

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School

# Student Parent Handbook



All information in this handbook is intended to provide a summary of the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) policies and procedures. PALCS will make changes as deemed necessary in the best interest of our students and parents.

2018-2019 SY

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# Section 1 - School Overview

## Founder's Welcome

Dear Parents and Students,

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's educational goal is to prepare students to be creative, intuitive, and analytical leaders with a firm understanding of the forces, leaders, and thinking that have shaped world cultures. The curriculum prepares students to be problem solvers both individually and collaboratively using skills developed through a comparative interdisciplinary study. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School teaches competency in reading, writing, mathematics, history, science, and the arts. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School prepares students to be successful whether they continue formal education or enter immediately into the workforce. The strong emphasis on technology skills provides the tools for students to embrace the unique challenges and global opportunities of the 21st Century.

### **Mission**

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) purpose is to provide an academically challenging, knowledge-based curriculum, individually designed for each student's needs. PALCS will combine the benefits of a classical basics-oriented education with the latest internet/computer technology and the best teaching and learning education practices. By studying the lives and works of the great leaders in history, PALCS students will develop multicultural perspectives and a global awareness. PALCS will prepare students to be informed, responsible citizens with a global mentality who will succeed through mentoring leadership.

### **Vision**

The vision of Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School is to provide parents with an option for public education that tailors the educational experience to the unique needs of their child and allows him/her to receive that experience via the World Wide Web.

The PALCS curriculum incorporates different learning styles within a strong academic environment. The PALCS teachers are encouraged to develop a flexible curriculum that incorporates state-of-the-art resources to ensure that each student can utilize a learning style that is most effective for him/her.

Students in grades K-12 receive the opportunity for instruction in a full complement of core and elective subject areas to ensure a well-rounded education.

Unique aspects of our school include:

- A collaborative relationship of faculty, staff, and parents that provides the opportunity for every student to achieve and reach his/her potential through an individualized program of instruction;
- Instruction provided by teachers in online classrooms, allowing students to attend class and engage in class work wherever they connect to the World Wide Web;
- Fully interactive technology that allows for supplemental live classroom instruction, live chat rooms, and live individual instruction;
- Opportunities for gifted or highly motivated students to accelerate learning, and opportunities for special education students to work at a pace conducive to learning;
- Real-time snapshots of student progress that allow parents as well as students to track academic achievement.

Our faculty and staff are committed to helping you achieve your educational goals.

Have a wonderful year!

Dr. James Hanak  
Founder and CEO

## School Board of Directors

William Middleton (Bill), President  
Dr. Brian Shuffler, Secretary/Treasurer  
Tom Curyto  
Sheriff Carolyn Welsh

## School Solicitor

Andrew Lehr, Esq.

## School Administration

Dr. James Hanak, Chief Executive Officer  
Mark Allen, Director of Academics and Director of the Center for Performing and Fine Arts  
Eileen Bowers, Director of Office Administration  
Heidi Gough, Director of Marketing  
Seth Heiland, Director of Human Resources  
Mark Murray, Director of Information Technology  
Debby Weisbach, Director of Student Services

Kerry Duke, Supervisor of Special Education  
Dr. Chris Hardin, High School Principal  
Valerie Harris, Supervisor of Induction and Federal Programs  
Dr. Angela Hoover, Elementary School Principal  
Karla Johnson, Middle School Principal  
Courtney Kofeldt, Supervisor of Education Technology  
Shavaun McGinty, Supervisor of Guidance  
Chris Stiles, University Scholars Principal  
Whitney Wrights, Supervisor of Curriculum

## School Contact Information

### **PA Leadership Charter School Main Office:**

1332 Enterprise Drive West Chester, PA 19380  
phone: 610-701-3333 fax: 610-701-3339

### **Western Regional Center:**

The Landings  
55 Alpha Drive West Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1401  
phone: 412-828-3331 fax: 412-828-3109

**Advanced Ideas Center / University Scholars:**

1585 Paoli Pike West Chester, PA 19380  
phone: 610-344-0524 ext. 1286 fax: 610-344-2898

**Center for Performing and Fine Arts:**

211 Carter Drive, Suite C West Chester, PA 19382  
phone: 610-430-6525 fax: 610-430-6526

[School Directory](#) link

[School Contact Card](#) link

## Section 2 - Admissions

As a public cyber charter school, admission to Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School is open to any student of school age who legally resides within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### Enrollment Policy

Any child of school age who is a resident of Pennsylvania is entitled to a public education. The Pennsylvania Department of Education defines “school age” as the period of a child’s life from the earliest admission age to a school district’s kindergarten program until graduation from high school or the end of the term in which a student reaches the age of 21 years, whichever comes first.

Kindergarten students are accepted based on requirements of their local district. This is usually 5 years of age by a certain date in the late summer or early fall of the current school year. Please check with your local school district for Kindergarten age eligibility dates.

In addition to meeting the residency and age requirements, the enrollment documents described below must be provided to the school.

To begin the enrollment process, a parent/guardian must complete an enrollment application. You can complete the application online at [www.palcs.org](http://www.palcs.org) or request that an application be mailed to you.

Parents/guardians are required to submit the following documentation for each child enrolling:

- Proof of age  
Any of the following constitutes acceptable documentation: birth certificate, baptismal certificate, notarized statement from the parents or another relative indicating the date of birth, a valid passport.

- (2) Proofs of Pennsylvania Residence  
Any of the following constitutes acceptable documentation: a deed, a lease, current utility bill, property tax bill, vehicle registration, driver's license.
- Proof That Immunizations are Up-to-Date  
Any of the following constitutes acceptable documentation: child's immunization record, a written statement from the former school district or from a medical office that the required immunizations have been administered.
- Parent Registration Statement  
A sworn statement attesting to whether the student has been or is suspended or expelled for offenses involving drugs, alcohol, weapons or violence on school property.

PALCS requests that the following documents also be submitted upon application:

- Most recent report card or interim grades
- Standardized Test Scores (PSSA and/or Keystone)
- High school transcript
- Special Education documents or 504 Plan
- Attendance records
- Proof of internet service in the home
- Court-issued custodial documentation if applicable

PALCS requires parents/guardians and enrolling students to attend an in-person orientation. These orientations are held in the West Chester and Pittsburgh offices. Please consult our public website, [www.palcs.org](http://www.palcs.org) to see a schedule of Orientation Windows and corresponding School Start dates.

Upon receiving your student's application, our Admissions Department will contact you to review needed documentation and schedule an appointment for your Orientation. Orientations are held daily throughout the school year.

## Registration Procedures

Applications for student enrollment must be submitted by a deadline that will be established and made known by PALCS.

If more students submit applications than can be accommodated by the school's capacity (class, grade, or building), students must be selected on a random basis from a pool of qualified applicants meeting the established eligibility criteria and submitting an application by the deadline established by PALCS. Before the lottery, qualified students will be separated by grade, and a specified date will be made known to all applicants and their families. A drawing of names will then be held by grade until all open slots in each grade level are filled. A waiting list

will be maintained in order drawn by lot, if needed, for the admission of students at a grade level should space become available during the school year.

Students whose applications are received after the deadline will be placed on the waiting list in the order that their applications are received. Students are permitted to withdraw from the charter school at any time upon written notice by the child's parent/legal guardian and upon evidence of arrangements at an admitting school. The district of residence will be notified by the school when a student withdraws. Students, who have been expelled from school because their behavior reflected concerns for their personal safety or for the safety of others, will be reviewed individually and enrollment decisions will be made in full compliance with Pennsylvania law and with the State Board of Education regulations.

## Immigration Policy

In 1982, the United States Supreme Court held that students who are undocumented immigrants have an equal right to education as students who are citizens. The purpose of this policy is to advise students, parents, and Charter School Board and Staff members of the rights of students who are undocumented immigrants to the United States.

At no time shall Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School, including the School Board, fail to admit a child conditioned on the child's immigration status. At no time shall Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School board members or staff inquire regarding the immigration status of a student as part of the admission process. 22 Pa Code 11.11(d).

Furthermore in compliance with Pennsylvania and Federal law, no board member, administrator, faculty, or staff member may inquire about a student's immigration status, before, during or after the admission process.

Additionally the purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal laws that prohibit employers from hiring undocumented immigrants. It is the policy of the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School to not employ undocumented immigrants. If any employee cannot provide required documentation that he/she is able to work in the United States legally, the employee shall be terminated.

## Section 3 - School Calendar

### PALCS Google Calendars

A multi-layered Google calendar records school activities, dates, and events by division. The School-wide PALCSchool Calendar pertains to everyone. Additional calendars include:

- Elementary School PALCSchool Calendar
- Middle School PALCSchool Calendar
- High School PALCSchool Calendar
- USP (University Scholars Program) PALCSchool Calendar
- CPFA (Center for Performing and Fine Arts) PALCSchool Calendar
- Events PALCSchool Calendar

Families may elect to show or hide any of these calendars, depending on personal preference and what is relevant.

Calendars are located on the PALCSchool Lobby navigation bar. Students and parents can click on the calendar icon, then customize which calendars they wish to view by clicking on the “down” arrow to the right of the word “Agenda.”

These calendars can also be added to a student or parent’s personal Google calendars by clicking on the + Google button below the calendar to add all selected calendars.

## PALCS 2018-2019 School Calendar at a Glance

<b>September 4, 2018</b>	<b>First Day of School</b>
<b>September 26, 2018</b>	<b>Marking Period 1 Progress Check 1</b>
<b>October 5, 2018</b>	<b>Fall School Picnic - West and East</b>
<b>October 8, 2018</b>	<b>Columbus Day Holiday - No School</b>
<b>October 18, 2018</b>	<b>Marking Period 1 Progress Check 2</b>
<b>October 26, 2018</b>	<b>No School - Teacher In-Service Day</b>
<b>November 8, 2018</b>	<b>End of Marking Period 1</b>
<b>November 22 - 23, 2018</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break - No School</b>
<b>December 3, 2018</b>	<b>Marking Period 2 Progress Check 1</b>
<b>December 4-6, 2018</b>	<b>Keystone Testing</b>
<b>December 24, 2018 - January 1, 2019</b>	<b>Winter Break - No School</b>
<b>January 3, 2019</b>	<b>Marking Period 2 Progress Check 2</b>
<b>January 21, 2019</b>	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School</b>

January 25, 2019	End Marking Period 2
February 1, 2019	No School - Teacher In-Service Day
February 15, 2019	Marking Period 3 - Progress Check 1
February 18, 2019	President's Day Holiday - No School
March 11, 2019	Marking Period 3 - Progress Check 2
April 1, 2019	End of Marking Period 3
April 12-19, 2019	Spring Break - No School
April 23-26, 2019	PSSA Testing
April 30, 2019	Marking Period 4 - Progress Check 1
May 14-16, 2019	Keystone Exams
May 21, 2019	Marking Period 4 - Progress Check 2
May 24, 2019	Last Senior Day
May 27, 2019	Memorial Day Holiday - No School
June 11, 2019	End of Marking Period 4 - Last School Day
June 15, 2019	Commencement

## Section 4 - Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

### Primary Role of the Parent/Guardian

The Parent/Guardian plays an integral role in student success. **Each student is required to have a Parent/Guardian serve as a facilitator or support system to ensure that the student is (virtually) attending school regularly and completing assignments on time.** The Parent/Guardian is an essential partner together with teachers, the student, and the school. Requirements for Parent/Guardian involvement will vary with age and, especially, the degree of motivation of the student. Students in primary grades (K-8), students with lower motivation levels, and students with special needs generally require more direct involvement in the learning process. **Please note that the PALCS model of education requires a commitment that goes beyond a traditional public school.**

## Primary Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian

1. Provide a safe and secure environment.
  - a. This requires that **the student has adequate adult supervision during the entire school day** in order for the student to complete his or her work in a safe and healthy environment.
2. Maintain an active internet account so that the students can complete online assignments.
  - a. The parent/guardian has the responsibility of maintaining access to a computer for the completion of student assignments and attendance for virtual lessons. If a school-issued computer or any other hardware (such as a power cord, printer, ethernet cable or headset) is currently under repair, **it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to locate an alternate location site with computer access until the student's computer or additional hardware is either repaired or replaced.** \*See Section 9, p.26 for more information
3. Maintain timely communication with teachers, principals, counselors, and school officials.
  - a. Respond promptly to all school communication (within 24 hours).
  - b. Please note that **all electronic communication from parents should be sent through the Parent/Guardian's communication system (email, etc.).**
  - c. **All written and verbal communication with teachers, staff and school administrators must be respectful, and geared toward a productive educational outcome.**
4. Maintain **confidentiality of Parent/Guardian username and password** access.
5. Ensure that the student completes the Online Learning module (Onboarding) prior to accessing courses.
6. Ensure that the student is attending school as per the attendance policy (see below).
  - a. Parents may not log into the student's account for attendance purposes without the student present.
7. Ensure that the student is an **active participant in school and is completing work in all courses**, as assigned.
  - a. Monitor student progress by checking online to see that assignments have been completed and submitted.
  - b. Expect students to spend **five to six hours a day engaged in school work and virtual lessons.**

8. Ensure that student progress is satisfactory by checking grades on a regular basis, communicating with teachers, and attending parent-teacher conferences.
9. Comply with state and local testing requirements.
  - a. Ensure student participation in all online proctored local assessments.
  - b. Ensure student **participation in all required in-person state assessments**.
  - c. Provide **transportation** for students to state-mandated testing locations, allotting time for test completion.
10. Complete and return **annual health forms**, including forms to be completed by the child's healthcare provider, according to the child's grade as required by School Health Services and the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

## Technology Skills Required of a Parent/Guardian

The Parent/Guardian must have an understanding of technology to provide appropriate supervision of the student while the student is in attendance at PALCS. **It is understood that, by choosing a cyber school for his/her child's education, the parent/guardian commits to mastering the technology necessary to support the delivery of his/her child's education.** This includes completing an initial Onboarding Course. Basic knowledge includes, but is not limited to: email, Microsoft Office, Google applications, PALCSchool and Canvas navigation, and the internet. If the Parent/Guardian does not have a sufficient understanding of computer technology, PALCS is available to provide additional training and support. It is important for any parent/guardian who feels he/she is lacking in sufficient technology skills to communicate this need to the student's Academic Advisor.

## Updating Information

Parents of continuing students are asked to **update family information annually**. Updates are completed by parents online, after July 1, through the primary parent's PALCSchool account by clicking on the "Update" icon in the left-side navigation bar of the PALCSchool lobby. Once this information is updated, the "Update" icon changes to "Family Information." Information (change of address, phone number, or email; emergency contacts; medical information) can be updated continuously throughout the school year.

Any information regarding parental divorce or separation, including exact terms of legal custody, must be on file with PALCS. **it is the parent's responsibility to notify the Guidance department immediately of any change.**

## Withdrawal Procedure

If a parent/guardian is considering withdrawing their child from PALCS, he or she is encouraged to discuss their concerns with a member of the Guidance department. A parent who intends to

withdraw their child should complete a Preliminary Withdrawal Form (found in the PALCSchool lobby under the “Resources” icon, in the section that says “Additional Links”). The parent will be contacted by a representative from Student Services to complete the process.

Please note that PALCS reserves the right to deny a student re-entry after being withdrawn for truancy.

## Parent and Family Engagement Policy

### [Parent and Family Engagement Policy](#)

#### Purpose

As a recipient of Title I funds, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School maintains a Title I District/School Parent and Family Engagement Policy. The policy is updated annually, with input from parents and students, distributed at parent meetings, delivered through our website, and posted within PALCSchool as a parent informational resource. The policy describes the means for carrying out Title I Parent and Family Engagement Requirements [Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)].

