

# The Pathway School Handbook



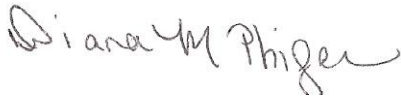
**NOTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a valuable member of your child’s learning team, we have provided you with this information to support the policies and protocol of The Pathway School. Please review this information with your son/daughter and contact me if you have questions regarding anything in this handbook. I would recommend you keep this in a location which will allow you to refer to it should questions arise.

**Please sign and return this page of the handbook**, signifying your receipt of this material.

Sincerely,



Diana M. Phifer  
Director of Admissions & Marketing  
610-277-0660 ext 289  
dphifer@pathwayschool.org

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



## **Mission:**

**The mission of The Pathway School is to build academic, social and life skills in students with special needs to promote their success and independence after Pathway.**

## **Programs**

### Lower School

Students range in age between 9 and 15 years of age. Emphasis is placed on academic and experiential learning where students learn, practice and generalize their knowledge in natural settings. Classes include language arts, math, history and science, as well as physical education and art. Students are exposed to employability skill training, focusing on life skills which enable individuals to obtain and keep employment (soft skills).

### Upper School

Students range in age between 16 and 21 years of age. Emphasis continues in areas of academic and experiential learning. Classroom curriculum becomes more specific in the main academic areas of language arts, mathematics, history and science. Students continue to receive physical education and can pick up art electives. Students engage in job sampling in the areas of horticulture, food service, computer technology and sales, with a continued emphasis on employability skills. Students are working to obtain their high school diploma.

### Practical Academics

Students range in age between 13 and 21 years of age. Emphasis is placed on life skills necessary for safety and transition to adult living. Students continue to take classes in practical mathematics, reading and social studies, with content geared to practical living experiences. The learning environments vary so that students can practice and generalize learned skills to the natural setting where those skills are expected to occur.

### Emotional Support

Pathway serves students between the ages of 6-14 (first through eighth grade). The goal of the program is to increase and improve academic, active learning, self-control and social/emotional skills to prepare students for transition to less restrictive academic settings, including return to District placement.

## Related Services

Speech, Occupational Therapy and Clinical Services are foundational elements to supporting the student at The Pathway School. Students have the opportunity to receive individual and group therapy.

## Careers

The mission of the careers program is to help students learn, practice and integrate employability skills. These are the skills that are required to obtain and keep a job, such as: getting to work on time, wearing your uniform, maintaining proper hygiene, taking the appropriate amount of time for a break, following directions and taking constructive criticism from your supervisor. Learning and mastering these basic employability skills at Pathway will allow students to secure more specialized training post Pathway. Students engage in job sampling in the areas of horticulture, food service, computer technology and sales in on-campus environments and then move to off-campus sites incorporating the lessons from campus. Students receive a continuum of job coaching and support.

## ***Student Rights and Responsibilities***

The following statements summarize student rights and responsibilities. They help explain the relationship between and among students at The Pathway School. In exercising their rights, students shall not disrupt the educational process or force upon, endanger, or deny others their rights.

### **Education**

**Right:** Students have the right to a public education, unimpaired because of gender, race, religion, national origin, medical condition, disability, economic status, personal characteristics, or any reason not related to their individual capacities.

**Responsibility:** Students have the responsibility to avoid actions or activities, individually or in groups, which shall interfere with a person's access to a public education.

### **Learning Environment**

**Right:** Students have the right to education environments that will promote learning for all students.

**Responsibility:** Students have the responsibility to utilize staff assistance, learning and coping strategies to keep education environments and school activities optimal learning environments.

### **Expression**

**Right:** Students have the right to express themselves in speech, writing, or symbolism within the boundaries of the law and policies of the school.

**Responsibility:** Students have the responsibility to ensure that such expression does not disrupt the educational process, present health or safety hazards, damage public property, infringe on the rights of others, or violate the law or school policies.

### **Religion**

**Right:** Students have the right to their own religious beliefs.

**Responsibility:** Students have the responsibility to ensure that in exercising their own religious freedom, they do not violate other students' constitutional rights to religious freedom.

### **Privacy**

**Right:** Students have the right to protection from unlawful searches and seizures of their personal possession(s) or their person without reasonable cause.

