



Pittsburgh Clayton Academy
Student and Parent Handbook
2022-2023

Our Mission

Our mission at Clayton Academy is to work collaboratively with staff, students, families, and communities to provide support and interventions that promote positive attitudes and behaviors necessary for academic and social success beyond Clayton Academy.

Our Vision

Our vision at Clayton Academy is to foster a safe, positive, and valuable learning environment through building strong, consistent relationships with all students, families, and communities while cultivating character and leadership qualities necessary for success beyond Clayton Academy.

District Non-Discrimination Policy

Board Policy 102 states in part:

The Board declares that it is the policy of the District to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or disability.

The District is committed to the maintenance of a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination by providing all students course offerings, counseling, assistance, services, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities without any form of discrimination, including Title IX sexual harassment. Discrimination is inconsistent with the rights of students and

the educational and programmatic goals of the District and is prohibited at or, in the course of, District-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities. Discrimination is also prohibited in any remote learning program or activity of the District.

For the full text of Board Policy 102-Non-Discrimination in School and Classroom Practices, please visit: <https://www.pghschools.org/nondiscrimination-policy>

Student Dress Code

The purpose of a dress code is to create an atmosphere where students are able to focus on academic achievement instead of their wardrobe. By engaging in the dress code we hope to promote the importance of uniformity and a respectable appearance which is a life skill that can directly support the success of all students.

Due to the climate in our region we are aware that the temperature does fluctuate in the different seasons and accommodations have been made to address these issues. All students will be expected to adhere to the dress code on a daily basis. The dress code is as follows:

1. All students must wear a **black collared shirt**. This may be a short sleeved shirt, long sleeved shirt, or black button down dress shirt. In case of cold weather, a plain black pullover sweatshirt or sweater may be worn over a collared shirt, but be aware that a collar must be showing at all times or the student will be considered out of dress code. No hoods or sweatshirts with zippers are permitted. A long sleeved t-shirt of any color may also be worn under short sleeved collared shirts.

2. All students must wear **khaki dress pant or shorts**. Pants must be dress-style pants (Dockers, Dickies, etc.). No khaki colored jeans will be permitted. Shorts must be “Cargo” or “Bermuda” styles. Shorts must be knee length or no more than one (1) inch above the knee.
3. Tennis shoes, dress shoes or boots are required. Sandals and slides are not permitted. Crocs and Ugg slides are not permitted.
4. No jackets, hats or the cold weather knit type earmuff or headbands will be permitted.
5. No jewelry of any kind. This includes piercings. All students will remove all earrings from piercings after entering the building before placing earrings and other personal items in designated property bins. Band Aids and other forms of coverings for piercings will not be permitted. **NO EXCEPTION.**

Reasonable Search and Seizure

In order to ensure the safety of all students and staff members in our school and to promote a healthy productive learning environment all students will be subject to a reasonable and appropriate search process upon entering the school on a daily basis. If a student is found to be in possession of an item that is deemed illegal or inappropriate that item will be confiscated. All other items such as cell phones, keys, wallets, purses, jewelry, candy/gum, hair wraps, bandanas, combs, brushes, etc. will be collected and safely stored until dismissal when they will be returned to the student.

Prohibited Items

- Jewelry of any kind (earrings, necklaces, watches, bracelets, piercings including eyebrow, nose, lip, etc.)

- Cell phones or other electronic devices
- Headphones
- Wallets or purses
- Outside food, drinks, candy
- Any item considered to be gang affiliated

****If at any time a student is found in possession of a prohibited items after entering the school and clearing the search process, the item will be confiscated. Upon confiscation of the item, parental contact will be made to make arrangements to return the item in question.

Food

During the 2014/2015 school year, Pittsburgh Public Schools began participating in the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** which allows all students in the district to eat for free regardless of their financial standing. All Clayton students receive breakfast and lunch during normal school days. This may not include early dismissal days. If your child has any type of food allergy medical documentation will need to be provided in order to provide an appropriate alternative.

Outside food/snacks are only permitted to be brought into the building by Phoenix student government members (further information below).

Attendance/Excused Absences

Pittsburgh Public School's attendance policies will be followed during the time of enrollment at Clayton Academy. In case of absence, a parent or guardian is responsible for providing written documentation within three (3) school days in

regard to their child's absence(s). Any absence from school that is not accounted for through written documentation will be considered unexcused and subject to truancy procedures.