#### Involvement of PALCS Parents in our Schoolwide Title I Program

- 1) The school convenes an annual meeting to inform parents of Title I Schoolwide program designation, requirements, and parent rights to be involved in the program.
  - a) The annual meeting is held in October and/or March. Parent Meetings are conducted via our conferencing system and/or live.
  - b) The school offers meetings multiple times to accommodate parent schedules. We hold morning, afternoon, and /or evening meetings. Recorded meetings are posted within PALCSchool for parental access for those who could not attend.
- 2) The school involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school’s Title I programs and with the Title I Parent Involvement Policy.
  - a) This engagement is conducted largely through annual parent survey invitations, newsletter information, and frequent feedback opportunities through our PALCS Parent Network. The Parent Network provides a platform for ongoing parental discussion.
  - b) Additional parent meetings are held over the course of the year for parent leadership opportunity to partake in reviewing survey results, contributing to the writing of the parent engagement policy, the school-parent compact, and in contributing to the development of the school level and comprehensive plans.
  - c) Student leaders within our student government participate in reviewing and contributing to our engagement policy, compact, and school planning.
  - d) Parent Survey results and parent advisory groups provide input for technical and academic program development.
    - i) Biweekly parent meetings are held at our Center for Performing and Fine Arts.
    - ii) Monthly parent advisory meetings are held at the Middle School.

- iii) Monthly parent meetings are held for USP parents.
  - iv) Parent Coffees are offered periodically in different locations for discussion and input.
  - v) Informal parent feedback and meetings are offered for partnering to build a user-friendly and informative resources.
- 3) The school provides information to parents with timely communication about Title I, II and IV programs.
    - a) Communication occurs monthly via division newsletters and daily via PALCSchool Lobby school-wide announcements.
    - b) Additional communiqués and news blasts are mailed to homes or sent through Remind101, MailChimp, Google+ and Smore
  - 4) The school provides parents an explanation of the curriculum, the assessments used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet through virtual sessions and communication through newsletters, progress reports, and email.
    - a) PSSA and Keystone information is relayed by phone, mailings, and parent meetings.
    - b) Course Catalog details selections and prerequisites. School Counselors collaborate with parents and students to establish course rosters.
    - c) Teachers communicate assessment results on NWEA MAP and other tests.
  - 5) If requested by parents or at the invitation of the school, the school provides opportunities for regular meetings that allow the parents to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
    - a) IEP review and 504 planning meetings
    - b) Bridge to Student Success - Providing parent assistance and student intervention
    - c) Guidance from School Counselors
    - d) Retention Meetings / Summer School Options
    - e) Principal – Parent meetings

## Parent-School Compact

### [2018-2019 Parent-School Compact](#)

In accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the School-Parent Compact outlines agreed-upon responsibilities of The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School staff, parents and students, participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A (a Federal Grant), that will help children achieve academic success.

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School values each parent as an integral partner for students to reach and exceed the Pennsylvania State Department of Education's high academic standards. Collaboratively, parents and school staff build, maintain, and work within a vital partnership to provide an exceptional student learning experience.

#### School's Responsibilities:

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School will:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment.

- Curriculum is reviewed and revised for alignment on an ongoing basis.
- Instruction is based on best practices to meet the needs of all learners.
- Teacher training and professional development opportunities are provided for and offered to instructional staff.
- Provide opportunities for ongoing communication between parent and teachers.
  - Reasonable access to staff through phone calls, virtual meetings, office hours
  - Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year and on-demand, as needs arise.
  - Written communication - announcements, newsletters, email, instant messaging
  - Frequent reporting of student academic progress, progress reports, report cards
- Provide assistance in understanding academic achievement standards, assessments, and how to monitor your child's progress.
  - Parent informational and planning meetings, back-to-school nights, open houses
  - Parent training sessions and posted parent resources
- Provide activities that interest and engage students to be more involved in the learning community.

#### Parent's Responsibilities:

We, as parents, will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.
  - Be sure each student has adequate adult supervision during the school day for the student to complete his or her work in a safe, supportive, and healthy manner.
- Ensure that your child has reliable internet access, attends school daily and participates actively in all courses.
  - Regularly review your child's school work. Check to make sure assignments are completed and submitted on time in all courses.
- Attend parent conferences and participate in parent informational meetings.
- Encourage positive use of extracurricular time and monitor online behavior.

#### Student's Responsibilities:

We as students will share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement by:

- Attend school daily, engage in coursework and complete assignments by due dates.
- Actively participate in school activities, virtual lessons and academic/social support, such as: student government, elections, self government, fundraisers, drives, virtual activities and events, newsletter, trips, S.A.D.D. events.
  - Student Government will provide student perspective on inclusive extra-curricular activities, such as: Creative Writing Circle, Book Society, GSA

## Section 5 - Student Records

### Public Notice of Parent and Eligible Student Rights (FERPA)

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. § 1232g), parents and students who are at least 18 years of age have the right to review and inspect all school records pertaining to the student.

School records are not open to the public. Only the following people have access to student records: (1) school personnel working with the student; (2) parents; (3) student; (4) anyone showing the proper Release of Information.

### Retention of Student Records

The Student Records Retention Policy is on file at the main office of Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School. For further information on the policy or for a full copy, please call 610-701-3333, or email at [info@palcs.org](mailto:info@palcs.org).

### Annual Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) is an equal opportunity educational institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, marital status, or handicap in its activities, program or employment practices as required by state and federal Law.

### Annual Public Notice (504)

In compliance with federal law, the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School will provide each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities.

In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. These services and protections for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled, or seeking enrollment, in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact PALCS at 610-701-3333, or via email at [info@palcs.org](mailto:info@palcs.org).

## Section 6 - Attendance

### Attendance Policy

Per the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), “The school can be effective in educating a child only if the child is in school.”

State law requires Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) to be open **180 days** a year and in operation for **990 hours**. In compliance with this law, PALCS has established and published a 180-day academic calendar.

The attendance requirement is met by logging on to PALCSchool each school day listed in the academic calendar. As a virtual school, student attendance is verified by electronically logging on to PALCSchool. If a student fails to log in to PALCSchool, he or she is absent.

Please note that, **as part of your student’s curriculum, she/he may be required to attend virtual lessons/sessions one or more times per week**. Absences from mandatory virtual lessons may adversely affect the student’s grade.

**Attendance and participation in onsite state assessments are also mandatory. Each missed day of scheduled state assessments will be documented as one unlawful absence.**

Occasionally, students are unable to log on and complete their schoolwork on a given day; this is considered an absence. Acceptable reasons for a student absence include illness or injury, medical appointments, family emergencies, observance of religious holidays, educational opportunities or family trips (see Student Educational Leave of Absence below).

In the case of a system-wide failure of PALCS that prohibits students from logging in to PALCSchool and completing their work, no absence will be charged to the student. In the event of such a school-wide outage that prohibits children from attending and completing their work, an additional school day will be added to the school calendar and families will be notified of the change.

In the case of a computer or technical issue with the student, parents are asked to immediately contact the Help Desk by:

1. Submitting a support ticket from the PALCSchool login page (underneath the fields for username and password, there is a note that reads, “*Problems logging in to PALCSchool? Please click here to submit a HelpDesk ticket*”); or,

2. If you are able to log in to PALCSchool, “Submit a Technology HelpDesk Ticket” is located in the “Quick Links” section which is displayed in the upper right hand corner of the lobby page.

If you are unable to submit a request for service ticket because of your technical issues, please call toll-free 1-877-725-2785, then press Option 3 or dial extension 1616 for assistance.

In all cases aside from a system-wide failure, a written excuse, outlining the reason for an absence, must be submitted online through the parent/guardian’s PALCSchool account to the Attendance Office within three days of a student’s absence. If the excuse is not submitted by the end of the third day following the absence, the absence will be unexcused.

**To submit an excuse**, the parent/guardian should select the “Attendance” icon on the left-hand navigation bar in the PALCSchool Lobby. You will be given a menu from which to choose the reason for your child’s absence.

While the school strongly prefers for parents to submit a timely excuse for each day of absence, it is possible for parents to submit one excuse for multiple consecutive days of absence. However, the Attendance Office must receive an excuse no later than three days after each absence. [Example: a student is absent Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. An excuse for the Monday absence is due by Thursday, even though an excuse for the Wednesday absence is not due until the following Monday.]

Additionally, parents of students missing more than three consecutive school days due to illness must provide a note from a physician in addition to the written excuse from the parent. A doctor’s note may be submitted to [attendance@palcs.org](mailto:attendance@palcs.org).

## Educational Leave of Absence Policy

A formal application and approval process is required for an Educational Leave of Absence. Applications must be submitted at least two weeks in advance of a planned trip. A **maximum of five consecutive days of excused absences will be considered for approval** by the division principal. A work plan must be completed with the student’s teachers and principal before the educational trip commences. Students are limited to one such request per year.

To request pre-approval for an educational leave of absence, a parent/guardian should select the “Attendance” icon on the left-hand navigation bar in the PALCSchool Lobby, then select “Submit Pre-approved Absence Request.”

## Cumulative Lawful Absences

Per the Pennsylvania Department of Education, a **maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences** verified by the parent/guardian (excluding absences that have been pre-approved by the principal) may be permitted during a school year. **All absences beyond ten cumulative days may require an excuse from a physician.**

Additionally, upon the tenth cumulative lawful absence and/or unlawful absence (see below), the parent/guardian will be notified in writing by the school regarding the student’s absentee record.

A conference may be requested by school administration when a student has cumulatively missed 15 days or more.

After 20 or more days of cumulative absences, the division principal, guidance department and school administration will undertake an informal review of the student’s record, including days of absence and other factors, and **a recommendation will be made regarding possible retention in the current grade for the next school year.** Such a recommendation may include a failing grade and/or no course credit for impacted courses. If the principal and Director of Academics support the recommendation, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the consequence. The decision of school administration is final.

## Unexcused and Unlawful Absences

Act 138 of 2016 relates to truancy and habitual truancy; it requires cyber charter schools to maintain attendance policies designed to accurately determine when a child enrolled in the cyber charter school has an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences are reported to the PDE through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

Absences that are not recognized as acceptable under the Pennsylvania School Code, or are lacking documentation, are considered unexcused and unlawful. This includes, but is not limited to, absences where a written excuse is not submitted within three days of the student’s absence.

Upon the third unexcused and unlawful absence, a letter will be sent from the Director of Academics (or designee) to the parent/guardian. This letter is known as a **First Offense Notice**, per the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

If the child continues to be truant and incurs additional absences after this notice has issued, the school will offer the student and parent the opportunity to attend a student attendance improvement conference.

Upon the fifth unexcused and unlawful absence, PALCS shall request a conference to discuss the cause of the child's truancy and develop a written **School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)** to resolve truant behavior. Issues to be reviewed at the school/family conference include the appropriateness of the child's educational environment, current academic difficulties, physical or behavioral health issues, and family/environment concerns. At the end of the conference, or in the absence of a conference, a comprehensive SAIP will be developed. All parties, including the school representative, the child, and the parents and/or family, will be given the opportunity to participate, agree to, and sign the SAIP.

If a child accumulates six unexcused absences, he or she is considered by the state to be **habitually truant**.

**For habitually truant children under fifteen years of age**, the school will refer the child to either: (a) a school- or community-based attendance improvement program; or, (b) the county Children & Youth Services (CYS) agency for services. Additionally, the school may file a citation against the parent of a habitually truant child under the age of fifteen in magisterial district court.

**For habitually truant children fifteen years of age and older**, the school will either: (a) refer the child to a school- or community-based attendance improvement program; or, (b) file a citation against the student or parent in magisterial district court. If the child continues to incur absences or refuses to participate in a school- or community-based attendance improvement program, the school may refer the child to the county Children & Youth Services (CYS) agency for services.

Students who have not complied with compulsory attendance requirements (including the SAIP) and **have met the maximum truancy of 10 consecutive unexcused absences will be withdrawn** from PALCS and the school district of residence will be notified.

Special note about students who transfer to PALCS during the school year with an excessive number of absences: Students who enroll in PALCS during the school year who bring with them an excessive number of absences, as determined by PALCS administration, will be automatically enrolled in a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). The SAIP will clearly state the number of absences permitted, the likelihood of grade level retention, and whether or not the student will be required to attend additional programs such as a Summer Bridge Program (summer school).

## Academic Non-participation

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School designates a classification of Academic Non-participation for students who log in for attendance purposes but are not working or

completing work in their courses. This designation is separate from the unexcused and unlawful absences outlined above.

All students are required to not only log in to school each day but also to remain current with school work and assignments.

“Current” is defined by actively participating and submitting work assignments on time. When students are not actively participating in their online classes and/or are not submitting assignments by the due date or progress check, they are considered to be a non-participant in the academic environment.

Additionally, some students are required to participate in “live” virtual lessons/sessions. Students who do not attend these required sessions may accrue academic penalties.

At the discretion of the school’s division principal, guidance and academic team, students designated as Academic Non-participating will follow a process designed by the school to engage the student in the learning environment. This process includes: 1) establishing parent contact; 2) providing support through the guidance department; 3) mandatory participation in a Bridge to Student Success Program (BtSS). The BtSS program offers comprehensive supports for students and families who are struggling in the cyber environment.

If the aforementioned process is found to be ineffective by the school’s division principal, guidance and academic team and the student is still considered to be Academic Non-participating, the school will report all such incidents to outside agencies, such as Childline, to provide families and students with additional support beyond the capacity of the school.

## Section 7 - Safe School Environment

### Bullying Policy and Intervention Program

[Bullying Intervention Program](#)

See Section 11 under Honor Code Violations for more on Bullying.

#### **Purpose:**

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment in which **all students are treated with dignity, respect, courtesy and kindness**. PALCS recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning and may lead to more serious harassment and violence. Therefore, **PALCS does not tolerate bullying of any kind**.

**Definition:**

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior intended to hurt another person. It includes acts of physical, emotional, or social behavior that are intentional, controlling and hurtful. The behavior is often repeated and habitual. It typically involves subtle methods of coercion such as intimidation. Bullying behavior may include name calling, verbal or written abuse, exclusion from activities, exclusion from social situations, physical abuse, or coercion.

Bullying consists of three basic types of abuse – emotional, verbal, and physical which fall under the following categories:

- **Direct Bullying – face to face confrontation** which includes, but is not limited to, physical violence, taunting; making insulting, offensive and sneering comments or threats.
- **Indirect Bullying – attacking a victim’s social standing or reputation by gossip, slander, or any other attempt to ostracize them** including but not limited to telling others about something that was told to you in private, or excluding them from a group on purpose.
- **Cyber Bullying – the use of electronic devices** including, but not limited to emails, pictures, voicemail, instant messaging, cell phones, web pages, chat rooms, blogs or discussion groups, and any other communication technologies with the intent of taunting, threatening, embarrassing, ostracizing, or otherwise hurting a victim.

**Complaint Procedure:**

Students and/or parents who are the victim of a bullying incident should report the situation to the student’s guidance counselor immediately. Teachers, administrators, or any other school personnel who observe, or become aware of an incident of bullying are required to report it to the Supervisor of Guidance immediately.

The Supervisor of Guidance will gather the information and execute the required reporting form. The Supervisor of Guidance will meet with the student’s principal and the Director of Academics to determine if the alleged incident meets the descriptions of bullying or cyber-bullying.

If the alleged incident is deemed bullying, the PALCS Administration will determine the need for further investigation which may result in disciplinary actions taken in accordance with the Approved Corrective Actions.

**Approved Corrective Action:**

A student found guilty of bullying may face **one or more** of the following corrective actions, from minimum to maximum:

- A. Meeting between the teacher and the student to discuss the student’s behavior and expectations for improving his/her behavior

- B. Student will be required to participate in bullying awareness class and attend mandatory bullying virtual lessons
- C. Notice sent to parents informing them of the student's behavior
- D. Student may be responsible for the cost of repairing and/or refurbishing and, if necessary, replacing damaged school materials, equipment and/or property
- E. Supervised mediation between the students involved
- F. Meeting with case worker or probation officer where applicable and appropriate
- G. Removal from Center participation and/or school suspension
- H. Meeting between the student and the CEO

### **Bullying Education Programs:**

- PALCS Guidance department will help to educate our school community by sponsoring school wide bullying prevention initiatives (i.e. Unity Day).
- Guidance counselors will develop educational lessons on bullying and cyberbullying for all grades.
- PALCS will make our staff and leadership aware of cyberbullying and the corrective actions we have in place, in addition to the education programs and interventions that we offer
- PALCS will make use of outside internet resources and textbooks to properly educate our student population on the harmful effects of bullying and our stance on the topic as a public school
- PALCS will inform parents and home facilitators of the strides we take to eliminate cyber bullying in our school
- PALCS will establish a bully-free culture where our students can thrive and have confidence in knowing we have a firm policy that will protect and support them from such abuse.

