may be taken, as well as possible legal action and/or financial restitution.



Grades

Grades will reflect participation, assignments completed, and test scores. Behavior and attendance will also be weighted in grade calculation.

Mid-term and marking period grades will be sent via mail on a quarterly basis to parents and home school districts.

Point System

River Rock Academy uses a five point system that is used to determine privileges and eligibility for special activities. It is also used for progress monitoring purposes. Each teacher evaluates every student in all periods each day. The measurable criteria for the point system are as follows:

TALID

Task – Student completes given task by the end of class period

Area – Student remains in classroom for full class period

Language – Student uses appropriate language for entire class period, if swearing does occur student corrects him/her self

Interaction – Student interacts well with peers (does not engage in horseplay or inappropriate interactions)

Direction – Student follows school and classroom directions needing 2 or fewer redirections

1 point each for a total of 5 points

Community Partnership Program

The Community Partnership Program is an integral part of the experience for students at River Rock Academy. By providing volunteer service to local non-profit organizations, students are able to connect in a positive way to their community while learning and demonstrating skills as well.

Local food banks, retirement homes, rescue missions, parks, gardens, and animal shelters are some of the places students have the opportunity to provide community service. As they



participate, students develop meaningful relationships while understanding the positive effects that giving back to others can have for their lives.

All River Rock Academy students who meet the expectations of the program have the opportunity to be involved with the Community Partnership Program. Participation is contingent upon program, parent, and school district approval.

Student Conduct & Responsibilities

Every student at River Rock Academy is expected to show courtesy and respect to each other and to all faculty members and visitors. Each student is to see that his own behavior is acceptable and appropriate at all times. All students share in the responsibility to develop a school climate that is respectful, tolerant of individual differences, and conducive to learning.

Three basic behavioral norms that are the foundations of River Rock are:

1. No student has the right to hurt, intimidate, or ridicule another student.
2. Education and the classroom are sacred.
3. Our school is sacred and we will always protect its property and belongings.

Rules of Conduct

1. Treat all others and self with respect and dignity. Refrain from physical contact.
2. Treat River Rock Academy property with respect.
3. Adhere to the “Program Expectations” and the River Rock Academy handbook.
4. River Rock Academy is drug-free and tobacco-free.
5. Behave in a manner that will only credit yourself and River Rock Academy.
6. Students are not allowed to bring more than \$10.00 a day to the program. Anything over that amount will be held until the end of the school day.
7. No cards, dice, or gambling of any kind is permitted.
8. Behavior norms of River Rock Academy are expected to be followed while students are being transported at all times.
9. Purses, lotions, and lipsticks are not permitted unless otherwise authorized.
10. Pens are not permitted.

Major Rule Violations

Major rule violations may require a meeting involving parents, the referring agency, the student, and any clinical/academic staff of River Rock Academy. Police involvement may result in charges. Violations which may require police involvement include:

- Physical violence or threats of violence
- Use/possession of illegal drugs/over the counter drugs/alcohol
- Inappropriate use/distribution of prescriptions drugs or over-the-counter medications
- Vandalism of property
- Possession of a weapon

Behavior Management

Infractions of the rules of conduct/major rule violations will result in staff intervention.

The intervention may begin on any of the following levels:

- Non-verbal
- Verbal
- Loss of privileges
- In-school suspension
- Therapeutic time-out
- Safe crisis management
- Out-of-school suspension
- Police intervention

Search Policy

The safety of our students and staff is paramount at River Rock Academy. Therefore, searches occur regularly to ensure our school is safe and drug-free. Police and K-9 units may also be utilized to randomly search students and the school. Students who are given the opportunity to drive to school must submit to random searches of their vehicles as defined in the driving agreement.

Safety and Security

Safe2SaySomething (S2SS) is designed to help staff and students recognize risk factors and signals of those who may be a threat to themselves or others. From a student perspective, S2SS teaches students to treat every warning sign seriously and to act quickly to get help by talking to a trusted adult and/or by reporting it anonymously to the Pennsylvania S2SS Crisis Center via telephone, mobile device, or website.

The program is based on the following three-step system:

1. An anonymous tip is submitted via one of the following options:

Website: safe2saypa.org or Tip Line: 1-844-SAF2SAY or Mobile App

2. All calls and tips are received by the 24/7 S2SS Crisis Center.

An S2SS Crisis Center analyst receives and reviews tip information. The tip is triaged and categorized as either life safety or non-life safety.

