

The Pathways School - Edgewood

2021-2022

Edgewood School-Based Parent/Student Handbook

The Pathways School – Edgewood
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PHILOSOPHY AND INTRODUCTION

Pathways Schools Philosophy

We believe that our students can learn, be successful, trust themselves and others, change, and take charge of their lives.

We believe that in order for students to do so, they must be taught the social, emotional, academic and survival skills needed to live independently and productively in their families and communities.

We believe that our students are worthy of every effort that can be made on their behalf so that they may realize their own self-worth.

We believe that providing them with small, structured, safe, and caring environments is best for enabling this self-discovery and change.

We seek to establish close working relationships with families and/or guardians to facilitate communication, conflict resolution and training to meet their son's or daughter's needs.

For students as well as families our goal is to provide PATHWAYS to a better future.

Introduction

The overall goal of The Pathways School – Edgewood is to help students make a natural transition from high school to post-secondary life. A safe environment, free of threat of injury and intimidation must exist if students are going to have the opportunity to accomplish the goals of the program. The staff and students share the responsibility for providing a safe, respectful environment.

The Pathways School – Edgewood occupies space within the Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church. We share the building during the day with the Silver Spring Day School, members of the church congregation, and at times other community organizations. Students are also often engaged in school-sponsored activities in the community. This may include participation in instruction activities in a public library, employment in a job setting, or field trips to various locations. Therefore, in addition to ensuring a safe environment for our own staff and students on site, we carry an additional responsibility for the safety of the church community, the preschool, and the community in which we provide school programming and work experiences.

The Pathways School – Edgewood policies and procedures and behavior management system have been developed based on the goals and needs of the program as a whole, while taking into consideration the importance of addressing individualized goals and needs. The following sections will describe the policies and procedures, behavior management system, motivational activities, and crisis procedures implemented at the Edgewood program.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

At The Pathways School – Edgewood, we recognize that behavioral issues will present themselves from time to time. It is our belief that the consequences of all behaviors must reflect real-life situations as much as possible. In most cases, student’s behavioral concerns will be dealt with on an individual basis. The following policies are written to serve as guidelines when monitoring behavior and determining consequences.

Attendance Policy

Both the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia have compulsory attendance laws requiring children to attend school regularly unless there is a lawful reason for being absent. According to the Compulsory Schools Attendance Laws, Maryland children must attend school if they are five years old or older and until they are eighteen and District of Columbia children age five and under eighteen. The Pathways Schools are required to follow the mandates of the laws.

If a student will be absent from school, the parent/guardian should contact the school to inform the school of the absence including the reason. Upon returning to school from an absence, a student is required to bring a written note from the parent or guardian. If the student returns to school without a note, the absence may be considered as unexcused.

If a student has a chronic medical condition that could impact school attendance, a physician’s statement regarding the condition will be requested. A physician’s note confirming a required absence from school must be provided for all absences beyond five (5) consecutive days. This includes absences for all medical reasons, including pregnancy.

Students must come to school on a consistent basis to benefit from all aspects of the program. Attendance will be monitored on a daily basis. The Administrative Assistant and/or school therapist will contact parents/guardians when a student is absent. In the event of ongoing unexcused absences, a truancy report must be made. This could result in a meeting being held to discuss whether this school placement continues to be appropriate.

Leaving School Grounds without Permission

State law stipulates that once a student has arrived at school, the school assumes responsibility for the student, regardless of age, much the same way a parent is responsible for their child. Students are not permitted to leave school grounds without permission or the general vicinity of school personnel during a school-sponsored activity. Once a student has walked off of the second floor of The Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church without permission, he or she will be considered AWOL. The following actions will be taken should a student decide to leave school grounds without permission:

- The principal or designee will be notified immediately when a student is identified as having left without permission;
- The student has fifteen minutes to return. If there are concerns for the safety of the student or others in the community, the parents/guardians and/or police will be contacted immediately. If the student fails to return within fifteen minutes, parents/guardians will be called and the police may be called.
- Any student who refuses to participate in the resolution process is expected to receive programming in the ALE, or receive alternative programming under the supervision of a staff person...
- Any student who refuses to participate in the resolution process will not be able to return to participation in regular school activities.
- Consequences/options will be determined based on the nature of the behavior associated with the student leaving school grounds without permission. It may include reporting to ALE, alternative programming under the supervision of a staff member, or out-of-school suspension, or in-school suspension.
- Students who go AWOL to go to the local establishments such as McDonald's or 7-Eleven, will be required to report to in school suspension. They will receive a one day in school suspension (ISS).