## **Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Intervention Policy**

Click [to view](#) the Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Intervention Policy

### **Purpose:**

The Board is committed to maintain a **safe school environment**; to protect the health, safety and welfare of its students; to promote healthy development; and to safeguard against the threat or attempt of suicide among school-aged youth. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources. The impact of students' mental health on their academic performance and the effect of mental health issues and suicide on students and the entire school community are significant

Therefore, in order to ensure the safety and welfare of students, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) will work to educate school personnel and students on the actions and resources necessary to prevent suicide and promote mental well-being.

**Authority:**

In compliance with state law and regulations and in support of PALCS' suicide prevention measures, this policy shall apply in any situation where a student is expressing suicidal thoughts or intentions of self-harm on school property, at any school- sponsored activity, or on any public vehicle providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity. **This policy shall also apply following a student's suicide threat or attempt that does not occur on school grounds or during a school-sponsored activity, but that is reported to any school personnel.** Information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the program supervisor, building principal or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.

PALCS will notify school personnel, students and parent/guardians of this policy and will post the policy on the school website.

**Definitions:**

At-Risk for Suicide shall mean any youth with risk factors or warning signs that increase the likelihood of suicidal behavior.

Chief School Administrator shall mean the superintendent of a school district or joint school district, the chief executive officer of a charter school, regional charter school or cyber charter school, and/or the executive director of an intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school.

Crisis Response Team shall include, but may not be limited to, the administrators, guidance counselors, the school nurse, and/or other members of the C.A.R.E. team, as designated, and may include other members as deemed appropriate by the chief school administrator/school entity. Community mental agency resources may be called for assistance to be a part of the team.

Expressed Suicidal Thoughts or Intentions shall mean a verbal or nonverbal communication that an individual intends to harm him/herself with the intention to die, but has not acted on the behavior.

Prevention refers to efforts that seek to reduce the factors that increase the risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors and increase the factors that help strengthen, support, and protect individuals from suicide.

Protective Factors shall refer to characteristics (biological, psychological, and social) that reduce risk and the likelihood of the individual developing a mental illness.

Resilience shall refer to an individual's innate ability to persevere in the face of adversity and reduce the risk of unhealthy outcomes.

Risk Factors shall mean the personal or environmental characteristics associated with suicide. People affected by one or more of these risk factors have a greater probability of suicidal behavior.

School Connectedness shall mean the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.

School Personnel include, but may not be limited to, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, coaches, bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers.

Suicide shall refer to death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Suicidal Act or Suicide Attempt shall mean a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person probably intended to kill him/herself; a suicidal act may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

Warning Signs are evidence-based indicators that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the very near future

PALCS shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.

## **Guidelines:**

### Protocols for Administration of Student Education

Students shall receive age-appropriate lessons in their classrooms through health education or other appropriate curricula on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help. Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development. Students shall be taught not to make promises of confidence when they are concerned about a peer or significant other. These lessons may be taught by health and physical education teachers, community service providers, classroom teachers or student services staff. Students who are in need of intervention shall be referred in accordance with the District's referral procedures for screening and recommendations.

Student education may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Information about suicide prevention. Resources are available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website– [www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov)
2. Help-seeking approaches amongst students, promoting a climate that encourages peer referral and emphasizes school connectedness.
3. Increasing students' ability to recognize if they or their peers are at risk for suicide.
4. Addressing problems that can lead to suicide, such as depression and other mental health issues, anger, and drug use.

#### Protocols for Administration of Employee Education

All school employees shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding your suicide prevention.

As part of the school's professional development plan, educators, school nurses and counselors shall participate in four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention, risk assessment and crisis intervention and prevention training every five (5) years.

#### Resources for Parents/Guardians

PALCS may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs; and information about local behavioral/mental health resources.

#### **Methods of Prevention:**

The methods of prevention utilized by the PALCS include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at risk; education for students, staff and parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.

The Supervisor of Guidance and grade level principals shall serve along with the Supervisor of Guidance to act as points of contact for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation.

PALCS shall establish a crisis response team(s). The crisis response team(s) may include, but is not limited to, administrator(s), school counselors(s), the school nurse, and/or teachers and other members of the school's Student Assistance Program team. Community mental agency resources may also be called upon for assistance.

Any school personnel who are made aware of any threat or witnesses any attempt towards self-harm that is written, drawn, spoken, or threatened shall immediately notify the principal and/or Supervisor of Guidance. Any threat in any form shall be treated as real and dealt with immediately. No student should be left alone, nor confidences promised. In cases of life-threatening situations, a student's confidentiality will be waived. The school entity's crisis response procedures shall be implemented.

If an expressed suicidal thought or intention is made known to any school personnel during an afterschool program and the principal or Supervisor of Guidance are not available, the school personnel shall call 1-800-SUICIDE, or 1-800-273-TALK for help. Thereafter, immediately inform the principal of the incident and actions taken.

**Risk factors** refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide including, but not limited to:

Behavioral Health Issues/Disorders:

- Depression
- Substance abuse or dependence
- Previous suicide attempts
- Self-injury

Personal Characteristics:

- Hopelessness/Low self-esteem
- Loneliness/social alienation/isolation/lack of belonging
- Poor problem-solving or coping skills
- Impulsivity/risk-taking/recklessness

Adverse/Stressful Life Circumstances:

- Interpersonal difficulties or losses
- Disciplinary or legal problems
- Bullying (victim or perpetrator)
- School or work issues
- Physical, sexual or psychological abuse
- Exposure to peer suicide

Family Characteristics:

- Family history of suicide or suicidal behavior
- Family mental health problems
- Divorce/death of parent/guardian
- Parent-child relationship

**Warning signs** are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Warning signs include, but are not limited to:

- Expressions such as hopelessness, rage, anger, seeking revenge, feeling trapped, anxiety, agitation, no reason to live or sense of purpose
- Recklessness or risky behavior
- Increase alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal from friends, family or society
- Dramatic mood changes

### Referral Procedures

Any PALCS employee who has identified a student with one (1) or more risk factors or who has an indication that student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for further assessment and intervention to the building school counselors.

### Documentation

PALCS shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.

### **Methods of Intervention:**

The methods of intervention utilized by the PALCS include, but are not limited to, responding to suicide threats, suicide attempts in school, suicide attempts outside of school and completed suicide. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of an emotional or mental health safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

### Procedures for Students at Risk

A suicide assessment instrument may be utilized by trained mental health staff.

Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk shall be notified by the school. If the school suspects that the student's risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, school staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services.

If the parent, or guardian, refuses to cooperate and there is any doubt regarding the child's safety, the school personnel who directly witnessed the expressed suicidal thought or intention will pursue a 302 involuntary mental health assessment by calling County Emergency Services for the county in which the student resides and ask for a delegate. The delegate will listen to concerns and advise on the course of action. If a 302 involuntary mental health

assessment is granted, the first-hand witness will need to be the petitioner, with support from the principal or other central office administrator.

PALCS shall identify mental health service providers to whom students can be referred for further assessment and assistance.

**Mental health service providers** may include, but not limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and primary care providers.

PALCS shall create an emotional or mental health safety plan to support a student and the student's family if the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

### Students with Disabilities

For students with disabilities who are identified as being at-risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

If a student is identified as being at-risk for suicide or attempts suicide and requires special education services or accommodations, the Supervisor of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

### Documentation

The District shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the intervention and assessment process including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.

### **Methods of Response to Suicide or Suicide Attempt:**

The methods of response to suicide or a suicide attempt utilized by the PALCS include, but are not limited to:

1. Identification of and training for the school crisis response/crisis intervention team.
2. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.
3. Notifying students, employees and parent/guardians.
4. Working with families.
5. Responding appropriately to the media.
6. Collaborating with community providers.

### Re-Entry Procedures

A student's excusal from school attendance after a mental health crisis and the student's return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

A PALCS employed mental health professional, the building principal, or the school counselor shall meet with the parents/guardians of a student returning to school after a mental health crisis, and, if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and applicable next steps to ensure the student's readiness to return to school.

When authorized by the student's parent/guardian, the designated PALCS employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside mental health care providers.

The designated PALCS employee will periodically check-in, as needed, with the student to facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.

### **Report Procedures:**

Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.

When a PALCS employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.

As stated in this policy, PALCS employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention and response.

The Supervisor of Guidance shall provide the grade level principal and Director of Academics with a copy of all reports and documentation regarding the at-risk student. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to school counselors, and school nurses.

### **References:**

A comprehensive set of resources for youth suicide awareness and prevention is accessible through the Department at [www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov)

PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative - <http://payspi.org/>

Oct. 2014 Dear Colleague Letter related to peer harassment of students with disabilities:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/publications.html#Section504>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center - <http://www.sprc.org/>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - <http://www.afsp.org/>

## Section 8 - School Health Services

### Immunization Records

All students must comply with the requirements of the State Immunization Code (28 PA Code, Ch 23). Complete immunization records must be delivered to the school prior to a student's acceptance for enrollment. It is the parent's responsibility to notify PALCS nurses when new immunizations have been administered to their child.

Children in **ALL** grades (K-12) need the following immunizations for attendance:

- 4 doses tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (usually given as DTaP or DTP or DT or TD)
  - 1 dose must be given on or after the child's 4th birthday
- 4 doses Polio
  - 4th dose on after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given
- 2 doses measles, mumps, and rubella (usually given as the combined MMR)
  - both doses must be administered after the child's 1st birthday
- 3 doses hepatitis B (properly spaced)
- 2 doses varicella (chicken pox) or proof of having had the disease

Children in 7th Grade through 12th Grade: **ADDITIONAL** immunization requirements for attendance:

- 1 dose tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap, Adacel, Boostrix)
- 2 doses meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV, Menactra or Menveo)
  - First dose is given between 11-15 years of age; a second dose is required at age 16 or before entry into 12th grade
  - Exception: If the first dose was given at 16 years of age or older, only one dose is required.

There are three exceptions to the school laws for immunization, all of which require adequate documentation:

**Medical Reasons** - exemptions must be signed by a physician or physician's' designee; once the physician determines that the immunization is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the child shall be immunized according to PA law.

**Religious Beliefs** - exemptions must be submitted in writing, signed by a parent/guardian.

**Philosophical/Strong Moral or Ethical Conviction** - exemptions must be submitted in writing, signed by a parent/guardian.

Please Note: If a child is exempt from an immunization, in the event of an outbreak of that disease, attendance at facilities or school activities may be prohibited according to the PA Department of Health recommendations.

*NEW REGULATIONS!! The Pennsylvania Department of Health has changed the law to require all returning/continuing students to have the mandated vaccines as of August 1, 2017. Students who do not have all the required vaccines, including incoming 12th Grade students and students entering Grade 7, will NOT be permitted to access their classes until PALCS receives an updated immunization record.*

**New families now have 5 days from date of enrollment to provide proof of immunizations.** Access to classes will be cut off if the 5 days have passed without providing proof of immunizations.

**Screenings (height, weight, vision, hearing) are required every year;** if an issue is identified, it can be referred for follow-up.

Families can either have screenings done on their own at a clinic or with a family doctor; or, through PALCS, which offers screenings at least once a year.

**Physical Examinations** are required for students in grades **Kindergarten, 6** and **11**.

**Dental Examinations** are required for students in grades **Kindergarten, 3** and **7**.

## Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

CHIP is short for the Children's Health Insurance Program - Pennsylvania's program to provide health insurance to uninsured children and teens up to age 19 who are not eligible for or enrolled in Medical Assistance. Uninsured Pennsylvania children and teens who are not eligible for Medical Assistance have access to affordable, comprehensive health-care coverage for routine doctor visits, prescriptions, dental, eye care, prescriptions and much more. For most

families, CHIP is free. Families with incomes above the free CHIP limits will pay low monthly premiums and co-pay for some services. Once enrolled, children are guaranteed 12 months of CHIP coverage unless they no longer meet the basic eligibility requirements. Families must renew their coverage every year in order for the coverage to continue. CHIP insurance companies send renewal notices 90 days before their benefits are going to end, and families must fill out and send the renewal information back to their CHIP insurance company in order for benefits to continue. For more information, families are encouraged to visit the CHIP website at: [www.CHIPcoversPAkids.com](http://www.CHIPcoversPAkids.com).

## Health Screening Requirements

For each student transferring to PA Leadership Charter School, we request an adequate health record from the previous school. Health Services accepts reports of privately conducted physical and dental examinations no older than four months from the beginning of the current school year (March 1) prior to a student's entry into the grade when an exam is required.

In compliance with School Code, all students are required to follow the state's health and dental exam policies:

Each child shall submit to the school nurse a comprehensive dental examination upon original entry into school Grades K or 1, and while in the third and seventh grades.

Each child shall submit to the school nurse a comprehensive physical examination upon original entry into school Grades K or 1, and while in the sixth and eleventh grades.

In compliance with PA Public School Code, PALCS offers dental and physical exams arranged by the West Chester school nurse with parents' written requests.

Parents/Guardians of students who require physical or dental exams shall be notified of the date, time and location of scheduled school health exams. The parent/guardian may choose to attend the school exams with their child, or may opt to provide Health Services with a copy of a privately conducted exam at the parent's expense. To promote continuity of care for your child, PALCS Health Services recommends private exams scheduled with your family physicians and dentists.

These exams should follow the timelines established by the school for the respective year requested and not carry over from year to year.

A student who presents a statement signed by his/her parent or guardian that a medical examination is contrary to his/her religious or moral beliefs shall be examined only if the Secretary of Health determines that the student presents a substantial health threat to the health of other persons.

## **In Addition:**

All students must have yearly far and near point vision screenings and height/weight, BMI (Body Mass Index) screenings.

All students in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 11th grades must have documented hearing screening results on file with the school nurse.

All students in grades 6 and 7 must have a scoliosis screening; the results are to be reported, in writing from the healthcare provider that provided the screening, to the school nurse.

Annual Health Screening results may be performed during your child's annual physical exam and results sent to PALCS Health Services. PALCS nurses will schedule health screenings to be performed in the nearest PALCS facility, at parent/guardian request.

PALCS faculty and staff observe students for conditions that indicate defect or disability and are instructed to promptly report such conditions to the school nurse. All student health information is maintained as a confidential health record, and its contents shall be divulged only when necessary for the health of the student or at the request of the parent/guardian to a physician.

## **Health Forms**

Health Forms are available through the PALCSchool Lobby by clicking on the "Resources" icon and selecting the "Health" section.

Available Health Forms in this section include::

- Health Screening and Immunization Requirements
- Physical Examination
- Dental Examination
- Emergency Care Information
- School Health Information
- CHIP - Children's Health Insurance Plan
- Medication Authorization Form
- Allergy Action Plan
- Asthma Action Plan
- Seizure Action Plan

An Emergency Care Form is kept on file in the health office for each PALCS student. Each year, **we request that the forms be completed and returned to PALCS prior to the first day of school.**

## First Aid and Illness

First aid is defined as immediate, temporary care given in case of an accident or sudden illness. First aid will be given by the school nurse or designated assistant following PALCS Health Procedure Guidelines. If emergency care is deemed necessary for the student, school personnel will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or other contacts listed on the Emergency Care Form, including the doctor. If we are not able to reach your listed contacts in an emergency, we will make the arrangements necessary to assist your child, at no expense to PALCS.