The tip is then sent to school officials and law enforcement/911 call center (as needed) via text, email, and/or phone call.

3. School officials and law enforcement intervene and/or offer assistance to School official

and law enforcement (as needed) investigate, assess, and intervene with reported at-risk individuals.

School officials report their outcomes into the Safe2SaySomething platform and close out the tip, ensuring accountability for every tip submitted. Specific questions relative to the S2SS program may be directed to River Rock Academy's Coordinator of Safe2SaySomething, Ed McManama, at emcmanama@riverrockacademy.net.

Safe Crisis Management

River Rock Academy attempts to manage physical aggression and/or violence safely. Non-physical intervention is always preferred. Physical intervention is used as a last resort to maintain a safe environment.

Safe Crisis Management should be a rare occurrence, however, it is important that students and parents are knowledgeable on the philosophy.

All River Rock Academy staff members are trained in Safe Crisis Management through a Department of Welfare approved course.

Care for School Property

It is everyone's responsibility to take care of our school. Anyone found damaging school property will face disciplinary action and criminal charges. Students who have been found to cause property damage will be required to pay restitution. Any student in the possession of damaged property will be held accountable. Therefore, students need to report any markings on desks and books to a staff member immediately.

It is also expected that students not touch walls or framed art throughout the building.

Quiet Hallways

Hallways in River Rock Academy are to remain quiet at all times. This means students may not speak in the hallways.

Exceptions to this rule are the following:

1. Students need to respond to a staff member's question or directives.
2. Students are to greet an adult in a positive manner.

Dress Code

1. All students are expected to practice good daily hygiene.
2. Hoodies and coats will not be worn in the building.
3. Hats and other headwear such as headbands or bandanas will be removed upon entering the building.
4. Clothing should be neat, clean, and seasonally appropriate. This means that pants should be worn at the waist with no boxers or underwear showing. Shorts/skirts and shirts/tops should not be tight, too short, or transparent. Midriffs should be covered at all times. Tank tops are not permitted at anytime.
5. Ornaments/apparel depicting or alluding to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, Satan, racial intimidation, gangs, or vulgarities are not permitted.
6. Jewelry large enough to be used as weapons will be confiscated.
7. Pajamas and slippers are not permitted.

Staff will use their discretion to make judgments about the dress code.

Lunches

Lunch is available for purchase from the local school district with a reduced rate cost for qualifying students. Students will be notified of the cost at the beginning of the school year. Free lunch is also available to qualifying students. Parents/guardians must complete the school lunch application form to be considered for a free or reduced rate lunch. Students are permitted to pack a lunch. No opened drink container or glass containers are allowed in school. Water and juice containers in packed lunches must be sealed and consumed at lunch time only. Students MAY NOT sell their lunches to other students. In the event that the student is tardy past 9:00 a.m., a lunch cannot be ordered.



Snacks

Snacks are available for students to purchase twice a day. The proceeds from the sale of snacks is used for program activities. No outside food or drink may be brought into our school other than a packed lunch. No gum or candy will be permitted on the premises. Bottled water is the only drink allowed for purchase in the program. No powdered drink packets are allowed.

Medication Permission

In order for River Rock Academy to administer any over the counter or prescription medication, these rules must be followed:

Before receiving any over the counter medications or prescription medications from River Rock Academy, students must have completed River Rock's medication paperwork and have a prescription from the ordering physician and a note from parent or guardian. Both signatures are needed before any medications will be given. If one or any of the signatures are missing, medications will not be given.

Verbal consent for over the counter medications such as Tylenol or cough drops will not be permitted.

To ensure the safety of the student, over the counter medications will only be given between 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. This reduces the occurrence of medication errors. This is due to staff being unable to verify what medication might have been taken at home.

If the signatures are missing and the parent or guardian feels their child needs this medication, the parent or guardian may bring the medication in and provide the medication at that time.



**THE BEST THING ABOUT THE FUTURE IS THAT IT
COMES ONE DAY AT A TIME.**

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Emergency Medical Plan

An emergency is an incident where the student in question needs immediate medical attention. When possible, River Rock Academy staff will contact the parent/guardian so the student can be taken to the family physician. Following is the protocol that River Rock Academy staff would utilize in the event of a medical emergency:

- Injured student will be separated from the group as necessary.
- Staff member(s) will call for Emergency Medical Services if needed.
- Staff member(s) will apply appropriate First Aid and/or CPR as needed.
- If the student requires immediate hospitalization, he/she will be transported by an ambulance or River Rock Academy staff. Students will be transported to the nearest hospital.
- If contact cannot be made with the parent/guardian, River Rock Academy staff will utilize the Consent for Medical Treatment form to obtain proper medical treatment.
- If contact cannot be made with the parent/guardian, and hospitalization is required, River Rock Academy staff will stay with the child until either the child is released from the hospital or the parent/guardian arrives.