School Safety

It is essential that students feel safe in their learning environment for which our staff is committed to promoting. In order for that to happen, it is necessary for staff, students, and families to work together.

In addition, as stated in our manual, weapons, drugs, matches, lighters, pagers, laser pointers, and any other contraband are not allowed. No drawings, photos, or magazine containing materials related to weapons or pornography will be allowed in school.

A hand held metal detector will be used to scan students, purses and bags, upon entry. All students will be scanned by appropriate (gender) staff. A hand-held metal detector will be used before each student can enter the school. Students who refuse to comply will be asked to remain in the lobby, and parents will be notified immediately.

Students are not allowed to lend their possessions to or borrow them from others; this includes money, electronic equipment, clothing, accessories, lunch, etc. If lending/borrowing becomes a problem, the parent/guardian may be notified and may be asked to come to school for a discussion.

Students are not to share food (either brought from home or earned at school), Students must arrive to their assigned area/classes on time. Permission must be granted by staff to go areas within the school building.

Should a student exhibit behavior compromising the safety of him/her and/or others, the parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible. They will be requested to remove the student from the school. The administration has the right to notify the police for assistance if needed.

Bullying, posturing, taunting, mocking, gesturing, and any other form of harassment, including harassment related to sexual identity, etc. will not be tolerated. Threats of any sort, regardless of intent, will also be taken seriously. Consequences will be given should this occur. Parents and the county personnel will also be notified. Police may also be notified and legal action may be taken.

Ensuring the safety of others includes refraining from any gang comments, gestures, and affiliations during school time. Thus, no gang writings/symbols can be written anywhere in school. Anything that would be generally considered disturbing or offensive is prohibited.

Cell Phone Policy

It is not a violation of Maryland law or of the Code of Student Conduct for a student to be in possession of a portable communication device, including pagers and cellular telephones, on public School property. However it is a violation to use such devices in a manner that will disrupt the school environment. Cell phones are not considered necessary for school. Should a student need to bring one to school, it is to be turned in upon arrival at school and will be returned upon scheduled departures. It will be kept secure. Students are not to call, text message, take photos, videos, etc. of/with anyone else in school, on/off school grounds or on the bus.

Should a student neglect to turn his/her phone in and it is seen, used or on during the course of the school day will be treated as any other student who disrupts the class. When appropriate, students may go to the office of the Program Assistant to check their messages or texts. If the student needs to make a call to a parent, social worker, etc., he/she should seek out the appropriate personnel in order to facilitate the call. Students are not allowed to answer text messages. A parent who needs to speak to their child must call the school and ask to speak to a therapist or the principal they will then be directed to the student. A student who sends or receives a page, call, text message, picture, or other communication on the bus or during the school day will be treated as any other student who disrupts class. If the cell phone continues to be a disruption, it is subject to confiscation by school officials until the student's parent comes to school to retrieve it and/or a conference will be held to discuss the issue.

Violations of the Cell Phone Policy:

1. Warning
2. Staff confiscate phone and return at the end of the day.
3. Staff confiscate and parent/guardian must retrieve it from the Principal
4. Parent/guardian conference with the Principal

Electronic Devices

Students are permitted to use electronic devices, such as walkmans, IPOD's, and MP3 players. They cannot however, use the cell phone as their portable music device. When using their headphones students are expected to maintain the volume so that only the individual student can hear the music. When receiving instruction, at all times in the hallways, and when engaged in conversation, electronic devices should be turned off and headphones should be removed from students' ears. It is a privilege for students to be able to use their electronic devices during the school day. The privilege may be revoked at any time if the student does not adhere to the guidelines or if the use becomes disruptive.

Pathways Schools is NOT responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items while in the students' possession. Students are responsible for their belongings and are encouraged not to bring items that are not easily replaced. Students are encouraged to secure their equipment or give to a staff member to be locked in a cabinet when it is not in use or being supervised. Pathways Schools does not recommend the loaning and/or trading of CD's or electronic devices amongst students.

School Phone Use

There are times that students will need to use the school phones. At no time are students permitted to use the phone without staff present. They can use them under the following conditions:

- 1) Transition-related phone calls - Students must first obtain permission from a transition staff person. With permission granted, the student can make these calls in the presence of a staff member.
- 2) Personal or other (i.e., parents, family, or therapists, etc.) phone calls - Students must first obtain permission from their therapist or the principal. With permission granted, the phone number will be dialed and the conversation will be held under the supervision of a staff member.