Children should not attend school or field trips when they are ill, or when they are not well enough to participate. A child should not have a fever and/or vomiting, diarrhea, or rash for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school to prevent the spread of infection.

When a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should be kept at home. Some general guidelines are:

- Fevers: A child running a fever of 100 degrees or higher should stay home.
- A child running a fever of 99+ degrees may have trouble keeping up with normal school activities and may well become sick before the day is over.
- A child with a low grade fever (99+ degrees) combined with other symptoms should stay home.
- The rule of thumb is: "Fever free for 24 hours without medications" before returning to school.
- Severe or Persistent Coughing
- Congestion or Very Runny Nose
- Unexplained Rashes
- Contagious Disease or Infection
- Untreated Head Lice

Please alert Health Services if your child has chickenpox, head lice, or any other communicable disease. Children with communicable diseases will be excluded from school or school activities.

Allergies: For students who attend school activities or on-site programs and who have serious allergies, i.e., nuts or latex, parents/guardians should contact the school nurse to discuss appropriate accommodations necessary for their child's well being.

### **Communicable Diseases:**

Students are excluded from on-site school programs and activities for the following:

- Strep Throat: 24 hours after prescription antibiotics are started;

- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after an eye discharge ends;
- Head Lice: Until the condition has been treated with a pediculicide or approved shampoo;
- Impetigo: Until adequately treated by a physician and lesions are no longer draining;
- Ringworm: Until adequately treated by a physician;
- Chicken Pox: Until all lesions are dry (usually at least six days);
- Scarlet Fever: 24 hours after prescription antibiotics are started;
- Scabies: Until adequately treated by a physician;
- Pertussis: Until first five days of prescription antibiotic have been completed.

The school nurse is available to discuss acute or chronic conditions that may affect education.

## Medications: School and Field Trips

It is recommended that no medications be given during school hours; most medications can be given prior to or after school hours. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has issued new guidelines for medication administration in schools which the Department of Education and PA law support.

**No Medication will be given in school without written consent from a parent/guardian and specific written orders from a health care provider.**

This refers to any medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, that is to be administered to a student while attending a PALCS sponsored function, i.e., field trips without parent supervision, the University Scholars Program, or Center for Performing and Fine Arts. Each medication must be accompanied by a copy of the physician's authorization and directions for administration and the parents'/guardians' written permission for their child to receive the medication. (Medication Authorization Form)

If a medication must be given during school or during a school field trip, it must be in its original container accompanied by a completed Medication Authorization Form.

PALCS school physician has approved that students may receive Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Benadryl, or Tums as directed on the bottle while attending school sites with their parents'/guardians' written permission.

NO medications will be sent from PALCS Health Services for field trips; it is the parent's responsibility to provide any medication their child may need during a field trip accompanied by a completed Medication Authorization Form.

Please contact the school nurse with any questions regarding health requirements or the medication policy.

Students with severe Food or Other Allergy must **submit an Allergy Action Plan yearly to the school nurse**, if the student attends regular classes in a school building. If approved by a doctor, the student may carry an Epi Pen. If the student is not approved to carry an Epi Pen, one must be provided for the school nurse to keep onsite. Parents have the responsibility to inform the teacher if the student is allowed to self carry an Epi Pen on a school field trip.

## Section 9 - Information Technology

### Instructional Property and Acceptable Use Policy

PALCS provides a computer for each student to access tools needed to engage in online education. This includes the PALCS internet-based educational portal, online libraries, curriculum, and other educational tools and materials. Upon enrollment, students are provided with a technology hardware kit. A standard hardware kit is comprised of laptop computer, printer/copier, microphone/headset, and an ethernet cable.

PALCS will provide ongoing technology support as needed to students who are using school equipment. The IT (Information Technology) department operates a school Help Desk with a convenient **online ticketing system** . The Help Desk can also be accessed by calling 610-701-3333 ext. 1616.

PALCS computers are preloaded with the software and settings needed for coursework. The IT Department "manages" all student computers. This management includes setting permissions on the computer, sending updates via the Internet, and installing programs. Students do not have permissions to install additional software.

**The PALCS IT Department does not support home Internet networks, including wireless connections. This is because home Internet service and related equipment is provided by a service provider that is not PALCS. The service provider is responsible for supporting families with the Internet service and related equipment (e.g. routers, switches, access points and extenders). Also any intervention by PALCS on a home Internet service and hardware may violate the terms of service for the home Internet service and related equipment.**

PALCS reserves the right to request the return of computer equipment in the event of damage, improper use, or the withdrawal of a student from PALCS. Improper use may include installation of unapproved software, accessing unapproved sites, or any use counter to the PALCS educational program and safeguarding of students.

## Lost, Stolen, Damaged Instructional Property

PALCS will repair and/or address any hardware or software issues that arise in the normal educational use of its computer equipment. PALCS will facilitate the return, repair and replacement of non-working equipment. In such instances, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to provide backup technology or access to computer equipment for students to continue school work without interruption. This would include, but not limited to: an additional personal computer or laptop in the home; visiting a public library; or relying on another member of the family or a family friend to use their device until the student's computer equipment has been returned.

If hardware or software issues, damage or loss of computer equipment or instructional materials are the result of improper, unacceptable, negligent or non-educational related activity, the Parent/Guardian is responsible for the cost of replacement and/or repair. For this reason, we recommend that families maintain homeowners or other insurance. PALCS reserves the right to retain internet reimbursement from families who have damaged or lost instructional materials to help cover replacement or repair costs.

## Equipment and Materials Return Procedure

**All packaging included with PALCS technology equipment and instructional materials must be retained by the student,** as the packaging is needed for returns of any kind.

At the end of the school year or on the date of withdrawal from PALCS, students/families are required to return all textbooks, CDs and any other materials issued to the student. Families will receive a list of requested materials and specific instructions of how to complete the return. **Shipping expenses are covered by the school. Families will be billed for damaged and/or missing items.**

Students who intend to continue at PALCS retain the school computer, printer and other hardware accessories from year to year.

Graduating students or withdrawing students must return the school computer, printer and other hardware accessories to the school in the original packaging with all accompanying documentation and accessories. Students will be denied their diplomas if they have not returned all requested school equipment and materials.

Some instructional materials are consumable supplies that do not warrant a return to the school. Such materials may include course specific art & science supplies, writable workbooks, worksheets and ink for printers. PALCS will provide every student with one replaceable black ink cartridge per school year, upon request. PALCS will not provide supplemental school supplies used in the normal course of the student's education.

## Internet Safety

PALCS equipment includes content filters to help safeguard students. Students and families are expressly prohibited from accessing materials available through the Internet that are inappropriate, illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive. While the school will take measures to make this access more difficult, the responsibility for enforcing standards of behavior on the Internet lies with the parent or legal guardian. Families are encouraged to contact the school with questions concerning safe Internet usage.

For more detail on the specifics regarding PALCS Instructional Property, please see the [Device Property Agreement](#).

## Google Suite for Education

**Google Suite for Education** is a core component of interactive online learning. Google Suite for Education (formerly known as Google Apps for Education) is a collection of free online applications, all of which flow together and integrate into the school environment.

The Google Suite for Education applications include:

**GMail** - a secure and safe email system that serves as the mail system for all students.

**Google Drive** – a file storage and synchronization system that serves as the home to an office suite of productivity applications such as Docs, Spreadsheets, Slides, and Forms.

**Google Calendar** - an individual calendar providing the ability to organize schedules, daily activities, and assignments

**Google Sites** - an individual and collaborative website creation tool

Using these tools, students collaboratively create, edit and share files and websites for school related projects and to communicate with other students and teachers. These services are entirely online and available 24/7 from any Internet-connected computer. These tools are used to showcase class projects, build an electronic portfolio of school learning experiences, and work on group projects. For more information about PALCS Google Suite for Education please visit [support.palcs.org](http://support.palcs.org)

## Technology Use

Technology use at PALCS is governed by federal laws including:

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) - COPPA applies to commercial companies and limits their ability to collect personal information from children under 13. By default, advertising is disabled for PALCS presence in Google Apps for Education. No personal student information is collected for commercial purposes. This permission form allows the school to act

as an agent for parents in the collection of information within the school context. The school's use of student information is solely for education purposes.

Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) - The district is required by CIPA to have technology measures and policies in place that protect students from harmful materials including those that are obscene and pornographic. This means that student mail containing harmful content from inappropriate sites will be blocked. CIPA: <http://fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/cipa.html>

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - FERPA protects the privacy of student education records and gives parents the rights to review student records. Under FERPA, schools may disclose directory information but parents may request the school not disclose this information. FERPA: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferp>

## Internet Reimbursement

It is recommended that all PALCS students have access to **high speed Internet service** in their home. This type of service will ensure they have an optimum connection to their online education.

PALCS reimburses one Internet connection per family for basic high speed cable or DSL service only. [Note: DSL: high-speed Internet connection through the phone line; Cable: high-speed connection through a cable company.]

Reimbursements are issued for the current school (session) year only. PALCS does not reimburse for Internet service during the months of July and August.

Advisory on Wireless Internet Service Providers: **Wireless Internet service (delivered through mobile phones, wifi hubs, wireless USB broadband cards, or satellite) provides inconsistent Internet speed and connectivity. These inconsistent and often low speeds make quality engagement with the online PALCS education platform challenging. PALCS cannot endorse their use and does not provide reimbursement for these services.**

In order to receive Internet reimbursement, a completed and signed [Internet Service Provider \(ISP\) Request for Reimbursement Form](#) must be submitted to PALCS at the beginning of each school year. The ISP Request for Reimbursement Form should be completed, scanned, and emailed along with a scanned copy of full Internet service bill to [isp@palcs.org](mailto:isp@palcs.org). [Please note that snapshots of a cable bill do not usually work; it is strongly recommended that families scan the bill and email it as an attachment.] The Internet service bill must include the pre-printed name and address of the person being billed, along with the detailed charges page.

A new ISP Request for Reimbursement Form along with a new bill must be scanned and emailed at the beginning of each subsequent school year (no later than October 31), or when

there is a change of address or change in their Internet plan (rate change, provider change, etc.).

Requests from new enrollments are accepted throughout the school year. The reimbursement cycle will begin upon receipt of a copy of the Internet connection bill for the first full month of the student's enrollment. The cut-off date for qualifying for a month of reimbursement is the 15th of each Month. For example: If a student enrolls before the 15th of the month, his/her Internet connection will qualify for reimbursement for the month; if a student enrolls after the 15th of the month, his/her Internet connection will not qualify for reimbursement for the month.

Reimbursements will be distributed two times during the year:

- The months of September-December will be reimbursed in April-May;
- The months of January-June will be reimbursed in late November-December. [Note: reimbursements will not be issued if outstanding books have not been returned.]

Reimbursement will be paid only on the basic Internet high speed/DSL charge. PALCS reserves the right to determine the basic reimbursement amount from the submitted bill in accordance with the available service area rates. This information will be compiled from Pennsylvania Internet Service Providers.

Newly enrolled students may qualify for additional reimbursements:

- Set-up fees for Internet access incurred by families who do not have service (PALCS reserves the right to determine the reimbursement amount from the submitted bill);
- Installation of Ethernet cable to be run by the ISP provider to the student's workstation. A receipt for this service must be submitted for reimbursement (maximum reimbursement = \$150.00).

The following charges will not be paid by PALCS: (1) enhanced high speeds and service packages that are not described above or necessary for education; (2) enhanced feature lines; (3) taxes, surcharges and fees; (4) rental or purchase of equipment, modem or router; (5) wire maintenance; (6) Internet security; or (7) late fees, reconnection fees, etc., that are not incurred as a result of PALCS action or inaction and/or that are not in any way connected with required courses or the provision of education to students.

## Section 10 - Student Rights and Responsibilities

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

### Education

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

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

### Learning Environment

**Right:** Students have the right to an orderly classroom environment that will promote learning.

**Responsibility:** Students have the responsibility to ensure that their actions do not disrupt the classroom environment or school activities.

### 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.

### Possession and Distribution of Literature

**Right:** Students have the right to possess and distribute literature including, but not limited to, newspapers, magazines, leaflets, and pamphlets within the law and school policies.

**Responsibility:** Students must ensure that distribution (or possession) of literature will not conflict with or infringe upon school activities, infringe on the rights of others, or contain religious, racial, or ethnic slurs. The material must comply with the policies of the school, which

prohibits obscenity and harassment. The Chief Executive Officer shall determine the time, place, and manner of distribution.

## 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 possessions 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.

## Peaceful Assembly

Right: Students have the right to peaceful assembly.

Responsibility: Students have the responsibility to secure approval for using school facilities for assembly, to discuss with an administrator the appropriateness of the facility for the function, and to ensure that such assembly does not disrupt the educational process. Non-availability of adequate supervision shall constitute grounds for disapproval of such assembly.

# Section 11: Student Dress Code & Code of Conduct

## School Dress Code

Students are expected to be fully clothed for any virtual or in-person school activity, where they will be seen. Students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines: (1) Indecent clothing is unacceptable. Indecent clothing is defined as any clothing that exposes midsection, cleavage or undergarments. (2) Clothing with written or pictorial references to drugs, alcohol, sex, tobacco products, or suicide is unacceptable. Additionally, clothing with vulgar language, double meanings, crossbones, gang signs or disrespectful symbols or references to individuals, groups of individuals, religion, race, or ethnic origin is unacceptable.

Students, and anyone in view of others on the webcam during virtual lessons, must be dressed appropriately. Acceptable live lesson attire includes a proper fitting shirt or dress and pants, skirt or shorts. Students who are not dressed appropriately will be asked to leave the lesson and return when dressed appropriately.

Consequence for Dress Code Non-Compliance: The student will be asked to change their clothing into acceptable dress code attire. Parents may be contacted and an incident/behavior report form may be issued leading up to and including suspension.

## Student Image Guidelines

PALCS requires students to post a profile picture that best represents them. Posted pictures must adhere to the dress code policy. Pictures of weapons or any other pictures that depict violent content are unacceptable. Pictures of students using any obscene gestures are unacceptable.

PALCS reserves the right to remove any content that does not adhere to these guidelines and action may be taken depending on the nature of the offense.

## Student Code of Conduct

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) has high expectations for the academic growth and development of all students. In order for a student to reach his/her potential, the school environment must be safe and orderly. PALCS will not tolerate any action from the student that interferes with the delivery of educational services, jeopardizes the health, safety, and well being of any member of the school family, or threatens the integrity and stability of the school.

These rules shall apply to conduct during school hours as well as at any live school activity, function, or event, including virtual lessons and interaction.

## Honor Code

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS) Honor Code addresses cheating, plagiarizing, lying and stealing.

## Honor Code Responsibilities

Students will:

1. Avoid unauthorized assistance on all school work.
2. Document borrowed materials by citing sources.

3. Use quotation marks for statements taken from others.
4. Acknowledge information, ideas or patterns of thought borrowed from any source.

Plagiarism: students are also responsible for following the **plagiarism guidelines** set forth in the teacher's syllabus or other related course documentation. Below are specific examples of plagiarism and/or Honor Code violations:

The use of a parent, home facilitator, sibling, tutor, another student, or another person to write an essay, assist with an assessment, or do a project which is then submitted as one's own work, will result in an Honor Code infraction. Failing to use proper documentation and bibliography; knowingly giving your work to a student or person representing a student. The use of online translators to complete the written portion of assessments is an infraction.

In addition, students are encouraged to speak to any student they observe violating the Honor Code about the seriousness of the infraction. Students may report the infraction by completing the [Student Incident Report](#) and submitting it to the course teacher or principal. Students are encouraged to discuss the incident with the parent/guardian before reporting the violation.

Parents will:

1. Maintain awareness of the Honor Code and consequences for violation.
2. Provide a positive example for adhering to the Honor Code.
3. Support PALCS faculty and administration in upholding the highest standards of conduct.