**Responsibility:** Students have the responsibility not to endanger themselves, other students, school personnel, or the general public by possessing material or objects which are potentially hazardous and/or prohibited by federal, state or local law, or school policy.

### **Grievance and Appeal Procedure**

The purpose of the Grievance and Appeal Procedure is to make sure that objections concerning treatment and/or student rights are take care of promptly and fairly. Students have the right to file grievances and appeals when informal ways of resolving problems are unsuccessful. Every student shall be informed of the grievance and appeal process and are encouraged to use it when other ways of taking care of complaints are unsuccessful.

#### 1. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- a. Any student may make a complaint, orally or in writing, concerning his/her IEP, his rights or the quality of services at the Pathway School. The grievance shall be given to the Education Principal.
- b. Every student shall have the right to the help of an independent person and witnesses in presenting his/her complaint.
- c. The staff member receiving the complaint shall investigate the complaint and make every effort to correct it. Based upon this procedure a decision shall be made in writing as soon as possible (within 48 hours) after the student files the complaint. Complaints will be decided by persons not directly involved in the circumstances leading to the grievance.
- d. The student shall be given a copy of the complaint and the final decision and a copy will be filled in the student record.
- e. A record of student complaints and grievances will be maintained.

#### 2. APPEAL PROCEDURE

A student may appeal the grievance decision within ten (10) working days. The Education Director will review and rule within ten (10) days. Students may utilize the Grievance and Appeal procedure when informal methods of resolving disputes regarding treatment and/or student rights are unsuccessful.

**Attendance and Absences:**

Student attendance requirements as set forth by the Pennsylvania Public School Laws and Regulations are enforced. A school calendar is provided to parents at the time of acceptance, and for each subsequent school year.

**General Absences:**

Students are expected to attend school regularly unless they are ill. To report your child's absence, please call the Education Office Manager at **610-277-0660 ext 321** prior to the beginning of the school day. Please leave the following information on the voice-mail if no one is available: your name, student's name, homeroom teacher, and date of absence. Students returning from an absence must bring an excuse note to be given to the homeroom teacher or education secretary. Following a three day absence the medical department requires a doctor's note stating that the student is free from communicable disease and able to resume all school activities.

Unexcused absences from the classroom for periods in excess of three days are reported to the local educational agency (school district) for follow-up in accordance with the compulsory attendance regulations. Parents sending a note citing the reason for the absence may avoid this.

**Late Arrival:**

Parents must notify the school at least a day in advance, except in emergency situations. Parents must bring the student to Butera Hall. The receptionist will contact the classroom. The classroom teacher will send a staff member to escort the student to his/her class. Parents and students may not go directly to the classroom.

**Early Pick-up:**

Parents must notify the school at least a day in advance, except in emergency situations. Parents must report to Butera Hall. The receptionist will contact the child's teacher and the student will meet his/her parents in Butera Hall. Parents are not permitted to go directly to a classroom to pick up a student.

AT NO TIME WILL THE SCHOOL RELEASE THE STUDENT TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THE PARENT/GUARDIAN WITHOUT WRITTEN PRE-APPROVAL FROM THE PARENT/GUARDIAN.

**Extended Absences for Vacations:**

A student may not be taken from school for family vacations without obtaining permission from the Education Director. The student will be responsible for completing missed work, reports, and tests.

**Borrowing/Lending Policy:**

Students may NOT borrow, lend, trade, and sell, etc. to one another. Students who do not comply and are caught borrowing/lending will report to the principal. Repeated offenses will result in a suspension of privileges.

**Bringing Items to School:**

Items from home may not be brought to school unless they are required by a teacher by a teacher for a classroom assignment. Recreational items (games, sports equipment, etc.) need written approval from the homeroom teacher before a student may bring them to school.

Yu-Gi-Oh Trading Cards and other such trading cards are NOT permitted at Pathway during the school day.

The following items may NOT be brought to school (even if left in a book bag) unless the student has submitted a written request to his/her respective principal and received an identification tag (the tag MUST be visible at all times)

- Cell Phone
- PDA/Palm Pilot
- Laptop computer
- I-pod, Walkman, Portable CD-player, etc.
- Handheld game systems (such as DS)
- Camera or video camera

Staff seeing a student using one of these devices with a tag may check to determine if the student is using it at the approved time and under the approved conditions. If a student is using a device without a tag, the staff member is to confiscate the device and turn it in to the Education Office.