Lockers

Students can be assigned a locker. If a student chooses to be responsible for and use a locker, he/she is responsible for all of its contents. A student may decline use of a locker at any time. The Principal or designee may search the physical plant of the school, including lockers, at any time.

Work Participation

An integral component of the Edgewood Program is engaging in work experiences. The purpose is to provide students with a series of hands-on experiences in a variety of community settings. The ability to get along with others in a work environment is a critical factor in the Edgewood program. Students will be assigned to work assignments based on their individual program needs. Work experiences may include competitive employment, volunteer work, internships, apprenticeships, and work crew. Students participating on work crews will be paid minimum wage through payroll and will not be provided benefits, such as health insurance and retirement plans.

If students miss any classwork while engaged in Pathways-approved work assignments, they are responsible for making up the assignments in a timely manner.

If a student consistently refuses to participate in any work experiences, a conference will be held with the student, parent/guardian, and/or a representative of the county to discuss alternative work options.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately for the activities they will be involved with throughout the day. Staff discretion will be used in determining the appropriateness of dress.

The following criteria provide guidelines regarding inappropriate clothing:

Shirts and Blouses

- Shirts and blouses should be continuous from neckline to waist. The entire mid-section should not show.
- No tank tops and muscle shirts. Exceptions may be made during work crews and physical activities.
- No clothing with vulgar language, obscene pictures, weapons, drug/alcohol or drug paraphernalia and tobacco products.
- No identifiable gang/crew clothing or paraphernalia - no bandanas at all and both pant legs must be kept down.
- No see-through clothing.

Skirts, Dresses and Shorts

- Skirts, dresses, shorts and spandex should be no shorter than fingertip level.

Pants

- Pants should be secured at waist - no sagging below waist to expose undergarments.
- Tights, stretch pants, leggings, and spandex body suits must be worn with clothing long enough to cover buttocks.

Hats

- Although students are typically allowed to wear hats during the school day, in some settings, students will be expected to remove hats.
- No hats with vulgar language, obscene pictures, weapons, drug/alcohol or drug paraphernalia and tobacco products.

Consequences for Inappropriate Dress

Students will be expected to abide by the dress code. Those students who are not dressed appropriately will be expected to change their clothing and will be provided with alternative items if necessary. If a student refuses to dress appropriately, he/she will serve the remainder of the day in ALE.

Meals & Snacks

Breakfast

We provide breakfast for students. We do believe that breakfast is an important meal of the day in order to be able to perform well and remain alert throughout the morning. Students may bring their own items for breakfast and are permitted to eat during homeroom. Microwaves are available for use during that time. Students are given a small breakfast snack.

Lunch

We provide lunches for all students. Students may bring their own lunches to school. They may store lunches in refrigerators and have microwaves for use during lunchtime.

Cigarettes and Smoking

It is against the law in the state of Maryland for students under the age of 18 to use, distribute, or possess tobacco products. Tobacco products are defined as any substance containing tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, smoking tobacco, snuff, or smokeless tobacco.

The Pathways Schools and participating churches are smoke-free environments. We support the belief that both first and second-hand smoke poses a significant health risk. We encourage students who smoke to seek alternative means for addressing their desire to smoke. This policy is in effect during

- the school day,
- school related activities,
- field trips,
- Community Based Programming
- walks in the neighborhood, and
- Work crews.

Cigarettes and other tobacco products, lighters, and matches must be turned in to the Principal immediately upon arriving at school. Parents/guardians will be informed that the student possesses these items.

The items will be returned to the student at the end of the school day if:

- a. the student is 18 or older, *and*
- b. they were turned in voluntarily by the student.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Pathways Schools philosophy identifies what we believe students can achieve. The Behavior Management System is designed to help them realize these achievements. All students are expected to participate in the behavior management system. This system enables the students to have daily practice of the behavioral and academic skills necessary to ensure success in the learning environment. In addition, it provides a regular system of monitoring, by both staff and students, and an incentive of positive rewards as students experience and display their progress. Our policies regarding student conduct are in effect throughout the school day, work day, on field trips, and during any school-sponsored activities, including community-based instruction and activities.

Edgewood Cares!