Teachers will:

1. Review the Honor Code during the first week of the school year and periodically as it relates to a specific discipline.
2. Specify the types of collaboration that are encouraged, and those that are discouraged.
3. Teach or review correct use of documentation when assigning work.

Counselors will:

1. Promote positive behaviors and school values.
2. Reinforce the school's Code of Conduct.
3. Maintain cumulative records of reported violations of the Honor Code.

Administrators will:

1. Assure that all faculty, students and parents have knowledge of the PALCS Honor Code.
2. Create a school-wide environment that encourages adherence to the Honor Code.
3. Enforce appropriate disciplinary actions

## Honor Code Infractions - Level I Offenses

The following infractions are considered **Level I Offenses**. Students will avoid situations which might contribute to any of these situations:

1. Cheating encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Willful sharing of personal login information or logging as another student.
  - Willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest or unscrupulous advantage in school work over other students.
    - Examples: deception; copying from another student or allowing the copying of an individual assignment; sharing test or quiz information; unauthorized use of study aids, notes, books, data or other information; computer fraud; sabotaging the projects or experiments of other students; soliciting assistance from community-driven question-and-answer sites (e.g., Yahoo Answers, ChaCha Answers, Ask.com) unless permitted to do so; completing work or tests assigned to others, or having others complete work or tests assigned to you.
2. Plagiarizing encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Presenting as one's own, the works or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement
  - Borrowing of the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of materials or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement
    - Examples: having a parent or another person write an essay or do a project which is then submitted as one's own work; failing to use proper documentation and bibliography; knowingly giving your work to a student or person representing a student.

Please note that plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Teachers routinely screen for suspected instances of plagiarism using sophisticated software.

3. Lying encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Willful telling of an untruth or falsehood as well as any form of deceit, attempted deception or fraud in an oral or written statement
    - Examples: lying or failing to give complete information to a teacher; feigning illness to gain extra preparation time for tests, quizzes or assignments due.
4. Stealing encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Taking school work, materials, or possessions of another student or instructor without the right or permission to do so.
    - Examples: stealing copies of tests or quizzes, the teacher's edition of the textbook, another student's homework, notes or handouts; or accessing, without permission, teacher answer keys for tests or quizzes.

## Honor Code Infractions - Additional Level I Offenses

1. Disruption - Students are expected to act in a courteous and peaceful manner toward staff, visitors, and each other. A student may not act in any way that disrupts or disturbs

any educational or school-related (live or online) program or activity. Violations of this rule include, but are not limited to:

- a. Cheating, Plagiarizing, Lying, Stealing (from above Honor Code Infractions)
  - b. Disobedience
  - c. Disrespect
2. Disruptive and/or Offensive Use of Language
- a. Students are expected to communicate with school staff and each other as they themselves should expect to be treated.
  - b. A student shall not curse or use vulgar, obscene, intentionally disruptive, or offensive language in any live or online school activity.
  - c. Students shall not send or pass on any offensive, sexually oriented, or threatening messages, pictures, or symbols from any source.
3. Damage, Destruction, or Theft of School or Private Property
- a. Students are expected to respect school property and the property of others. Students shall not recklessly or intentionally cause or attempt to cause damage to or deface school or private property or steal or attempt to steal school or private property. Damage and defacement include graffiti, carving, tearing, cutting, or otherwise marking such property.
  - b. Students may not harm or destroy data of another student or person, the Internet, or other networks. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation, downloading, or uploading of computer viruses. Computer violations of a criminal nature are treated as an aggravated offense under Rule 14.
  - c. Serious damage, defacement, or theft that interferes with the educational or safety rights of others will be treated as an aggravated offense under Rule 14.
4. Fighting
- a. Students are expected to refrain from physical confrontations. Two or more students who engage in a mutual confrontation involving intentional physical contact commit an offense under this rule. Each willing participant shall be subject to disciplinary action.
  - b. Where it is determined that any student or students were not willingly involved in the incident, only the responsible student(s) will be subject to discipline. Rule 14 shall be applied where serious injury resulted or was likely to result regardless of whether the victim was a willing participant or not.
  - c. Where it is determined that a student is acting in reasonable self-defense, no disciplinary action will be pursued for that student. Reasonable self-defense shall be a defense only where the student had no opportunity to flee or otherwise avoid physical contact, and the force used was the minimum necessary to escape or avoid injury.
5. Reckless Conduct

- a. Students are held responsible for intentionally harmful actions and for the reasonably foreseeable consequences of such reckless actions. A student may not act in a manner which ignores the health, safety, or welfare of any member of the school community by placing them in danger of injury or pain.
  - b. Reckless conduct that risks serious injury or death or serious property damage as described in Rules 3 and 4 will be treated as an aggravated offense under Rule 15.
6. Academic Dishonesty/Abuse of Computer or Internet
- a. Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their work.
  - b. Forgery of papers, reports, tests, or notes or any other forms of cheating and/or copying the work of another student or plagiarism from library, publication, or Internet sources is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action as well as loss of academic credit.
  - c. Students are expected to respect the computer privileges given to them. All students must keep their passwords to themselves. It is against this rule to use another person's passwords or accounts. It is also against this rule to break into ("hack") other files or systems, to download copyrighted material, or to conduct a personal business enterprise using the school computer network. Students shall not go into any sites on the Internet which contain sexually explicit material. Additional rules on computer use are listed in the school's Instructional Property Agreement and Acceptable Use Policy.
7. Bullying (See Section 7: Safe School Environment for complete Bullying Policy)
- a. Bullying is defined as **unwanted, aggressive behavior that can be repeated or has the potential to be repeated**. It includes acts of physical, emotional, or social behavior that are intentional, controlling, and hurtful. There are three types of bullying:
    - b. Direct bullying – face to face confrontation which includes, but is not limited to, punching, kicking, verbal taunting, and threatening.
    - c. Indirect bullying – the attack on a victim's social standing or reputation by gossip, slander, or any other attempt to ostracize a classmate.
    - d. Cyber bullying – use of electronic devices including, but not limited to, emails, instant messaging, cell phones, web pages, chat rooms or discussion groups, and other information communication technologies with the intent of hurting, embarrassing, or ostracizing a classmate through verbal taunts and threats.
  - e. Complaint Procedure:
    - i. Students and/or parents who are the victim of a bullying incident should report any situations of bullying in writing to a staff member of PALCS.
    - ii. The staff member will gather the information and seek administrative assistance to determine if the alleged bullying or cyberbullying incident occurred.

- iii. After all information has been gathered, the Director of Academics will be notified of the incident. The Director of Academics will determine the need for further investigation which may result in disciplinary action taken in accordance with the Approved Corrective Actions for Level I Offenses.

## Corrective Action for Level I Offenses

1. For any violation of a Level I offense, a student may face one or more of the following corrective actions, from minimum to maximum:
2. Meeting between the teacher and the student to discuss the student's behavior and expectations for improving his/her behavior;
3. Meeting between the student and the CEO;
4. Notice to parents informing them of the student's behavior;
5. Student may be responsible for the cost of repairing and/or refurbishing and, if necessary, replacing damaged school materials, equipment, and/or property;
6. Supervised mediation between the students involved;
7. Meeting with caseworker or probation officer where applicable and appropriate; and
8. Removal from Center participation and/or school suspension.

## Honor Code Infractions - Level II Offenses

The following infractions are considered **Level II Offenses**:

1. Repeated School Violations
  - a. A student shall not continue to break any of Rules 1 through 7. Nor may a student repeatedly fail to follow directions given by any school staff member while the student is under school supervision. A student who continues to violate any of these rules after the school staff has attempted reasonable interventions to address the student's behaviors is subject to suspension or expulsion provided for Level II offenses.
2. Harassment
  - a. No student shall engage in verbal or physical activity in a live or online setting which he/she should reasonably expect to have the effect of **harassing, threatening the safety, or maliciously damaging the reputation of any student or staff member.**

- b. An aggravated incident is one which reasonably places a victim in fear for his/her safety or well being if the offender remains in the school.
  - c. Harassment or threats, for the purpose of this rule, includes a course of conduct or a single aggravated incident. Harassment includes, among other things:
    - i. Unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual relations; sexual comments; sexually-oriented gestures, sounds, remarks, or comments about a student, staff member, or a visitor's sexuality or sexual experience;
    - ii. Offensive expressions concerning a person's race, sex, religion, disability, or national origin;
    - iii. **Efforts to intimidate, bully, or ridicule;**
    - iv. Threats include any attempt, by physical menace or verbal intimidation or taunt, to put a member of the school community in fear of injury, pain, or social ridicule. The intentional posting on networks of the addresses or telephone numbers of fellow students or other members of the school community is a violation of this rule;
    - v. This rule includes spoken and written messages including any bulletin board, flyer or notice, computer networks or displayed on a student's personal belongings; and
    - vi. Threats to bomb, kill, injure, or use dangerous or deadly weapons will be treated as an aggravated offense.
3. Indecent Assault or Indecent Exposure
- a. All students must keep their hands and bodies to themselves at all times. No student may touch the sexual parts of another person with any parts of his/her own body or an object, or encourage another person to touch him/her in sexual part of the body.
  - b. No student may show the sexual parts of his/her body in a live or online setting to other persons in a way that would offend them or in an effort to excite them. (See Rule 14 for forcible or voluntary sexual acts.)
4. Assault on School Personnel
- a. A student shall not intentionally cause or attempt to cause physical injury or pain to any school employee, or student employee acting in the scope of his/her employment for the school. See Rule 5 for reckless conduct and Rule 14 for assaults that may potentially result in serious injury or that are in retaliation for participation in any official live or online school-related function.
5. Possession of Tobacco Products and Paraphernalia, Drugs, or Alcohol
- a. Students are expected to help keep their school a safe and healthy place. A student may not possess, distribute, solicit or use any tobacco product. Possession, distribution, or use of cigarette lighters, matches, rolling papers, pipes, or other such paraphernalia is also prohibited. In addition, a student may

not possess, use, distribute, solicit, or be under the influence of any unauthorized prescription or nonprescription medication, drug, or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, steroid, growth hormone, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant, or look-alike substance of any kind.

- b. Possession of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a licensed physician and carried in the original container supplied by the pharmacy is permitted. Non-prescription medications may only be possessed in the amount needed during the time in school for that day. Medications supplied by a pharmacist showing the name of the student and proper dosage shall not be considered a violation of this rule where the supply carried by the student does not exceed the amount necessary for use during that school day. Non-prescription medications may only be possessed with a note from a parent or doctor. Nonprescription medications may not be distributed to other students, but are solely for the prescribed student's use.

#### 6. Possession of a Weapon

- a. **Students shall not possess on their person, in their belongings, or in any storage space provided by the school, any tool, instrument, implement, or weapon capable of causing serious injury or death. Such weapons include, but are not limited to: any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, stun guns, BB guns, starter pistols, harmful biological or toxic substances, explosives, fireworks with the potential to injure or devices which may cause a fire, and any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.** The possession, use, or attempted uses of a weapon or another object not traditionally viewed as a weapon in a manner which causes or risks injury will be treated as an aggravated offense under rule 15(A) or 15(F).
- b. Students may not bring compasses or sharp bladed or pointed scissors to school. If these or similar sharp tools are needed for a lesson, they will be provided by the teacher for the limited period of the lesson. Students are also prohibited from bringing look-alike weapons to school.
- c. The CEO is required, under the Pennsylvania Public School Code, to take the following steps when a student is found in violation of Rule 13:
  - i. The student shall be detained;
  - ii. Any incident involving possession of a weapon will be reported to police immediately;
  - iii. The student shall be suspended;
  - iv. A Serious Incident Report will be filed; and
  - v. Expulsion will be recommended pursuant to the Pennsylvania Safe Schools Act.
- d. The Serious Incident Report filed for incidents involving students found to be in possession of weapons shall include:
  - i. The circumstances of the possession and discovery of the weapon(s);
  - ii. The action of the police in response to the call for assistance;

- iii. The action taken by the school including contacts with the student's parent or guardian and the filing of a report;
- iv. A picture or facsimile of the weapon; and
- v. Such incidents will also be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

## 7. Aggravated Offenses

- a. A student shall not engage in, or attempt to engage in, any conduct in a live or online setting which endangers the health, safety, or welfare of any member of the school community, including but not limited to:
  - i. Attacks on any staff member which result in injury or place the person in danger of serious injury or involve the use or attempted use of a weapon (including mace, pepper spray, or laser pointer);
  - ii. Setting any fire that potentially risks injury to any person or damage to any property;
  - iii. Sexual acts:
    - 1. Forcible acts, as to the offender;
    - 2. Voluntary acts, as to each student;
  - iv. Rob, steal, or threaten someone to receive money or property;
  - v. Assault on another student or other non-employee which results in serious injury or involves the use or attempted use of a weapon (including mace, pepper spray, or laser pointer);
  - vi. Damage to school property which disrupts, impairs, or prevents the school from carrying out any of its programs;
  - vii. Retaliation against a school employee, witness, or hearing officer for their participation in any investigation, academic or disciplinary proceeding where the student's action takes the form of assault, threats of bodily injury or death, telephone or Internet harassment, stalking, or substantial property damage;
  - viii. Threats relating to the planting of bombs or other explosive devices, the use of any other weapon, including biological or toxic substances, or to kill or seriously injure any member of the school community; and
  - ix. The conduct of illegal activities via the school's network.

## Corrective Action for Level II Offenses

For any violation of a Level II Offense, a student may face one or more of the following corrective actions, from minimum to maximum:

1. Meeting between the teacher and the student to discuss the student's behavior and expectations for improving his/her behavior;
2. Meeting between the student and the CEO;

3. Notice to parents informing them of the student's behavior;
4. Supervised mediation between the students involved;
5. Meeting with caseworker or probation officer where applicable and appropriate;
6. Removal from Center participation and/or school suspension;
7. Report added to the student's School Record;
8. Report made to the police;
9. Referral for Crisis Intervention;
10. Placement of the student in an alternative education program;
11. Placement in an alternative education program, including a remedial disciplinary program; and
12. Expulsion from the school.

## Due Process

The Pennsylvania Public School Code gives charter schools the authority to make reasonable and necessary regulations regarding the conduct of students. The charter school must publish and distribute the code of conduct to students and parents and make copies of the code of conduct available on the school's website. Student discipline must be based on applicable provisions within the student code of conduct.

## Suspension

The Pennsylvania Public School Code defines suspension as exclusion from school for a period of 1 to 10 consecutive school days. **Suspensions may be given by the CEO, the Director of Academics, or Principal. No student shall be suspended until the student and parent have been informed of the reasons for the suspension and have been given an opportunity to respond.** Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.

The Pennsylvania Public School Code further requires that the parents be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended. When the suspension exceeds three (3) school days, the student and the parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements set forth in the Code. The school shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first five (5) days of the suspension. Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10-school-day period. Students are responsible to make up exams and work missed while suspended.

## Expulsion

The Pennsylvania Public School Code defines expulsion as exclusion from school by the board of education for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls. All expulsions require a prior formal hearing under the Code. During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the board of school directors in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his normal class except, if it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety, morals, or welfare of others, and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days, if the formal hearing is not unreasonably delayed. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education which may include home study.

Students who are less than 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled, and they must be provided an education.

## Hearings

The Pennsylvania Public School Code explains the informal and formal hearing requirements.

### Informal Hearing

The Pennsylvania Public School Code makes it clear that the purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended. The informal hearing is meant to encourage the student's parents or guardian to meet with the CEO or designee to discuss ways by which future offenses can be avoided. The following due process requirements are to be observed in regard to the informal hearing:

- Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardian and to the student;
- Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given;
- A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing;
- A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf; and
- The district shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.

### Formal Hearing

The Pennsylvania Public School Code states that education is a statutory right, and students must be afforded all appropriate elements of due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing, which is a fundamental element of due process. Therefore, a formal hearing is required in all expulsion

actions. This formal hearing may be held before the board of school directors or an authorized committee of the board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the board. Where the hearing is conducted by a committee of the board or a hearing examiner, a majority vote of the entire school board is required to expel a student.