First Offense:           The device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Second Offense:        The device will be returned in one month and parents will be notified.

Third Offense:         The device will be returned only to parents. Permission to use the device will be terminated for a period of time to be determined by the Principal.

**Bullying:**

Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors that disrupt both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment, is prohibited at The Pathway School. School administrators, faculty, staff, students and volunteers are directed to: demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat each other with civility and respect and refuse to tolerate bullying.

"Bullying" is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:

1. Directed at another student or students.
2. Which occurs in a “school setting” or occurs outside of school conduct materially and substantially interferes with the educational process or program in the school, as allowed by the law.
3. That has the effort of doing any of the following substantially interfering with a student’s education creating a threatening environment substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

A “school setting” shall mean in the school, on school grounds, at any school sponsored community activities, on the school’s server or school’s electronic, web-based, internet or on-line program, in school vehicles, at designated bus stops or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

Because bystander support of bullying can bolster these behaviors, the school prohibits both active and passive support for acts of bullying. The staff should encourage all students to refuse to engage in these acts and to report them immediately to their Teacher, Principal and/or Education Director.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including in-school or out-of-school suspension, in the case of a student, or suspension and/or termination in the case of an employee.

Consequences for student who commits an act of bullying shall be unique to the individual and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student’s disability, and must be consistent with the school’s approved School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Plan . Remedial measures shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; teach replacement skills and strategies; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act.

The Education Director at the school is responsible for the receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to their supervisor who will ensure a direct report to the respective Directors. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report without further investigation.

The Education Director is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the designated Director shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. An investigation is to be conducted within three school days after a report or complaint is made known to the specific Director.

The Pathway School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who

engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

The Pathway School prohibits any person from falsely accusing another of bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension.

The Pathway School will comply with applicable federal and state laws relating to bullying, including but not limited to those requirements delineated in the Pennsylvania Code and applicable House Bill 1067 Public School Code amendments relating to bullying.

The Pathway School will comply with applicable federal and state laws, including Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code and applicable provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) and its applicable implementing regulations regarding the discipline of special education students and thought-to-be eligible students who engage in an act of bullying.

The Pathway School will further comply with applicable federal and state laws, regarding protected handicapped students and applicable sections of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and its applicable implementing regulations.

To report an act of bullying, contact Diane Gonsalves, Education Director.

**Communication between home and school:**

Communication between parents and teachers is critical for student success and is an essential component of Pathway's program.

- At the beginning of the school year and as new students arrive during the year; parents are contacted by homeroom teachers to determine the most appropriate communication system for the specific family (emails, communication log, phone calls).
- Communication may happen daily or weekly depending upon the student's needs and the specific plan outlined in his/her IEP.
- Parents are asked not to call the classroom during school hours (8:30am-3:00pm) as this disrupts the learning process. Since each staff member has voice mail, messages can be left before or after school, and the staff members will return the call as soon as possible.
- All staff members have email addresses which can be accessed using the first initial of their first name, followed by their last name @pathwayschool.org. Parents may email staff as well. (I.E. Jane Smith = jsmith@pathwayschool.org). Please keep in mind that during the school day, teaching staff will not be able to respond immediately to e-mail requests/questions/communication. All information which staff should know immediately should be communicated through the Education Office Manager, Ana Singh at ext 321 or the receptionist at ext 0.

**Dress Code:**

Students are expected to dress in serviceable clothing that is appropriate for every-day wear. Cleanliness and good grooming are required. Students may dress informally for school. Clothing must be neat, clean and not hazardous for school activities.

**Appropriate appearance includes:**

- Midriff is covered
- Clothing cannot be seen through
- Clothing that does not have patches/slogans/pictures which suggests the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and/or drugs, contains obscene or offensive language, or depicts sexual, violent, or illegal behavior
- Clothing should not be raggedy, holey, or cut-off
- Shirts that have sleeves (muscle shirts not permitted)
- Spandex, tight-fitting, or ill-fitting clothing or clothing that is sexually revealing is not permitted
- Chains (including those on wallets) and spikes are not permitted
- Boots, skirts, jackets, clothing, and accessories may not have metal work on them
- Footwear may not leave marks or abrasions on the floor
- Shorts/skirts must be fingertip in length

Students are expected to dress appropriately according to the weather.