Tardiness

All students are expected to be present and on time daily. If a student arrives after the start of morning assembly (7:28am), he or she will be deemed tardy. When tardy, the student should be prepared to present some form of documentation as to the reason for his or her tardiness. Excessive tardiness could result in disciplinary action. Students should not arrive later than 9:00 A.M. without a written excuse from doctor, court, etc. **Students arriving after 9:00 A.M. without acceptable excuses may not be permitted to remain in school that day.**

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, reference the district website as well as the local news channels to obtain information in regards to cancellations or delayed schedules. When schools are operating on a two hour delay, students should report to their bus stops two hours after their designated pick-up time. If there are ever any questions or concerns about inclement weather please contact the school.

Our Program

Clayton Academy operates a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) model that focuses on creating a Positive Peer Culture within the school building. Clayton implements behavior expectations and norms for students to

adhere to that will allow them to become productive and eliminate any anti-social, anti-positive behaviors that have caused them problems in the past. Through establishing norms, staff members can provide a solid foundation and high expectations for all students that are necessary for them to become productive and effective students when they return to their sending schools.

The four foundational behavioral expectations that are presented are:

At Clayton Academy we are...

1. Respectful
2. Independent
3. Safe
4. Engaged

Students are expected to adhere to these standard behavior expectations at all times and are responsible for helping to create a culture within the building in which all students and staff maintain these expectations. Students who refuse to adhere to these established expectations will find it difficult to earn the positive incentives that are available to them within the PBIS model. In these instances, student conferences, parent conferences, and contact with probation officers (where applicable) may be deemed necessary.

Behavior Matrix (Expectations and Norms)



Clayton Academy Behavior Expectations and Norms



	Campus	Classroom	Hallway and Transitions	Cafeteria	Assembly	Bus
Expectations	Behavior Norms					
We are...	At Clayton we will...					
R espectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Treat staff with respect. ✓ Treat peers with respect. ✓ Use appropriate language. ✓ Tell the truth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise our hand for attention. ✓ Take care of learning equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stay quiet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thank the lunch personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Respect assembly as sacred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Treat the bus driver with respect.
I ndependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Follow the Code of Student Conduct. ✓ Follow the dress code. ✓ Keep our shirts tucked in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use non-verbal redirections. ✓ Complete all of our work. ✓ Complete our own work. ✓ Ask for missed assignments. ✓ Wait until last five minutes to ask for log signatures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ask for permission to be in the hallway. ✓ Ask for permission to use the bathroom or water fountain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Put our waste in the trashcan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Give positive feedback to our peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Keep the bus clean and tidy.
S afe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Keep our hands to ourselves. ✓ Only touch our own property. ✓ Stand up to bullying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stay in our seat unless we have permission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Walk in the hallway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stay in our seat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sit in a straight line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stay in our seat. ✓ Keep our hands to ourselves.
E ngaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate positive behavior. ✓ Support the positive behavior of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Always be attentive. ✓ Participate when called upon by the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Walk in protocol. ✓ Walk in a straight line, in the middle of the hallway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Talk to the people sitting at our table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Actively participate. ✓ Stay attentive. ✓ Keep our eyes on the speaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pay attention to our surroundings.

Student Responsibilities

Along with following the established foundational behavior expectations and norms of the PBIS program at Clayton Academy, each student is responsible for:

1. Following the district code of conduct as well as the school's procedures, policies, and directions from staff daily.
2. Refraining from any illegal activity.
3. Maintaining safe behavior at all times.

Clayton Academy will use the PPS Code of Student Conduct, and any consequences outlined within, to enforce consequences for serious infractions. While we do maintain our own behavior model, as described below, all students are still PPS students and fall under the purview of the Code of Conduct at all times.

Program Processes

Due to the fact that Clayton Academy is an alternative school established to support the behavioral and social/emotional needs of students who experience some difficulty in these areas, there are certain processes within a school day that differ from a traditional school. Some of these processes will be explained to better assist in allowing parents/students to understand the day-to-day operations of the school.

Assembly

Assembly is a formal group process that utilizes positive peer relationships to improve behavior. It also serves many purposes in regard to the development and implementation of our desired school culture. Everyone on campus participates

in the student-facilitated daily assembly. Staff supports the assembly process to help promote positive behavior. Peers provide appropriate feedback, intervention, and support to each other. Staff also uses this as a forum to deliver information and expectations pertinent to the day's schedule on campus. Assembly happens at the beginning and end of every day.

Individual and Group Counseling

Students will participate in various individual and group counseling opportunities each week. These opportunities will consist of three types of counseling experiences.