The following due process requirements are to be observed with regard to the formal hearing:

- Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardian by certified mail;
- Sufficient notice of the time and place of the hearing must be given;
- The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing;
- The student has the right to be represented by counsel;
- The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses;
- The student has the right to request that any such witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined;
- The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf;
- A record must be kept of the hearing, either by a stenographer or by tape recorder;
- The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy of the transcript; and
- The proceeding must be held with all reasonable speed.

Where the student disagrees with the results of the formal hearing, recourse is available in the appropriate court of the Commonwealth. If it is alleged that a constitutional issue is involved, the student may file a claim for relief in the appropriate Federal District Court.

## Disciplinary Records

All official disciplinary records for incidents involving the possession of a weapon or acts of violence shall remain in the student's permanent record and must be transferred with the student to any school in which the student enrolls. They shall also be released to any other school upon request if the student is enrolled in the school or district or by permission of the student's parent or guardian if the student is not enrolled.

The School will follow Chapter 711 of the Pennsylvania Code and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act regarding the discipline of all special education students.

## Section 12 - Parent Code of Conduct

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School strives to maintain positive and productive communication with students and families to achieve a successful educational experience. As a school, we maintain a set of minimum requirements and expectations for all verbal and written

communication with teachers, staff (all PALCS employees), and school administrators, as well as other parents and children. Parents who enroll their children in the school have the responsibility to adhere to the expectation of cordial, open, proactive, and productive communication.

The following are examples of violations that are strictly prohibited:

- Use of aggressive tone or language, including threats.
- Use of profanity.
- Use of insults or derogatory comments.
- Use of school sanctioned social media to post inflammatory or personal remarks.
- Use of unruly or harassing behavior.

We understand that families care deeply about their children's education which can lead to passionate conversations. All attempts will be made to maintain cordial and appropriate interactions. If, after several reminders, an amicable discussion is not possible, the school may direct that a parent may only communicate with members of staff through a nominated school representative. Communication may be restricted to phone, email, or written communication as determined by the school representative.

## Section 13 - Academic Guidelines

### Curriculum

PALCS curriculum is aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Education.

PALCS strives to provide the best educational materials available. To achieve that goal, teachers review curriculum from a variety of publishers and select materials with rigorous content that works optimally in our cyber environment. Materials supporting curriculum design are from multiple publishers, research based materials, and supplemental educational resources available on the Internet.

Our curriculum materials serve as the foundation at PALCS, but the greatest strength of this curriculum resides with the teachers who utilize these resources to design unique courses and lesson plans, deliver instruction, make and grade assignments, and interact with students on a daily basis.

### Course Selection Process

In the spring, course catalogs for the upcoming school year are available to students and families. Students are encouraged to review the catalog with their family to begin the process of

choosing elective courses for the upcoming school year. The course catalog is available in the PALCSchool Lobby under *Resources* on the navigation bar.

Also in spring, school counselors send students an **online elective survey** allowing students to choose elective courses based upon interests, grades, or any prerequisites that may be required.

**In the summer, students are placed in core courses (Math, English, Social Studies and Science) based upon previous grades and teacher recommendations.**

**In August, two weeks prior to the start of the new school year, final rosters are available for students to view electronically through PALCSchool.**

## Course Options

All core courses and courses necessary to meet the graduation requirements, as posted in the course catalog, must be completed at PALCS unless permission is granted by the Director of Academics or Principal and the Guidance Supervisor.

## Dual Enrollment

PALCS has a dual enrollment agreement with Delaware County Community College (DCCC). **Qualifying students may take a specified number of courses at this institution, at a discounted rate, to receive both high school and college credit. Please note that PALCS will only award high school credits;** the awarding of college credits is the responsibility of DCCC. Grades will be weighted in accordance with the PALCS Advanced Placement (AP) grading scale. PALCS does not reimburse families for the cost of tuition.

Students interested in dual enrollment must complete a Dual Enrollment Approval form, found in the Resources section of the PALCSchool lobby, and submit to the grade level guidance counselor. After receiving PALCS pre-approval for Dual Enrollment, students complete the application process with the respective college or university. Please note: PALCS pre-approval for dual enrollment does not guarantee acceptance into a particular college or university dual enrollment program.

## Other College / University Elective Course Options

Students may be granted permission to complete post secondary elective courses for enrichment and/or advancement by the Director of Academics or Principal and the Guidance Supervisor. Prior to approval and registration, a course description must be submitted from the accredited college or university.

Upon receipt of an official transcript from the accredited institution, courses will be transcribed, awarding one high school credit per course. Grades will be weighted in accordance with the PALCS Advanced Placement grading scale.

## Independent Study Courses

Upon school approval, students may select an independent study course. **Prior to acceptance in any independent study, students will conference with the guidance counselor and/or principal. An agreement between the student, parent, and PALCS will be developed and signed by all parties involved.**

Students may choose to **purchase an accredited core course or elective course to replace a PALCS course required for graduation.** Purchased courses are **not reimbursed** by PALCS.

If the accredited course corresponds to a Keystone-eligible subject, the following additional conditions apply:

- For Biology or Algebra I, a family may select and purchase, with school approval, an accredited course, however, if a student does not pass the corresponding Keystone exam, the student will be placed in an appropriate PALCS course at the discretion of the Director of Academics.
- After a student has passed the Keystone Literature Exam, a student may select and purchase, with school approval, an accredited course to replace a PALCS English course required for graduation.
- Middle School students, who opt to enroll in accredited core content courses, must complete the courses and submit for credit, or the students must participate in summer school to make-up credits necessary to maintain grade level status.

## Vocational Technical Programs

Participation in a vo-tech program is a privilege and is not a substitution for the academic program provided by PALCS. Credits earned through a vo-tech program will appear as **elective credits** on a student's transcript.

Students must meet the requirements listed below to be considered for participation in a vocational/technical school. Students who wish to be considered for a vo-tech program should notify the grade level guidance counselor who will verify student and program eligibility.

### Requirements

1. Enrolled in PALCS a minimum of two complete semesters
2. Enrolled in grade 11 or 12
3. Overall grade average of 70%
4. Cost of the program may not exceed 65% of students' sending district tuition

5. Attendance - Students must meet the requirements of the Vo-Tech attendance policy.

### Continuation of Vocational/Technical Program

As vo-tech is a privilege, students undergo a review at the end of each marking period to determine eligibility to continue in the program. If a student's grade average drops below a 70%, the program may be discontinued. Continuation in the program from year to year is not a guarantee.

### Transportation to Vocational/Technical Programs

**Families are required to provide transportation to and from the vo-tech program.** If a student with a disability attends a vo-tech program as a transition need, as determined by the IEP team, the student may be eligible for transportation. The IEP must document the need for the program and provide guidelines regarding the transportation.

### Auditing Courses

In exceptional circumstances, students may be permitted to audit a course -- meaning, they have access to the course content but do not receive grades for assignment submissions or assessments. In such cases, the teacher is not responsible for providing feedback or grades. Requests to audit a course must be initiated through the guidance counselor, and approved by the Principal and Supervisor of Guidance.

Example: A student received credit for a Spanish I at a previous school, yet doesn't feel as if the material was truly mastered and feels that additional exposure to the content would be beneficial in order to advance to Spanish II.

### Add/Drop Procedure

Students seeking to add or remove a course must obtain permission from the Guidance Department. This can be done by completing an Add/Drop Request Form and submitting it to the guidance counselor for approval. This form can be found under the "Resources" icon in the PALCSchool lobby, within the "General" section.

Courses may only be added or dropped during the first two weeks following the beginning of the course. The final decision to add and/or drop a course will be determined by the Division Principal in concert with the Guidance Department. Please note: Neither the act of requesting to add and/or drop a course nor the approval of a teacher and/or guidance counselor guarantees the removal or addition of any course.

## Virtual Lessons

### Elementary Division:

Elementary students are required to attend all mandatory virtual lessons in the content areas of Mathematics, ELA, Science, and Social Studies as scheduled by the homeroom teacher. Additionally, some students are required to attend mandatory PALCS Eagles lessons to support the academic growth of Mathematics and ELA skills as scheduled by the Reading Specialist, Math Interventionist and/or homeroom teacher. Students in grades 2-5 are required to attend mandatory virtual lessons in the Health, Safety, Physical Education course (HSPE). If a student has an excused absence on the day of the scheduled virtual lesson, the student will have the opportunity to either view a recording of the missed virtual lesson or make arrangements with the homeroom teacher to attend a different session for the week. It is the responsibility of the parent of the elementary student to ensure that students are logged in on time and prepared for their scheduled virtual lessons. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the parent to communicate with the homeroom teacher when a virtual lesson is missed to arrange for a rescheduled session. Attendance and participation during virtual lessons is a key component of the student's instructional week. Attendance is monitored by the homeroom teacher. Lack of attendance for mandatory virtual lessons may have a negative impact on a student's mastery of skills, thus resulting in a lower academic proficiency rating.

### Middle School Division:

Middle School students are required to either attend their virtual lessons live or view the recorded version. Each virtual lesson will have a corresponding graded assignment associated with the virtual lesson. The middle school provides one virtual lesson each week that is offered four (4) different times in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science; as well as one virtual lesson each week offered three (3) different times in Social Studies, Foreign Language, Art/Music, and Technology/Health, Safety & PE. All virtual lessons are staggered throughout the week and offered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The weekly lesson in each subject is offered at multiple times to allow flexibility for the student to attend, according to his or her own schedule. Virtual lessons are recorded and available for later viewing.

### High School Division:

High school students are required to either attend their virtual lessons live or view the recorded version. Each course has one virtual lesson per week. Each virtual lesson will have a corresponding graded assignment associated with the virtual lesson. This assignment must be completed whether the student attends live or views the lesson at a later time. Virtual lessons account for 10% of the student's marking period grade. This percentage includes the completion of the virtual lesson assignment.

## Due Dates and Extensions

### Progress Check and End of Marking Period Dates

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School values the balance between flexibility and accountability. **Students must learn how to manage time and meet deadlines to prepare for life after PALCS, while maintaining a degree of flexibility within the cyber environment.**

**To ensure student success, PALCS has established progress check deadlines for middle and high school, and end of marking period dates for all divisions. Designated on the school calendar, these dates serve as checkpoints for students during the school year. Teachers will provide letter grades at each progress check and at the end of each marking period to allow students, parents, and teachers to monitor academic progress. Grading at progress checks also provides teachers the opportunity to review and modify curricula and delivery based on student performance. It is important to note that progress check grades serve as an official deadline for submission of work in grades 6-12. All assignments have suggested due dates, and students who are committed to success should honor these due dates. However, the progress check dates represent hard deadlines, after which point any unsubmitted work for the progress check period will receive a “0.”**

Progress Check grades are posted under the “Student Info” icon and listed as “Interim Progress Report” in the PALCSchool Lobby.

In grades K-5, **weekly assignment deadlines apply. Daily assignments are given a suggested due date.** This will help the students stay on schedule for the completion of assignments. **All assignments have a hard due date at the end of the weekly cycle, at which time the assignments are closed and no longer accessible.** Failure to complete and/or submit any assignment during the week may result in the student receiving no credit or score. Student development and growth of time management, study skills, communication and organization are critical areas during the elementary years. The elementary division strives to develop these lifelong habits in our students. All assignments will have a hard close date and will not be reopened without prior parent communication with the classroom teacher. To respect our teachers’ time for grading and lesson feedback, any requests for a lesson extension must be communicated to the classroom teacher within three (3) days of the hard due date. Final consent for lesson extensions will be granted at the discretion of the elementary principal.

### Extension Request Process: Grades 6-12

PALCS defines an extension as changing the coursework due date. Extension requests are granted at the discretion of the division principal.

Students or parents must submit an online form to request an extension **at least three school days** prior to a marking period deadline in grades 6-12. Forms will be made available through PALCSchool Lobby announcements one week prior to the progress check or marking period deadline. **Extension request are typically given for a period not to exceed three days.** Extension requests beyond three days will be approved or declined by the division principal. **Students will not be granted an unlimited amount of extensions within in a marking period or school year.**

## Procedure for Grade Complaints and Student Appeal of Grades

A student or parent/guardian wishing to voice a concern/complaint or to appeal a grade, whether it be an assignment grade, a quarter grade or a final course grade, begins by communicating with the course instructor explaining the student's position. The instructor will reply to the request in writing or by phone conference.

If the student or parent/guardian is not satisfied with the course instructor's response, the student or parent/guardian contacts, in writing, the respective Principal. The Principal will confer with the course instructor, and communicate a final decision to the student and/or parent/guardian in writing or by phone conference.

## Graduation Requirements

The requirements for graduation from PALCS are listed below. Credits for courses passed during the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades shall be counted towards the necessary credits for graduation. To receive a diploma, each student shall have met Pennsylvania Academic Standards by earning passing grades in all required subjects. Students transferring from homeschool programs will be awarded credits based on previous evaluations.

If a student has any outstanding account balance or balances with PALCS, they are responsible for providing payment prior to receiving their diploma.

In order to graduate from PALCS, students must successfully complete the following:

- 4 credits of English
- 3 credits of Mathematics (including 1 credit of Algebra I)
- 3.5 credits of Social Studies (including 1 credit in U.S. History and 1 credit in U.S. Government)
- 3 credits of Science, including 1 credit of Biology
- 1 credit of Technology
- 1 credit of Health/Safety/Physical Education
- 1 credit of Arts and Humanities
- 4 credits of Electives (may be core courses)
- 1 credit Graduation Portfolio or equivalent (0.5 credits per course)

**21.5 total credits are required for graduation.**

[Note: beginning with the class of 2019, students would need 0.5 Graduation Portfolio credits each year, grades 9-12, for a total of 2.0 credits and cumulative 22.5 credits required for graduation.]

In addition to the above requirements, college-bound students are strongly encouraged to take:

An additional credit of Mathematics

An additional credit of Science

An additional credit of Social Studies

At least two (2) consecutive years of the same foreign language

## Early Graduation

Students who intend to graduate before their Senior year must submit a petition including postgraduate plans. This petition is to be submitted to the guidance counselor prior to successful completion of the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School requirements for graduation. The approval of the petition will be at the discretion of the division principal.

## Graduation Portfolio

It is important that students demonstrate competency in Career Education and Work Standards as outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. **All students will complete a career portfolio as a part of their graduation requirement. The e-portfolio completed within Canvas will include research and career preparation components including: resume, cover letter, thank you letter, research paper relevant to the career preparation program, career plan and mock interview. In the process of completing the portfolio, students will recognize their strengths, abilities and interests and plan for the future. Students will have their completed portfolios to share with post-secondary admissions offices and potential employers.**

Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores and Freshmen will take the graduation portfolio course in the fall or spring of their grade level year. Each course is worth 0.5 credits.

(0.5 credits per course, beginning with the class of 2019, students would need 0.5 credits each year- 9th through 12th grade for a total of 2.0 credits) **Students earn a grade of A, B, C or F on graduation portfolio. Students who earn an "F" will need to retake the course. This grade does count toward a student's GPA.**

## Transfer Credits

Transfer credits are considered and evaluated from each individual school previously attended. Separate official transcripts from each school must be in the student's file to make proper placement in grade levels and course selection. Grades for courses completed within a

Homeschooled Program will be transcribed as a “Pass” (P) or “Fail” (F) on the PALCS report card and transcript. Credit will be assigned for high school courses receiving a Pass.

In the event that a transferred course is in doubt, the school will take steps to verify the content of the course. Credit may be given for a course as an elective even though it may not meet PALCS course requirements.

Students who transfer to PALCS during the school year will have credit consideration given after full review of academic progress from their former school by the Guidance Department. Transferred courses accepted for credit will be listed on the PALCS transcript and will be assigned quality points based on the PALCS grading scale.