Students who arrive for school inappropriately dressed will be sent to the respective building principal.

Appropriate dress and hygiene for vocational settings will be outlined and monitored by the Career Department.

**Driving Privileges for Students:**

Students are not permitted to drive to or from school or to or from an off-campus activity which is supervised by Pathway. Under extremely special circumstances a student and parent may submit a written request to the Director of Education for driving privileges. It will be at the Director of Education's discretion to approve this request.

**Homework:**

There are two main purposes for homework. The first is to reinforce skills/knowledge covered in class; and the second is to help students learn to be responsible. Since either or both apply to all students in varying degrees, all students shall be given homework.

Because each student is different in regard to needs and abilities, the amount of homework given varies from child to child. Still, there are some homework-related issues and guidelines that all parents can follow.

- If you are dissatisfied with the amount of homework given to your child (either too much or too little). Please notify the teacher.
- While a child may be unable to complete homework from time to time due to family issues (visiting a relative all night), it would be inappropriate for this to occur on an ongoing basis.
- If your child is having particular difficulty with a piece of homework and is getting frustrated, please tell the child to stop working on the assignment. Write a note to the teacher explaining what happened.
- No child should remain up past bedtime in order to complete homework.
- You will be notified if your child is not handing in homework on an ongoing basis.

**Lockers:**

Lockers are assigned to secondary students based on availability and need. Students may put locks on lockers as long as the principal is given a spare key or the combination. Lockers are the property of The Pathway School and therefore may be searched by Pathway staff at any time. If a locker is to be searched, an administrator and at least one other staff member will conduct the search with the student present. If it is suspected that the locker contains material(s) which pose a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of students and/or school personnel, the search may be conducted without the student being present.

**Lost and Found:**

“Lost and Found” boxes are placed in various building throughout campus. Periodically, lists of lost items are published in the daily newspaper.

**Lunch Arrangements:**

Students may bring a lunch, purchase a lunch, or purchase a beverage or snack.

Meals are provided by the school’s Food Service Department. All food is made in conjunction with the regulations of the USDA and National School Lunch Program to ensure that students are eating well-balanced meals.

Menus for the school lunch program are made available at various times throughout the school year.

The school has a cafeteria in which the student may eat his/her lunch with classmates at the designated times. A “Mellow Lunch Area” is also offered during some lunches for students who prefer a quieter, less busy lunch setting.

Student may pay cash for their lunches on a daily basis. Our cafeteria system allow for parents to set up an online account and deposit money into that account as appropriate for their child to use to purchase lunch. Please see the school website under Parents-Current and look for the “myschoolaccount.com” link for information and to get started.

For those parents who believe they may qualify, applications are available for free or reduced-cost lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Applications may be submitted at any point during the year, but must be resubmitted at the beginning of each new school year.

**School Store:**

The school store operates generally during the last period of the day. The school store sells snack items and some school supplies. Students may bring money to school to purchase items at the store, but should not exceed two dollars.

**Smoking Policy:**

The Pathway School is a smoke-free campus. No one, including staff, students, and visitors may smoke on campus. Students are not permitted to smoke or bring tobacco products on campus or to any Pathway sponsored off-campus activity/program.

**Student Social Activities:**

The Pathway School sponsors several recreational events such as dances and bowling which are open to current day students. The Pathway School is not involved in any student social activities which it does not sponsor.

**Visitors:**

Requests from non-family individuals and groups to visit the campus must be made at least one week in advance and are to be referred to the appropriate principal for approval. Former students may visit after obtaining approval from the Education Director or the President. Pathway reserves the right, based on the student’s past inappropriate behavior, to limit, restrict, or deny such visitation.

Parents/families are welcome to observe their child in program at any time as long as two days notice is give. Requests are made to the program principal. Specific arrangements (arrival time, schedule to follow, etc. are worked out ahead of time). Upon arrival, parents/family must check in at Reception in Butera Hall.

For safety and security, it is expected that all visitors to the school obtain a visitor’s pass and wear the pass while on campus.

Under no circumstance will a student be released to anyone other than the student’s assigned bus driver, parent/guardian without written permission from the student’s parent/guardian.

## **School-Wide Positive Behavior Support**

### **Introduction**

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) uses a school-wide approach to discipline. It focuses on appropriate behavior and emphasizes consistent application of the expectations and consequences for behavior.