1. A daily morning group session called GGI (Guided Group Interaction). GGI is a structured environment, facilitated by students under the supervision of a teacher. Students are encouraged to discuss personal or school issues that might interfere with their ability to be successful that day. This group allows staff to have an understanding of each students' mental state as they start their day so that appropriate supports can be offered as needed to help each student be successful. This group also offers staff an opportunity to support the PBIS model by re-teaching expectations and norms on a regular basis to ensure all students understand the behavior expectations in all areas of the school building.
2. Small group sessions with staff counselors and social workers are offered to all students as a class period on a daily scheduled basis. These sessions use the *ReThink Ed* curriculum. *ReThink Ed* employs a daily lesson format that includes instructional video, discussion questions, individual activities and home and school connections —to teach essential prosocial skills to

children and adolescents. This approach allows students to take the behavior expectations and norms they are taught every day and practice using them in real-world situations.

3. Individual sessions with staff counselors and social workers are offered to students on a weekly scheduled basis as well as on an as-needed basis. During these sessions, students work with a staff member to create and monitor individual behavior goals. These sessions are extremely important because creating and reaching individual behavior goals is the basis for students being able to transition back to their sending schools. These individual sessions give students the support they need to monitor their progress and work to improve any areas that may be hindering them from reaching their individual goals.

In all three types of group and counseling environments, students are expected to show positive social skills that make the counseling environment feel safe and productive for everyone involved, with the idea that working on these social skills in group will attribute to them being used widely in all settings of the school building.

Program Beliefs

All processes in the building are meant to help students gain an understanding of, and personal success in the following areas that lead to personal improvement and a successful return to their sending schools.

Eight Basic Social Skills

1. Follow instructions.
2. Accept “no” as an answer, and accept ideas different from my own.

3. Talk with others.
4. Introduce myself to new students and staff.
5. Disagree appropriately.
6. Accept criticism or consequence.
7. Show respect.
8. Show sensitivity to others.

Six Steps to Success

1. Help to confront your peers.
2. Accept all redirections, right or wrong, weak or strong.
3. Be where you are supposed to be, on time, plan ahead.
4. Do what you are supposed to do.
5. Take pride in Clayton Academy.
6. Work together to succeed.

Five Basic Behavior Beliefs

1. No one has the right to hurt another person.
2. Education and the classroom are sacred.
3. We behave in a way that brings positive credit to ourselves and our school.
4. We take pride in Clayton Academy.
5. A Clayton Academy student is always a lady or a gentleman.

Student Leadership and Incentive System

Clayton Academy utilizes a student leadership and incentive system to promote positive pro-social behaviors within the classroom and school setting. In addition, the incentive system serves to continuously provide recognition for positive

behavior, which is necessary for the growth of all students. On a weekly basis, students can exhibit their leadership skills and earn the opportunity for more and new incentives. All students are provided with feedback that allows them to understand how they can earn the next set of incentives.

Executive

Students can earn a leadership role in student government by becoming an officer, known as an “Executive.” These students have already become a Phoenix and have arrived at the highest trust level he or she can achieve with the staff. The staff can then nominate the student to be elected by the student body as an Executive. Executives will be trusted to redirect and enforce the normative culture at Clayton Academy. This student should lead by example and consistently assist other students with their problems. All Executives must have strong decision-making skills. Executives are relied upon by staff to make good decisions and to ensure all students are treated fairly. Executives have all of the incentives offered at the Phoenix level, with the added ability to work with staff to plan and suggest new incentives for the student body. Executives lead the student government meetings.

Phoenix

Students earn the leadership role of Phoenix, by showing the consistent ability to meet their individual weekly behavior goals and follow the expectations and norms of the school. Phoenixes are considered part of student government. The purpose of student government is to give support to the student leaders in the school and help them with their own personal growth, encourage responsibility, promote academics, facilitate social interaction among the leaders, and create a

positive peer culture. Members of this group are student leaders who promote the positive peer culture of the school. In order for students to attain membership into student government they must meet their weekly behavior goals as well as demonstrate the ability to:

- Complete a Pledge Log.
- Promote positive behavior.
- Support the normative culture at Clayton Academy.
- Provide mentorship to new students as well as struggling students.
- Support staff.
- Communicate with staff about school related issues.

Phoenix incentives include a more relaxed dress code, the ability to bring snacks and food for breakfast and lunch, the ability to participate in all incentive field trips, and the ability to have more freedom throughout the building in terms of bathroom breaks, running errands for teachers, etc.

Pledge

Once students show the ability to start meeting some of their weekly behavior goals, they earn the Pledge leadership level. These students are ones who may be meeting some of their behavior goals each week, but not all of them. These students are ones that show the staff improving positive behavior and an improved ability to follow expectations and norms. These are students that are supporting positive behavior and growing in consistency in redirecting peers and supporting the normative culture of the building. These students then receive the responsibility of completing a Pledge Log. This helps the student show evidence of their ability to redirect his/her peers, enforce the expectations and norms of

the school, and support and help staff. Completion of the Pledge Log is required for a student to move into student government, as the Log demonstrates the student's willingness and ability to become leader. Pledge incentives include the ability to participate in dress-down days, purchase extra snacks during lunch, attend educational and incentive field trips, as well as others.

