



2011/2012

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

- FOR ALL POLICIES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED IN THIS HANDBOOK, THE POLICIES IN THE NEW HORIZONS STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES HANDBOOK APPLY



WELCOME

Welcome to Center for Autism. This handbook has been prepared to help orient you to the program. Please read it as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to discuss any questions with a member of the staff.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Center for Autism is a day treatment program established for the purpose of providing a safe and therapeutic school environment for students on the autism spectrum grades K-12 who require a more specialized school environment than is otherwise available within their school system. Inclusive in the program are a highly structured environment, low student /teacher ratio, individualized instruction to possibly include speech and language therapy and adaptive physical education, a focus on communication and social skill development and community based instruction. Center for Autism is a regional program serving the following school divisions: Newport News, Hampton, Poquoson, Williamsburg James City County, York County and Gloucester. Student individual education plans (IEP) are developed and followed collaboratively by CFA staff, school division liaisons, parents and community agencies as needed. The primary goal of the program is to provide appropriate services in the specialized environment, enabling the student (through successes) to return to a less restrictive environment in his or her home school division.

Center for Autism operates programs at the following campuses:

Student hours

Kiln Creek/Yorktown 8:15-1:55

Woodside Lane 7:55-1:46

Staff hours

Kiln Creek/Yorktown 8:00-3:15

Woodside Lane 7:45-3:00

Office Hours and Phone Numbers

Kiln Creek 7:30-3:30 369-2581 x2201 Fax: 369-5417

Woodside Lane 7:00-4:00 874-4444 x5500 Fax: 872-8951

This guide provides information concerning school regulations and procedures. These regulations and procedures have been established to provide all students with an equal opportunity to gain the maximum educational benefit from their program: therefore, each family will be expected to be familiar with and to observe these regulations and procedures.

We ask that you please adhere to our hours of operation. No provision has been made for staff to supervise children before and after school (parent conferences and IEP meetings may be an exception).

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT GROOMING AND DRESS

Students will maintain person attire and grooming standards that promote safety, health and acceptable standards of social conduct. Our centers are housed in public school buildings which follow the following dress code.

A student will not dress, groom, wear or use emblems, insignias, badges or other symbols where the effect thereof is to cause disruption or interference with the operation of the school. The coordinator or designee will determine whether any particular mode of dress, apparel, grooming or use of emblems, insignias, badges or other symbols results in such interference or disruption as to violate this policy. Students should wear appropriate clothes. (Students must wear protective equipment when performing hazardous operations. This includes not only safety glasses and shields, but also gloves, aprons, hats, etc. Clothing must cover legs and arms as required.) All students are required to wear shoes, shirts, pants or skirts at all times on school grounds.

- 1 Hats, bandannas, sweatbands, sun visors, or other headgear are not to be worn in the building (except as required for safety in the class).
- 2 Lewd or suggestive attire may not be worn.
- 3 Apparel which advertises, glorifies, or symbolizes any illegal substance, alcohol, or tobacco may not be worn.
- 4 Tank tops, halter-tops, or other apparel specifically designed as beachwear may not be worn.
- 5 Footwear must be worn at all times. Athletic shoes recommended. Shoes should be comfortable for exercise, physical education, and playground use.
- 6 Shirts must be worn appropriately (pulled over head, both shoulders and both arm).
- 7 Sunglasses are not to be worn in the school building.
- 8 The midriff must be covered at all times.
- 9 The waist of pants and shorts must be between the waistline and the hip (pelvic) bone. Skirts and shorts must hang no more than two inches above the knee.
- 10 Clothing which may be offensive to different cultures or groups of people is not permitted.
- 11 Clothing, colors, or items, which may be considered as "gang" related, may not be worn on campus.
- 12 Coats and jackets will be put in designated area immediately upon arrival to school and remain there until dismissal.
- 13 Students are asked to keep their pants pulled high enough to hide undergarments. Students insisting on exposing undergarments or private areas will be placed apart from their peers. Options will be given such as string to use as a belt or sweat pants/scrubs.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND TIME OUT

All Center for Autism staff are trained in a physical intervention system by certified instructors. All staff are trained in verbal de-escalation and will assess and attempt to de-escalate crises before using physical intervention. Physical intervention will only be used when there is a physical threat made by the student, destruction of property, or refusal to leave a designated area and disrupting instructional time, or behaving in a way that could cause self-injury.

Center for Autism utilizes a time out booth when students exhibit behaviors such as loud and disruptive behavior which disrupts the learning environment, verbal or physical aggression, leaving assigned area without permission, or when a student requires a quiet place to calm down and evaluate behavior. Time out booths are supervised at all times while students are in them.

Students are encouraged to use voluntary time outs when experiencing strong negative emotions to assist them in calming down and evaluating feelings.

Students will be asked to remove shoes, belts, jewelry, and to empty pockets if they have exhibited aggressive behaviors during the incident or have had a history of aggressive behaviors while in time out. Items will also be removed if used inappropriately in the time out room such as scratching or drawing on walls, destroying object, self-injury, or threatening to use it as a weapon.