### **Mission Statement**

Pathway staff and students adhere to consistent expectations for positive behaviors that are taught, practiced and reinforced to create productive living, learning and working environments that promote success and independence.

### **Expectations**

The Pathway School has established different behaviors that students and staff should display in various environments. Those behaviors were then grouped into the following categories:

#### **Be Cooperative**

Definition: A willingness and ability to work with others.

#### **Be Flexible**

Definition: A capability to adapt to new, different or changing requirements

#### **Be Responsible**

Definition: To be able to answer for one's own conduct and obligations

The Pathway School also believes that there are five expectations that students and staff are expected to display in every environment. The five universal expectations are:

#### **Appropriate Voice Volume**

Definition: A volume that is suitable for the distance and the situation.

#### **Appropriate Language/ Topics**

Definition: Suitable communication and subject of conversation for a particular person, condition, occasion, or place.

#### **Respect Personal Space**

Definition: Maintaining an arm's length distance away from others.

#### **Respect Property**

Definition: Treating it the way you would want your property to be treated.

#### **Follow Directions**

Definition: The ability to complete one, or a series of, verbal or written instructions.

<b>The Pathway School Expectations</b>			
<b>Universal Expectations</b>			
Appropriate Language/Topics		Appropriate Voice Volume	Respect Property
Respect Personal Space		Follow Directions	
<b>Environment Expectations</b>			
	<b>Be Cooperative</b>	<b>Be Flexible</b>	<b>Be Responsible</b>
<b>Learning Environment</b>	Ask for help	Accept Feedback	Clean up your area
	Complete task	Be patient	Arrive on time and leave when dismissed
	Pay attention	Occupy your free time	Raise your hand and wait quietly for assistance
	Focus on yourself		Have Materials Ready
<b>Working Environment</b>	Complete tasks	Be helpful to your co-workers and supervisor	Have a clean and neat appearance
	Ask your supervisor what to do next	Accept Feedback	Wear appropriate clothing
	Ask for help		Arrive on time and leave when dismissed
	Be polite to customers		Stay in assigned area
<b>Community</b>	Be mindful of traffic and your surroundings	Stay on designated walking areas	Throw away your trash
	Be prepared with emergency numbers	Be patient	
	Notify a staff when unsure of a situation	Follow the rules of the environment	
	Stay with your group		
<b>Eating Environment</b>	Eat with your assigned group	Try new foods/drinks	Arrive at designated time
	Eat in designated area		Clean up after yourself
	Use utensils appropriately		Chew with your mouth closed
	Follow portion sizes		Sit with both feet on the floor
<b>Transportation</b>	Stay seated	Advocate for yourself	Take your stuff with you
	Use seatbelt	Compromise	Be aware of schedule
<b>Transition areas</b>	Stay with your assigned staff	Stay on designated walking areas	Walk
	Go directly to designated area		

<b>Recreation areas</b>	Stay with your assigned staff	Be tolerant of other's abilities	Take breaks if needed
	Clean up the materials		Wear appropriate clothing
	Play fairly / Have good sportsmanship		
	Follow the rules of the game		
	Use equipment properly		
<b>Behavior/Zen/ Relaxation Room</b>	Use equipment for its intended use	Be mindful of others	Use time wisely
	Ask for permission	Wait your turn	Follow time limits
			Clean up after yourself
<b>Bathrooms</b>	Wash your hands with soap and water	Wait your turn	Clean up after yourself
	Close the door		Report any problems
			Replace any necessary items
<b>Staff offices</b>	Ask for permission	Accept Feedback	Respect privacy
	Knock before entering	Wait for your turn to speak	
	Enter and leave when asked		
<b>Nurse's station</b>	Take your medication	Wait appropriately	Come at scheduled time
	Return to designated area when finished		Ask questions if you have concerns
	Stay with your assigned staff	Accept the Nurse's decisions and directions	Report any medical concerns promptly to the nurse
	Know your medication		

### **Rewards System**

The rewards program is a way to acknowledge ALL students who are engaging in appropriate behavior. It is also a way to provide reinforcement for when students are following the expectations.

### **Rule-violating Behavior**

There is an outlined process to identify, define and provide possible consequences for rule-violating behavior.