## College Applications, Letters of Reference and Transcript Requests

Students requesting college application review, letters of recommendation, and transcripts must make the request and submit proper materials at least two weeks prior to the particular college or university deadline. Students requesting transcripts must complete a transcript request form. This form can be found under the Resources tab of the PALCSchool Lobby. Once completed, the form can be mailed or faxed to PALCS at the address or fax number listed on the form. Due to the large volume of seniors, please allow up to three weeks for the processing and delivery of requested transcripts.

In order for a member of the administration or faculty to gather the necessary information to write a letter of recommendation, please allow at least three school weeks after making the request for the letter to be completed. Students and parents must submit a complete request that includes sharing necessary information with the faculty member to complete the recommendation.

Note that PALCS' high school code # is **391441**. This is also referred to as an **SSD code** or **CEEB** by colleges. Students will need this code to fill out various forms such as college and financial aid forms.

## Standardized Testing and Local Assessments

Standardized tests are administered periodically to students to gauge progress and to identify gaps in learning that require additional supports. Local assessments (common assessments, quizzes, and unit tests) are frequently conducted online.

**Standardized tests, such as state-mandated PSSA or Keystone Exam, require traveling to regional testing sites.**

Attendance and participation in onsite (in-person) state assessments is mandatory. Each missed day of *scheduled* state assessments will be documented as one unlawful absence.

These standardized tests are critical to the educational success of your child and our school. Testing helps your child's counselor and teachers learn each child's strengths and weaknesses. Testing helps our teachers improve their courses to make them better for your child. Entrance into most post-high school programs (college, technical schools, etc) require a standardized test, and assessments such as PSSAs and Keystone Exams offer practice and preparation for those types of situations. Finally, testing is a legal requirement of the state of Pennsylvania.

If parents choose to exempt their children from standardized testing, they must contact the Supervisor of Guidance to schedule an appointment to view the material. After viewing the material, parents must provide a written, signed statement explaining why they are exempting their child from testing. They must also sign a confidentiality agreement provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

It is important to note that in all school ratings and evaluations, the school is penalized for each child that fails to complete state-mandated testing.

## Photo Identification

A form of photo identification may be needed for students who are taking state-mandated onsite (in-person) assessments.

## PSAT/SAT/ACT

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test) tests are usually taken in a student's sophomore and/or junior year. Merit Scholarships are possible only at the junior level. PALCS is an approved testing site for the PSAT and the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) at the Advanced Ideas Center in West Chester. The ACT (American College Test) is NOT administered at PALCS. Students must register online for the SAT at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Registration for the PSAT is handled internally at PALCS. Students can register for the ACT at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). The tests are administered on Saturday mornings several times a year at various school districts throughout the state. Dates are posted on the Guidance Department web page and also on this website: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

## PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment)

PSSA standardized tests are required by the State of Pennsylvania. Students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are tested in Math and English Language Arts. In addition, students in grades 4 and 8 are tested in Science. The tests are given to help ensure that every child achieves a state-defined level of scholastic competence.

Testing will be conducted at a variety of sites around the state. Efforts will be made to locate a testing site within one hour of each student's home, but in some cases it may be necessary to travel longer than one hour. **These tests are given over a 2-4 day period**, depending on the student's grade level.

## Keystone Exams

The Keystone Exams were developed by Pennsylvania educators and are aligned to the Keystone Exams Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content. **The Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess performance in the content areas of Algebra I, Biology and Literature.**

**Students in 11th grade who have not taken a Keystone exam are required to take the exam that is currently missing. Students in 10th grade or below who have completed Algebra I, Biology, and Literature courses are required to take the Keystone Exams in Algebra I, Biology, and Literature.** Beginning with the graduating class of 2019, students are required to score Proficient or higher on each exam in order to graduate. PALCS will continue to abide by the regulations and make any changes to the Keystone Exam requirements as directed by the Department of Education.

## PASA (Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment)

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the Life Skills program at PALCS, and who meet the criteria as specified by PDE, participate in the PASA. The PASA is an individually administered and videotaped assessment in the areas of reading, math, and science and is aligned with the Pennsylvania Alternate Standards.

In order to participate in the PASA, the student must meet all six criteria below:

1. By September 1 of the school year will be in grade 3-8 or 11
2. Has significant cognitive disabilities and an IEP
3. Requires intensive instruction to learn
4. Requires extensive adaptation and support in order to perform and/or participate meaningfully and productively in the everyday life activities of integrated school, home, community, and work environments
5. Requires substantial modifications to the general education curriculum

Participation in the general education curriculum differs substantially in form and/or substance from that of most other students.

## PALCS Local Assessments

All students are required to participate in local assessments (assessments that are not statewide/state-mandated but allow PALCS to evaluate student achievement). PALCS

elementary and middle school currently uses the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) which is designed by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). MAP assessments are adaptive, aligned to national and state curricula and standards, and delivered over the web. The MAP assessment provide teachers and administrators with actionable data about where each child is ready to begin learning. To ensure authenticity and data validity, the assessments will be delivered in a virtually proctored environment at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year.

Students in grades 3-12 participate in Achieve3000, a program which gives students non-fiction reading opportunities at individualized reading levels. Students take an Achieve3000 assessment at the beginning and end of year to monitor achievement.

Additional assessments may be used throughout the school year, such as Exact Path, DIBELS, Study Island, ALEKS, and others.

#### High School Midterms and Final Exams

Mid-Terms and Final Exams will be open for a period of 24 to 48 hours depending on the course. If a parent or student has any questions regarding approved accommodations or extensions regarding the Midterm or Final Exam timeframe, please contact your school counselor, course teacher or special education teacher.

If student accommodations are needed beyond this time, the teacher of record for the course, guidance counselor and/or special education case manager/teacher is responsible for coordinating the appropriate time frame for these assessments.

## Academic Policies

### Religious Exemptions for Course and Instruction Policy

At PALCS families have the “right to have their children excused from specific instruction that conflicts with their religious beliefs, upon receipt by the school entity of a written request from the parent or guardian” ([022 Pa. Code § 4.4.](#)).

### K-8 Retention/Promotion Policy

PALCS recognizes that the academic, social, emotional and physical growth of students will vary. Students will be placed in the educational environment appropriate to their needs. To ensure success, instruction will be aligned with the abilities of the individual student.

Promotion of a student will be determined by an evaluation of the student’s achievement, progress and potential for success during the next school year and the recommendation of the teachers and principal of the division.

Factors considered in student promotion/retention decision-making include:

1. Achievement/Performance
2. Ability/Effort
3. Attendance
4. Chronological age
5. Social, emotional, and physical development
6. Previous retention

### Elementary School Promotion

In the elementary division, all students K-5 are required to **successfully complete Math and English/Language Arts courses to be considered for grade-level promotion**. Successful completion is determined by the final grade on the official report card. A final grade of 60% or grade-level mastery of all standards is considered successful completion. The final decision for student promotion is at the discretion of the division principal.

### Middle School Promotion

PALCS Middle School students must complete the following sixth, seventh, and eighth grade courses:

- 3 years of English
- 3 years of Math
- 3 years of Social Studies
- 3 years of Science
- 1 course of Technology
- 1 course of Health/Safety
- 1 course of Physical Education
- 1 course of Arts and Humanities Electives

In the middle school division, all students 6-8 are required to **successfully complete Math, English/Language Arts, and Science courses to be considered for grade-level promotion**.

### Extended Year Program / Summer School Policy

#### Summer Session

PALCS offers a Summer Session that includes **remediation courses** for students in K-12. This includes the **Extended Year Program (EYP)**, **Course Credit Recovery Program (CR)**, and **Elementary and Middle School Summer Bridge Programs**. The EYP and Course Credit Recovery Programs are designed for students to catch up with grade level peers in order to be promoted to the next grade level. The Enrichment Program is specially designed for students to strengthen existing academic skills, learn new concepts, and explore unique educational opportunities.

The Summer School remediation program is an **intense six (6) week program** designed to help students achieve standard benchmarks outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

# Grading Policy

## I. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- A. To encourage students and faculty to create and sustain a positive learning environment;
- B. To create consistency of grading in academic courses in those areas where such consistency is beneficial to students and to the school; and
- C. To provide some flexibility in grading practices which are reasonable and consistent with the intentions of the PALCS Grading Policy.

All courses are covered by this grading policy. Individual teachers may request exceptions to the policies.

## II. PALCS GRADING POLICY

Grades are distributed directly by an individual instructor to an individual student for work completed in an individual course. Therefore, the grade will be entered directly into the student's record precisely as it is distributed by the instructor of record. Students may appeal grades following established procedures.

### Grade Symbols

The instructor is responsible for assigning the grade symbol (A, B, C, D, F, Pass, Fail, W, M, IP, NA, NE).

- W- Student has been withdrawn from a course
- M- Medical
- IP- Student is in progress of completing the course
- NA- Student does not have transfer grades
- NE- Student is not enrolled in school

### Grading Scale

Elementary, Middle, and High School

The A-F scale below will be used to evaluate student performance in Elementary, Middle, and High School.

Grading Scale / Course Level Weighted Credit

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Academic College Prep	Honors	Advanced Placement Dual Enrollment
A (4.00)	94 & above	4.00	4.50	5.00
A- (3.70)	90-93	3.70	4.30	4.70
B+ (3.30)	87-89	3.30	4.00	4.30
B (3.00)	84-86	3.00	3.70	4.00
B- (2.70)	80-83	2.70	3.30	3.70
C+ (2.30)	77-79	2.30	3.00	3.30
C (2.00)	74-76	2.00	2.70	3.00
C- (1.70)	70-73	1.70	2.50	2.70
D+ (1.30)	67-69	1.30	1.30	1.30
D (1.00)	64-66	1.00	1.00	1.00
D- (0.70)	60-63	0.70	0.70	0.70
F (0.00)	59 and below	0.00	0.00	0.00

F Failing-no credit points per credit hour

P/F Pass / Fail - "Pass" is not factored into grade point average

M Medical

W/F Withdraw Failure

W/P Withdraw Pass

DE Dual Enrollment

IP In Progress

NE Not Enrolled

K-5 Electives: O,S,P,NI (Outstanding, Satisfactory, Progressing, Needs Improvement)

## Floor Grades

### Middle School Floor Grade Policy

Floor grades will be assigned in the Middle School for students who have not met the minimum requirements to receive a passing grade. The student's actual grade will be also be documented on their report card in the comments section.

### High School Floor Grade Policy

If a high school student is failing with less than a 50% due to unforeseen circumstances and acceptable documentation is obtained, PALCS will grant a floor grade of 50%. Only (1) one floor grade per course per year will be approved for any one student.

Floor grades will be considered for a chronic medical issue or a life event that substantially limits the student's ability to complete academic work.

The following criteria must be met:

- A doctor's note MUST be submitted for medical approval to be granted.
- Students may not receive floor grades for life events unless the grade level counselor is aware of the situation prior to end of progress check two.
- Students who are not actively participating in their courses and are not submitting work assignments will not be granted a floor grade.
- All floor grade requests must be submitted at least one week prior to the end of the marking period. Filling out this form does not guarantee a floor grade approval. The decision to grant or deny a floor grade will be determined by the guidelines above, the grade level counselor, and the High School Principal.
- Floor grades will not be granted without approval. Floor grades will also not be given after 12 pm on the date of the floor grade request form deadline.

### High School Course Failure Guidelines

Students who do not achieve a 60% or above will fail the course, receive an "F" on their transcript, and will not be issued credit for the course.

Students in grades 9-11 must earn a 50% in their regular year courses to be eligible for summer school courses. 11th or 12th grade students that are slated to graduate upon the completion of summer school course work, are permitted to have lower percentages when retaking classes in the summer session. In order to earn credits for a failed course or course (s) students are permitted to retake available courses during summer school which is approximately (6) weeks in length. **Students completing the requirements of a summer school course will earn a passing grade of a "D" with a maximum of a "C".**

Students are also permitted to retake a full course during the regular school year and have the possibility of earning a grade of A through F. Please be reminded that re-taking full courses may impact a student's ability to graduate with their regularly scheduled cohort or class.

### Research Paper/Project Policy

Students may be required to complete projects or research papers in their classes. Projects, papers, and interim assignments are due on the date assigned by the teacher.

# SECTION 14: Additional Academic Support

## Special Education Program

PALCS provides special education and related services to enrolled children with disabilities who are ages five through twenty-one. Information below will explain (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for such programs and services, (2) the special education programs and related services that are available, (3) the process by which PALCS screens and evaluates such students to determine eligibility, and (4) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents or legal guardians.

### **What types of disability might qualify a child for special education and related services?**

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, commonly referred to as the “IDEA,” children qualify for special education and related services if they have one or more of the following disabilities and, as a result, demonstrate a need for special education and related services: (1) intellectual disabilities, (2) hearing impairments, including deafness, (3) speech or language impairments, (4) visual impairments, including blindness, (5) emotional disturbance, (6) orthopedic impairments, (7) autism (8) traumatic brain injury, (9) other health impairment, (10) specific learning disabilities, (11) multiple disabilities, (12) deaf-blindness, or (13) for preschool age children, developmental delays.

The legal definitions of these disabilities, which the public schools are required to apply under the IDEA, may differ from those used in medical or clinical practice. Moreover, the IDEA definitions could apply to children with disabilities that have very different medical or clinical disorders. A child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, for example, could qualify for special education and related services as a child with an “other health impairment,” “serious emotional disturbance,” or “specific learning disabilities” if the child meets the eligibility criteria under one or more of these disability categories and if the child needs special education and related services as a result.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, some school age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria under the IDEA might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

### **What programs and services are available for children with disabilities?**

PALCS must ensure that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent appropriate in settings with their non-disabled peers, commonly referred to as the least restrictive environment. Programs and services available to students with disabilities, in descending order of preference, are (1) regular class placement with supplementary aides and services provided as needed in that environment, (2) regular class placement for most of the school day with itinerant service by a special education teacher either in or out of the regular classroom, (3) regular class placement for most of the school day with instruction provided by a special education teacher in a resources classroom, (4) part time special education class placement in a regular public school or alternative setting, and (5) special education class placement or special education services provided outside the regular class for most or all of the school day, either in a regular public school or alternative setting.

Depending on the nature and severity of the disability, PALCS can provide special education programs and services in (1) the public school the child would attend if not disabled, (2) an alternative regular public school either in or outside the school district of residence, (3) a special education center operated by a public school entity, (4) an approved private school or other private facility licensed to serve children with disabilities, (5) a residential school, (6) approved out-of-state program, or (7) the home.

Special education services are provided according to the primary educational needs of the child, not the category of disability. The types of service available are (1) learning support, for students who primarily need assistance with the acquisition of academic skills, (2) life skills support, for students who primarily need assistance with development of skills for independent living, (3) emotional support, for students who primarily need assistance with social or emotional development, (4) deaf or hearing impaired support, for students who primarily need assistance with deafness, (5) blind or visually impaired support, for students who primarily need assistance with blindness, (6) physical support, for students who primarily require physical assistance in the learning environment, (7) autistic support, for students who primarily need assistance in the areas affected by autism spectrum disorders, and (8) multiple disabilities support, for student who primarily need assistance in multiple areas affected by their disabilities.

Related services are designed to enable the child to participate in or access his or her program of special education. Examples of related services are speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing services, audiologist services, counseling, and family training.

PALCS, in conjunction with the parents of each identified child, determines the type and intensity of special education and related services that a particular child needs based exclusively on the unique program of special education and related services that the school develops for that child. The child's program is described in writing in an individualized education program, commonly referred to as an "IEP," which is developed by an IEP team consisting of educators, parents, and other persons with special expertise or familiarity the child. The parents of the child have the right to be notified of and to participate in all meetings of their child's IEP

team. The IEP is revised as often as circumstances warrant but at least annually. The law requires that the program and placement of the child, as described in the IEP, be reasonably calculated to ensure meaningful educational progress to the student at all times. IEPs contain, at a minimum, the projected start date and duration for the IEP, a statement of the child's present levels of educational and functional performance, an enumeration of annual goals, a description of the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and reported, a statement of the special education, program modifications, and related services to be provided, an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children, the anticipated frequency and location of the services and a statement of any accommodations necessary to measure academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and district wide assessments. For children aged fourteen and older, the IEP must also include a transition plan to assist in the attainment of post-secondary objectives. The public school must invite the child to the IEP team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the post-secondary goals and transition services needed for the child.