The Behavior Management System is centered around our “Edgewood Cares!” (EC) incentive program. It is also supplemented by data collection from both classroom and common area observation data. Within the EC system students are asked to do the following:

Communicate your needs appropriately

Accept responsibility

Respect yourself and others

Embrace others boundaries

Stay in your assigned area

Earning Bonus Points

Each student has the ability to earn 5 points per class. 1 point will be awarded by the classroom teacher for demonstrating one of the *Edgewood Cares* behaviors. They also have the opportunity to earn up to 10 extra points per week by demonstrating the following: fostering community; staying in their lane; using coping skills/strategies independently; going out of their way to help someone else; showing improvement in an identified area.

Recording Points

Student points are recorded daily by the classroom teachers and then submitted every Wednesday to the Therapist team. They then tally the points and notify students what they have earned for the week to save or make purchases in the school store. The utilization of the point system is a tool for promoting and rewarding expected behaviors. It also encourages and allows students to experience mistakes without feelings of failure, to increasingly regulate their own behavior, and to begin to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Students have the opportunity to earn and participate in a variety of motivational activities throughout the school year. Students earn rewards, awards and activities based on their behaviors and academic performance. The Pathways School – Edgewood attempts to match motivation and rewards typical of adult life. We recognize that students enjoy frequent acknowledgement for their successes. Therefore, we include a range of activities that are designed to motivate our students toward success and to reward their hard work in attaining their goals. For some students, contracts are developed to link clear expectations with desired rewards.

Reward Opportunities

Weekly

- School store purchases every Friday

Monthly

- Friday Activities 2 x a month
- Most improved/3 highest ticket earners get lunch

Per Semester

- Each semester we will host a “Semester Jam”. Students will vote on a list of preferred activities suggested by their peers and approved by administration. Students must earn a minimum of 2220 points per semester to participate

Contracts

For some students, a contract may be developed to supplement the point sheet. Individualized contracts can be used for a variety of situations, including:

- To increase a desired behavior,
- To decrease an unacceptable behavior,
- To motivate or challenge a student having difficulty with the point sheet,

The contract will be designed to link specific expectations with desired rewards.

Awards

A variety of awards and certificates are used to mark achievements made by students. These and other awards are presented during our community group or in other group settings, so that peers and staff and sometimes families can celebrate each student’s successes.

Honor Roll

At the end of each quarter those students who have earned a grade point average of 3.0 (B average) or better will be placed on the Honor Roll. They will receive a certificate and an Honor Roll pin in acknowledgement of their accomplishment. Honor Roll students are also taken to breakfast/lunch as a group with a teacher, therapist, and administrative staff person.

Perfect Attendance

At the end of each quarter those students who attended school every day during the quarter will be awarded for their exemplary attendance record. They will receive a certificate and a Perfect Attendance pin.

Al Minnigh Student Achievement Award

Since June 1992, Pathways has been awarding Pathways students who have demonstrated outstanding improvement in at least two of the following areas the Al Minnigh Student Achievement Award:

- Academic achievement
- Behavioral change
- Participation in therapy
- Volunteer work, or
- Vocational training

The principal and staff of each site recommend the most deserving student to the Executive Director for review and selection. This finalist receives a cash award. Awards are announced at each site's graduation ceremony.

CRISIS PROCEDURES

Whenever a student is unable (whether emotionally, physically, or otherwise) to participate fully in the activities planned and scheduled for that time, we expect that student to work with a staff respectfully to negotiate plausible alternative activities that address legitimate learning outcomes and to make appropriate choices to remain in school programming as much as possible.

Safety Procedures

In cases of imminent danger to self or others, staff will work to maintain the safety of the students, the staff, and the community. When on-site, staff will assess if going to a community based setting will deescalate a situation while maintaining the safety of students, staff, and others. In those instances, staff, student, and principal verbally develop a plan for the remainder of the day for the student who is in crisis. Situations in which staff determines that neither working individually in the community nor remaining on-site is appropriate for a student in crisis; the student may be suspended for the remainder of the day. The factors that influence this decision include, but are not limited to the following behaviors: aggressive verbalization toward staff, students, or the general program; the inability to redirect the student; and other serious behaviors that cannot be controlled by the staff. In these instances, students are transported home when it can be done safely. Parents may be contacted to pick up the student from school.

In cases of medical emergencies, the Pathways School – Edgewood follows The Pathways Schools' procedures. All emergencies are reported to the Principal as soon as feasible.