Positive

Positive students are ones that are at the beginning stages of meeting their behavior goals. They may show the ability to meet daily goals in certain areas, and are moving in the direction of meeting their weekly goals. These students are starting to redirect negative behavior and support the normative culture of the school. Staff are working with the student to bring out their leadership qualities and decision-making abilities necessary to become a leader of the school.

Positive incentives include the ability to participate in special dress-down days, school activities such as Spirit Week, attend educational field trips, as well as others.

Neutral

These students are typically new students that may be unsure of the processes and systems used at Clayton Academy. They are still learning about the behavior expectations and norms in the building and are taking time to learn their schedule, get to know teachers and peers, and learn about the procedures of the school. These students are also in the process of learning their new behavior goals and understanding what they need to do to start improving their behavior and meeting their goals.

Occasionally, students that have already earned an incentive level, may have an unexpected behavior issue, or an “off” week that causes them to not meet their behavior goals. In these cases the student will return to a Neutral leadership role and will spend extra time with staff evaluating their behavior and what they need to do to get back on track.

In either case, the Neutral students are given an opportunity to learn, or relearn, the expectations and norms of the building in order to start earning incentives.

Students that are not eligible for incentives.

Occasionally a student demonstrates concerning behavior that makes that student ineligible for incentives for a specific period of time. This can be either a series of concerning and unacceptable behaviors, such as complete disregard for the expectations and norms of the building, or can be a serious behavioral incident, such as a fight. In these cases the student may not be eligible for any incentives, and will be scheduled for additional individual counseling time with staff for re-teaching expectations and norms, reviewing behavior goals, and working through the social or emotional issues that are causing the behaviors. Once staff is confident that the appropriate re-teaching and review has taken place, students will be eligible to earn incentives again.

Staff Intervention for Behavior

All staff members will use their best judgment to select the appropriate intervention technique based on the individual circumstances where staff intervention is deemed necessary. In making such determinations, staff are trained to begin redirecting student behavior with the least intrusive technique.

The least intrusive technique available, however, will vary based upon the circumstances of the intervention.

Friendly Non-Verbal

The friendly non-verbal is first in the order of behavioral intervention. When staff observe a student involved with a problem, staff will give that student a helpful non-verbal gesture. These gestures are made with eyes, hands, head, or other body parts. These gestures, often given with empathy, are used to change behavior of the student at the immediate time of the problem. If a student does not change his or her behavior, a concern non-verbal technique may be utilized.

Concerned Non-Verbal

A concerned non-verbal is given by staff through stern and forceful facial gestures, hand gestures, or other non-verbal gestures. Concerned non-verbal gestures are used to change behavior or actions of a student at a particular time. If a student does not respond to this level of intervention, a helpful verbal technique may be utilized.

Helpful Verbal

A helpful verbal is given by staff through verbally communicating, in a cordial manner, the staff's concern with a student who requires redirection. If a student does not respond to this level of intervention, a concerned verbal technique may be utilized.

Concerned Verbal

A concerned verbal is given by staff by informing a student that his or her actions are becoming a major concern to the staff. Concerned verbal redirections are

made by using different voice levels, facial expressions, and non-physical actions. If a student does not respond to this level of intervention, staff support may be utilized.

Staff Support

Staff support is used to alert a student that his or her actions have reached a high level of concern. Staff support is given through both non-verbal and verbal communications such as different voice levels and facial expressions. In addition, supporting staff also observe the redirection to ensure that all staff act professionally and to maintain a safe physical environment in the event that the student becomes a threat to himself/herself or others.

Staff Guide/Transport

If the first five redirection techniques fail in motivating the student to change his or her behavior from anti-social to pro-social, a staff guide, or transport may be used. The purpose of these intervention options is to communicate to the student that his or her behavior is becoming a major concern, remove the student from the agitating situation, and provide the student with a final attempt to gain self-control. The student's response will determine if the intervention will require a less intrusive technique or if a hold will be necessary. If at any time during the staff transport the student becomes out of control and a threat to injure themselves and/or others, a hold will be utilized.

Hold

If all redirection techniques have failed and the student becomes a threat to himself/herself and/or others, staff will place the student in a hold. Staff will use

the least amount of physical management possible to de-escalate the situation. When the student is no longer out of control or a threat to himself/herself or others, staff will counsel the student to discuss the incident and alternative replacement behaviors with the goal of returning the student to the classroom. The de-escalation and physical management program that is used at Clayton is Safety Care. All staff is trained and certified yearly in using Safety Care.