PALCS is required to allow parents of children with disabilities reasonable access to their child's classrooms, subject to the provisions of the school visitation policy or guidelines.

### **How does PALCS screen and evaluate children to determine eligibility for special education and related services?**

#### *Multidisciplinary team evaluation*

PALCS must conduct a multidisciplinary team evaluation of every child who is thought to have a disability. The multidisciplinary team is a group of professionals who are trained in and experienced with the testing, assessment, and observation of children to determine whether they have disabilities and, if so, to identify their primary educational strengths and needs. Parents are members of the multidisciplinary team. PALCS must reevaluate school-age students receiving special education services every three years and must reevaluate children with intellectual disabilities receiving special education services every two years.

Parents may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their children at any time. They must do so in writing. PALCS has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. Please contact your child's teacher, guidance counselor, or principal to speak about this process. You may also call the Special Education department at 610-701-3333 x 1204 to ask questions or get assistance with this process.

Before PALCS can proceed with an evaluation, it must notify the parents in writing of the specific types of testing and assessment it proposes to conduct, of the date and time of the evaluation, and of the parents' rights. The evaluation cannot begin until the parent has signed the written notice indicating that he or she consents to the proposed testing and assessments and has returned the notice to the public school.

## *Screening*

PALCS undertakes screening activities before referring students for a multidisciplinary team evaluation. Screening activities could involve an instructional support team, commonly referred to as the “IST,” or an alternative screening process. Regardless of the particular screening method employed, the screening process must include (1) periodic vision and hearing assessments by the school nurse as mandated by the School Code and (2) screening at reasonable intervals to determine whether all students are performing based on grade-appropriate standards in core academic subjects.

If screening activities produce little or no improvement within sixty (60) school days, the child will then be referred for a multidisciplinary team evaluation.

## **What special rights and protections do children with disabilities and their parents have?**

State and federal law affords many rights and protections to children with disabilities and their parents. A summary of those rights and protections follows. Interested persons may obtain a complete written summary of the rights and protections afforded by the law, together with information about free or low cost legal services and advice, by contacting their school district's special education or student services department at 1332 Enterprise Drive, West Chester, PA 19380 or calling 610-701-3333.

## *Rights and Protections*

*Prior Written Notice.* PALCS must notify you in writing whenever it proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement of a child or whenever it refuses to initiate or make a change in the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement requested by a parent. Such notice must be accompanied by a written description of the action proposed or rejected, the reasons for the proposal or refusal, a description of the evaluation information and other relevant factors used as a basis for the decision, the other options considered, if any, the reasons why such options were rejected and a statement that the parent has the right to procedural safeguards.

*Consent.* PALCS cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of the parents. However, PALCS may attempt to override the lack of consent for an initial evaluation or reevaluation by requesting the approval of an impartial hearing officer by filing a due process request. Additionally, in the case of a parent's failure to respond to a request to conduct a reevaluation, PALCS may proceed with the proposed re-evaluation without parental consent if it can show that it made a reasonable effort to obtain parental consent and that the parent failed to respond. A public school may not seek a hearing to override the refusal of a parent to consent to an initial placement in special education.

*Protection in Evaluation Procedures.* Evaluations to determine eligibility and the current need for special education and related services must be administered in a manner that is free of racial, cultural, or linguistic bias and in the native language of the child. The evaluation must assess the child in all areas related to the suspected disability and include variety of technically sound instruments, assessment tools and strategies. The assessments and evaluation materials must be used for the purposes for which the assessments or measure are valid and reliable, must be administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessment and must be talked to assess special areas of need. Moreover, evaluation determinations cannot be based upon any single measure or assessment.

*Independent Educational Evaluation.* If parents disagree with the evaluation conducted by PALCS, they may request in writing an independent educational evaluation, commonly referred as an “IEE,” at public expense. If an IEE is provided at public expense, the criteria under which the IEE is privately obtained must be the same as the criteria that PALCS uses when it initiates an evaluation. Information concerning each school entity’s evaluation criteria can be obtained through the Office of Special Education or Student Services of PALCS. If PALCS refuses to pay for the IEE, it must immediately issue a Notice of Recommended Placement indicating the refusal to the parent/guardian and must request a special education due process hearing to defend the appropriateness of its evaluation.

### *Due Process Hearing Procedures*

The parent or local educational agency, commonly referred to as the “LEA,” may request a due process hearing with respect to any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education, commonly referred to as “FAPE”. The party requesting the hearing must submit a “Due Process Hearing Request” form to the Office for Dispute Resolution, 6340 Flank Drive, Suite 600, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17112; telephone (800) 222-3353; TTY (800) 654-5984. A due process hearing will not proceed until all required information is provided and procedures followed.

## English as a Second Language Program (ESL)

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School provides an **appropriately planned instructional program for identified students whose dominant language is not English**. These English Learners (ELs) are students who require an English as a Second Language (ESL) service by the school. It is our policy to provide an equal opportunity for all students, including ELs, to achieve their maximum potential through the curriculum, instruction, and programs offered.

The purpose of the program is to increase the English language proficiency of ELs so they can attain the state academic standards within the ESL program setting, as well as within the regular

classroom environment, and to equip ELs with the skills to function, compete, and prosper in American society.

Goals of the ESL Program are for ELs to use English to communicate in social settings, to achieve academically in all content areas, and to use English in culturally and socially appropriate ways. The WIDA - ACCESS Placement Test is used to determine program placement and to measure growth in English language proficiency.

## Bridge to Student Success Program (BtSS)

The BtSS program is a support system for students and families that focuses on **improving improving the consistency, quantity and quality of coursework and assignment submissions.**

The BtSS program is monitored by Academic Advisors who work together with students, classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and the principal. **An Academic Advisor will be assigned to designated students to create a personalized support plan for the child.**

BtSS Student Supports include:

- Frequent check-in via PALCSchool Message/PALCS Gmail/ Canvas mail and text message (middle and high school) with the Academic Advisor
- Regular check-in via phone call with Academic Advisor as required
- Virtual Lesson/Lesson Help Schedule
- **Weekly or Daily To-Do-List**
- Reminders for end of Progress Checks and Marking Periods
- Other personalized supports as needed

Parent/Guardian Support includes:

- Frequent check-in via PALCSchool email or text message (middle and high school) with Academic Advisor
- Check-in via phone call with Academic Advisor as required
- **Help with setting up a good learning environment, getting organized, creating a daily schedule, etc.**
- Parent Pal referral if applicable
- Access to the Parent Resources
- Other supports as needed

## High School (SOAR)

The high school **SOAR (Student Opportunity for Academic Recovery)** program is designed to support students that meet one or more of the following indicators: **1) in need of academic credit recovery; 2) presently failing in two or more subject areas; 3) lack of work submissions; or 4) lack of class attendance on a regular basis.** Students in the SOAR program will receive

additional individualized support from their respective academic SOAR teacher, academic advisor and school counselor. Based on the specific needs of the individual students, **the SOAR teacher will work closely with the student to ensure that they are on track to improve academic performance and/or complete necessary graduation requirements.** The SOAR program provides intensive individualized support, communication and remediation to best support the goals of the individual student. Students who show improvement may be permitted to return to their regular course schedule upon approval by the SOAR team.

## Middle School (SOAR)

Students will be enrolled in special **courses that have been designed by the teachers to cover key concepts and will focus on Pennsylvania State Standards.** The courses will be modified courses that cover 1 full year of instruction in one semester. The program will provide students with a **project-based curriculum.** Students will have the ability to **complete grades 6-8 in 1.5 years.** The program will operate from **September to July.** These courses will consist of modules that are closely aligned to the Pennsylvania State Standards and the PDE SAS portal. **At the end of each module students will be given a review guide that will help them prepare for an assessment that will target specific standards.** Students will not be able to progress to the next module until they have mastered the concepts in the module.

## Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program (TAPP)

**TAPP stands for *Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program.*** It is a program that has been instituted to help students who are parents or expectant parents. This means if you are a student who is expecting a child or already has a child you may be eligible to participate in this program. The program provides qualifying students with **additional supports and assistance that are designed to help see them through this challenging time in life.** It is not just a program for female students; male students qualify as well. The goal of the program is to help students **develop and maintain their academic goals while at the same time receiving a measure of support related to the birth and care of their child.** Additional information can be found in the “Resources” section of PALCSchool.

### TAPP Work Completion Policy and Plan:

In accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines, students are to have access to homebound instruction within the first six weeks post-childbirth. PALCSchool provides online learning continuously with our LMS (Canvas). However, the student should begin completing work no later than three weeks after childbirth unless it is deemed medically necessary to follow an alternate start time. Prior to childbirth leave, the student will complete an action plan with their guidance counselor discussing work completion time frames upon the student's return to school post childbirth.

## Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The **Student Assistance Program (SAP)** provides confidential support for students that may be experiencing a challenging situation or crisis. **Behavioral, emotional, social or academic concerns** can be supported through the SAP team process. The Team consists of specifically trained and certified teachers prepared to assist students and parents during times of stress and difficulty that may present a barrier to student learning. The SAP Team invites all students and parents to take advantage of the PALCS student assistance program services or by contacting one of the guidance counselors, school administrators, and/or a member of the student assistance team.

### Referral Process:

Any PALCS staff member, parent or guardian can make a referral. A student can also self refer. A referral can be made on any student who has made a concerning statement, may have exhibited a change in academics (for the worse), shown a change in social behavior, a decrease in attendance, or overall poor school performance. A referral can also be made with any student who is going through a stressful or traumatic event.

[SAP Referral Form](#)

## SECTION 15: Specialized Programs

### University Scholars Program

Admission to the University Scholars Program is performance-based and highly competitive. Students must be **academically accelerated and able to demonstrate a high degree of motivation and superior classroom performance**. Middle school course work is commensurate with what a student would get at a public high school in rigor and content, while it is also designed to meet the maturity of the students. High school coursework is largely college level, including many **Advanced Placement (AP) College Board approved courses**. Students must demonstrate the intellectual ability and motivation to handle this level of coursework in order to be considered eligible to participate in the program.

### Center for Performing and Fine Arts

The Center for Performing and Fine Arts offers a **specialized, advanced program in arts education for students with exceptional aptitude as well as the maturity and dedication to pursue a pre-professional course of study in the arts**. As this is a multi-disciplinary program, **students are expected to have aptitude and interest in multiple areas of the arts**. Acceptance into the program is not guaranteed to any student and is based on an audition and interview process that focuses on aptitude, passion, and self-discipline. Study of the arts requires a serious commitment, and this is a competitive program.

## Extracurricular Activities and Sports Team Eligibility

The Charter School law, known as Act 22 of 1997, is part of the Pennsylvania School Code cited as 24 P.S. - 24 P.S. § 17-1719-A (14), and **requires that students be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities offered by their home school district provided that they are not offered by PALCS. Students must comply with the policies and meet the specific eligibility criteria set forth by that home school district.** Student athletes must also satisfy eligibility requirements established by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association. Students who are members of a sports team with their home school district must continue to meet grade requirements to be part of the team. Coaches needing academic information from PALCS must make a request in writing to the child's grade-level guidance counselor and provide their email address. PALCS will only notify the home district when grades fall below a "C."

## Student Club Policy

PALCS may maintain a student club program appropriate to the maturity of our student groups and as varied as the curriculum, staff and facilities permit. The program will be designed to offer for the greatest number of students academic-based interest exploration, wholesome recreational and social activity, and opportunities to develop leadership skills within these activities.

**Clubs may only be school-sponsored, related to the curriculum and must have a faculty member sponsor.**

## Educational Outings

PALCS offers a variety of trips/events for students to attend. **Trips are led and organized by PALCS teachers.** All trips/events are extracurricular and are optional. Students must comply with all school policies, and follow the direction of the adults who are supervising the trip/event.

## Day Field Trips

Educational field trips that are limited to one day or less are approved by division principals. **Field trips are encouraged across multiple disciplines and in different regions of the state to allow the geographically diverse population of PALCS students to take advantage of these interactive learning opportunities.**

**At minimum, two field trips per year will be planned in high school for each of the following subject areas: English, History, Science, Math, and Electives. Also at minimum, a total of four field trips per year will be planned in middle school, and four field trips per year will be planned in elementary school. All field trips will be chaperoned by at least two PALCS employees.**

## Extended Stay Trips

Extended stay educational trips are enriching experiences that form a key component to a well-rounded school program. Over the past decade, PALCS has sponsored trips to China, Panama, Costa Rica, Quebec, Paris, Europe, the Galapagos Islands, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Washington, D.C., Harrisburg, and other places of cultural significance. All extended stay educational trips are approved and coordinated by the PALCS Extended Stay Trip Committee. We are looking to focus extended stay educational trips on any of the following key educational areas:

- 1) Language Immersion
- 2) Science and Mathematics
- 3) History and Humanities
- 4) Civics and Leadership

Cross-curricular collaboration is encouraged as an option for extended stay educational trips. The goal is to have a full schedule of trips planned for the next several years, so we can begin to plan on a four-year cycle. This will allow high school and future high school students to plan well in advance for trips that appeal to their interests, as well as time to raise funds for the trip.

### Proposed Trips - Middle School

Yosemite National Park	Spring 2019
Everglades National Park	Spring 2020
Grand Canyon	Spring 2021
Yellowstone National Park	Spring 2022
Appalachian Trail and Washington, D.C.	Spring 2023

### Proposed Trips - High School

Eastern Europe (Budapest, Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, and Austria)	Spring 2019
France (Southern France and the Loire Valley)	Spring 2020
Iceland	Spring 2021

### General Policies for Extended Stay Trips

All extended stay trips require the use of a third-party tour company partner that is vetted, insured, and approved by the PALCS Educational Trip Committee. A minimum of ten students will be required. A minimum of two chaperones will be required for each extended stay trip. Chaperones will be required at a ratio of 1:10 for Elementary School and 1:20 for High School. These are minimum requirements, and international trips often have a ratio of 1:6. Emergency contact and emergency care forms are required for all students. For travel abroad, chaperones will keep with them at all times a packet containing copies of student and chaperone passports, visas, and other travel documents. It is up to trip organizers to determine if parents are allowed to accompany students on trips, but all parents participating in school-sponsored trips must have clearances (criminal check, child abuse, and FBI fingerprint).

## Work Permits

Work Permits are needed for students aged 14 – 17 who want to work during the school year and/or the summer. Permits should be obtained from the student's home school district. It is advisable to contact the school district administrative office first to make arrangements to pick up the paperwork. Employment rules vary by age category.

Rules for students aged 14-15:

- 3 hour maximum on school days
- 8 hour maximum on non-school days
- 18 hours per week maximum when school is in session
- 40 hours per week maximum during the summer work hours of only 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. when school is session work hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. between June 1 and Labor Day

Rules for students aged 16-17:

- 8 hour maximum on any given day
- 28 hour per school week maximum when school is in session, plus additional 8 hours on Saturday and on Sunday with 44 total maximum hours
- Maximum of 8 hours per day and 44 hours per week during the summer
- Work hours start after 6 a.m. daily and end at midnight Sunday through Thursday
- No work hour limits during the summer

Rules for students aged 18 and older

- Students eighteen years of age may work full-time during the school year according to Pennsylvania law

If a student is behind in any of his/her classes or has a "C" average or below, a job is not advisable until after the school year has ended to insure successful completion of all courses in order to move to the next grade. Students who are working must adjust their work schedule to meet class requirements such as virtual lessons and teacher office hours.