Parents will be notified of all time outs or physical interventions involving their child.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE--Parents may excuse five absences during a school year without providing a doctor's note or documentation of family emergency. All other absences will be considered unexcused.

EARLY DISMISSAL--On early dismissal days students will be dismissed between 11:00 and 11:30 A.M. Lunch is not served on half days. Please check with your child's teacher whether students should bring a snack and drink on these days.

FIRE DRILLS--Virginia State Law requires that fire drills be carried out periodically. Students must follow the fire drill procedure and participate in every fire drill in a serious manner. Center for Autism supports student participation and understanding with the use of visuals and reinforcement as needed.

PORTABLE COMMUNICATION DEVICES--Beepers, phones or other unauthorized communication devices are prohibited on school grounds. If a student is found to be in possession of these items, the items will be confiscated.

STUDENT DRIVERS--Students are not permitted to drive a vehicle to and from school. All students must be transported to and from school by school bus, parent/guardian, or an adult with prior written parental permission.

UNAUTHORIZED ITEMS – Items that are disruptive to other students and to the educational process are considered unauthorized items. Any student bringing disruptive items to school will be given the opportunity to give the unauthorized item(s) to his/her classroom teacher to be locked up and returned at the end of the day. Failure to comply with this may result in confiscation of item(s) and further consequences. Unauthorized items include such things as radios, tapes/CDs, food items, disruptive clothing items, or any item that becomes disruptive to others.

Students are not allowed to sell any items while on school grounds; including but not limited to: personal items, trading cards, CDs, food, or candy.

Material Restrictions / Contraband:

- Bandannas
- Compact Discs, audio or video tapes
- Computer software
- Fire works
- Gang related paraphernalia
- Glass containers
- Knives
- Laser pointers
- Letter openers
- Lighters/Matches
- Magazines or materials containing sex, guns or aggression in any way
- Open containers
- Pagers
- Phones
- Pornography
- Sums of money of \$50 to be reported to parent
- Tobacco products
- Tools
- Trading or playing cards
- Weapons.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is provided for students through their school division. Center for Autism will be glad to assist with questions or concerns, but school divisions set their transportation policies and procedures. If the bus is late or the bus has not picked up your child, please call your school division transportation for information. In the past, some parents have also called our office simply to inform us of a bus situation such as a late bus—which we appreciate.

If you, a family member or neighbor do transport (drop off or pick up) your child, please take a minute and sign them in/out in the register at the Center for Autism office or similar location. If you plan to transport your child on a regular basis, a note stating the transportation arrangements can be filed in the office as a sign in/out time saving measure.

STUDENT PACKET INFORMATION

Each year you will receive a packet of information and forms to complete on your child. It will include information on our open house for that school year, a summary of important information for parents and forms to give us current emergency and medical information on your child as well as your signature on policies and procedures. Please take a few minutes to complete these forms and return them at open house or with your child on the first day of school. It is important that we have this information on file in a timely manner. Please do not hesitate to call our office if you have questions regarding the packet of information.

PARENT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Center for Autism supports parents with frequent contact and interaction between home and school. It is suggested that parents and Center for Autism classroom and related service staff establish a consistent mode of communication, e.g. e-mail, daily communication notebook that travels by backpack, phone calls, etc. Please discuss this with your child's classroom teacher.

Center for Autism will continue to provide parent group meetings at various intervals during the school year for topic discussion and support.

Parents are welcome to come and observe their child and participate in school activities. We have an open door policy but ask that you be courteous and considerate when planning a visit. We prefer that you call ahead and check in with classroom or support staff. Extra people in the classroom and changes in routine are often very disturbing or distracting to our students. When you do visit during student hours, please respect the matter of confidentiality regarding students other than your own child. You may be asked to sign a confidentiality form. Please also know that staff are very busy during student hours. They would love to take the time to chat and answer questions, but that can best be done after students have left for the day. Support staff will be glad to try to assist you or get questions answered.

The following information may be helpful to parents in looking for resources or other parents with similar questions or concerns.

Center for Autism staff have developed a parent handbook of information located near the front office at the Kiln Creek campus

As each student reaches transition age (13-14) a packet of transition services information related to your community agencies will be shared. Please feel free to ask questions.

The following are Parent Resource Centers for the school divisions we serve:

Hampton-1442 W. Queen St.---896-7623

Newport News-Kiln Creek Elementary— 591-4527

Poquoson-Poquoson Elementary—868-7564

Williamsburg James City County-Berkeley Middle School—229-8051 x148

York County-302 Dare Rd.—890-1017

Here is a brief list of some parent resource agencies or organizations:

1. Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) www.peatc.org 1-800-869-6782
2. Legal Advocacy Center—VA Coalition for Students with Disabilities www.virginialac.org
3. Peninsula Autism Society of America (PASA) Deborah Warren—Communications—564-6106
PASInfo106@msn.com



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF CFA PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Please sign and return this form to school

I have read and reviewed the Center for Autism Parent/Student Handbook. I understand that if I have any questions about the information contained within the handbook, I may contact a school representative.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Student name: _____ Date _____

Parents, please note:

The forms in the back of this handbook are copies of those already sent home for student enrollment (you can refer to these extra forms and use if needed).

You do NOT need to fill out the attached forms.