Fire and Emergency Procedures

River Rock Academy regularly holds emergency fire drills and provides instruction to the students on the procedures. Students are to remain quiet throughout the entire drill and follow all staff directives.

Extreme Weather & Other Announcements

During poor weather conditions, please watch for the River Rock Academy announcement for the appropriate campus decision on the television station WGAL Channel 8 or check their website at www.wgal.com.

In addition, River Rock Academy will notify your family via a recording on our “One Call” system in the event of delays, early dismissals, closings or other school related announcements. If, for whatever reason, you choose not to be included in the “One Call” messages please contact your Campus Director.

River Rock Academy Grievance Procedure

When the grievance procedure is used, the following steps shall be followed:

1. The student shall request a conference with the person(s) who allegedly treated the student unfairly. If requested, a supervisory staff member may be present.

2. If the conference fails to resolve the issue within ten (10) school days during which the student is present from the date of the alleged incident, the student shall file a written grievance with the Campus Director.

3. A student wishing to appeal the campus director's written decision must file a written appeal with the company Chief Operating Officer no later than five (5) school days from the date of the receipt of the Campus Director's written decision. The appeal must be signed by the student as well as his or her parent or guardian requesting a meeting with the Chief Operating Officer.

4. The Chief Operating Officer shall schedule a conference to include the appropriate parent(s) or guardian(s) to hear the grievance not later than five (5) school days following receipt of the notice of appeal and shall issue a decision, in writing, no later than five (5) school days following the grievance conference.

5. If the grievance decision at the appropriate Chief Operating Officer level is not acceptable, the Chief Operating Officer's decision may be appealed to the Chief Executive Officer. Such appeal is to be filed, in writing, not later than ten (10) school days following the date of receipt of the appropriate Chief Operating Officer's written decision. The Chief Executive Officer shall resolve the grievance by investigating the problem, holding conferences with the involved parties, or reviewing the written grievance record.

6. The decision of the Chief Executive Officer shall be the final decision. The Chief Executive Officer shall send a copy of the final decision to all involved parties not later than ten (10) school days following receipt of the appeal.



Nondiscrimination in Services

While enrolled at River Rock Academy, all students maintain certain rights. These rights include:

- A child may not be discriminated against because of race, color, religious creed, disability, handicap, ancestry, sexual orientation, national origin, age or sex.
- A child may not be abused, mistreated, threatened, harassed, or subject to corporal punishment.
- A child has the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- A child has the right to be informed of the rules of the facility.
- A child has the right to communicate with others by telephone subject to reasonable facility policy and written instructions from the contracting agency or court, if applicable, regarding circumstances, frequency, time, payment, and privacy.
- A child has the right to communicate and visit privately with his attorney and clergy.
- A child has the right to be protected from unreasonable search and seizure. River Rock Academy may conduct search and seizure procedures, subject to reasonable facility policy.
- A child has the right to practice the religion or faith of choice, or not to practice any religion or faith.
- A child has the right to rehabilitation and treatment.
- A child has the right to be free from excessive medication.
- A child may not be subjected to unusual or extreme methods of discipline which may cause psychological or physical harm to the child.
- A child has the right to clean, seasonal clothing that is age and gender appropriate.
- The child and child's family maintain the right to lodge grievance without fear of retaliation pursuant to the grievance policy listed in the student handbook.
- River Rock Academy will obtain written consent for treatment resulting from accidental injuries/illnesses.
- Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available.

Any student/client/parent or guardian who believes they have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with:

River Rock Academy, Inc.
2124 Ambassador Circle
Lancaster, PA 17603

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
Harrisburg Regional Office
Riverfront Office Center
1101 South Front Street, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17104

Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Central Regional Office
Cameron and Maclay Street
Building 56, Patton House
P.O. Box 61260
Harrisburg, PA 17106-1260

U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.
150 S. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

River Rock Academy
Sinking Spring Campus

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Sinking Spring, PA 19608

PH: 610-670-1273

Fax: 610-670-1389

www.riverrockacademy.net

Classes are in session from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.