



Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to The Graham Academy! We look forward to working with your student and providing a quality educational experience. This handbook will give you a brief overview of the Graham Academy and provide you with some necessary information for your student while they are at the school. This document is not intended to answer all of your questions. We encourage you to contact the school with any additional questions.

In addition to this document, parents are kept informed regarding their students progress in academic, behavioral, and social areas. Consistent communication from teachers and school staff is also provided through various forms including, but not limited to, notes sent home with your student, email, school newsletters, school social media pages, school website, monthly, and quarterly reporting. It is our goal to be a positive resource for families and to partner with school districts to provide a quality education that is in alignment with Pennsylvania State Standards.

School Hours

The school day runs from 8:30am to 3:00pm Monday through Thursday, excluding holidays, Fridays, and half days. On Fridays and other half days, school is in session from 8:30am to 12:00pm.

Calendar

In order for our staff to maintain a high level of professional excellence to best support our students, a half day is scheduled weekly for training, continuing education, and certification in various areas of education, and behavior management. A current calendar for the existing school year is always available on the school website: www.thegrahamacademy.com

School Cancellations, Delays and Early Dismissals

The Graham Academy follows the Wyoming Valley West School District for school cancellations, delays, and early dismissals **in the case of inclement weather or other community emergencies**. In the event that there is a school delay on a scheduled half day, the Graham Academy will not dismiss early. We will adjust our schedule and dismiss at 3 o'clock. If the Wyoming Valley West School District closes due to weather conditions, the Graham Academy will close as well. Typically, if your student's home school district is closed and the Graham Academy is open, transportation for your student is not provided by the school district. If this is the case and your student is absent, it will be counted as an excused absence. You will have to confirm your school district's policies regarding student transportation if your home school district is closed.

Attendance

The Graham Academy follows the state standards and code for school attendance as explained in Chapter 11 of the Pennsylvania Code. Students are permitted to miss a maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days will require an excuse from a physician. All absences require written notice by the parent or a doctor for the absence to be considered excused. Multiple unexcused absences will be reported to the student's home school district.



Transportation

Guidelines for transportation are as follows:

A. *Day to Day Pickup - Drop Off* - The Graham Academy does not provide transportation for our students. We will help make arrangements with school districts for transportation if requested.

B. *Other than Regular* - If your student will not be riding district provided transportation, please notify school staff and your home school district's transportation office. If your student is to be picked up early, please notify your transportation office. The Graham Academy will have a copy of the student's transportation number, but it is also requested that the parent/guardian obtain and maintain that number. If your student is not attending school, it is the parent/guardian responsibility to contact and cancel transportation. If your student is being picked up or dropped off by someone other than the regular transportation or by a parent or guardian,

please provide written notice or call the school office informing them who will be picking up the student. This notice should include the person's name, model of car, and relationship to the student. Without written notice or a phone call from the parent or guardian on record, the student will not be released and the primary caregiver will be contacted.

C. *Student Refusal To Transport* - If your student refuses to take scheduled transportation from school at the end of the day, someone must be available to pick up the student. The emergency transportation form was included in your enrollment package.

Late Arrival and Release of Students

The safety and security of our student body is of the highest priority to the Graham Academy, and therefore we have certain procedures in place to protect our students. Students who do not arrive for the start of the school day on their scheduled transportation must be signed in to the school office by a parent or guardian. A note from the student's parent or guardian explaining the student's tardiness or absence must be provided to the school administration. A doctor's note may be requested depending upon the individual situation by the school administration.

A student may only be released to a parent/guardian, relative, or friend on record at the school. A parent or guardian must give written permission to the school administration when requesting a student to be released for an early dismissal to other persons designated by the parent. This notice should include the person's name, model of car, and relationship to the student. Without written notice or a phone call from the parent or guardian, the student will not be released and the primary caregiver will be contacted. Proper identification will be required to be presented by the person picking up the student at the time of dismissal. If identification is not provided, the student will not be released at that time and the parent or guardian will be contacted.

Visiting the School

At the time of admission into the school, guests are to report to the Main Office directly across from the entrance to sign in. At times, outside members of the community may request to observe students throughout the school day. These guests may include student teachers, perspective students and parents, school districts, volunteers, or other members of the community. The school strives to maintain a high level of security for the safety of all students and staff. For those guests who will work directly with the students, the school



administration will require background checks, child abuse clearances, written documentation, or other security measures depending upon the purpose of the visit. These clearances will be kept on school property. All guests of The Graham Academy will be monitored by staff during their time at the school.

Dress Code

The Graham Academy encourages our students to be very active and we ask that you keep this in mind while dressing your student for school. Please keep in mind the following guidelines for their attire:

- Clothing should be clean.
- No inappropriate shirts: this includes but is not limited to alcohol, drugs, sex, profanity, adult situations, ethnic references or racism of any kind.
- No hats are to be worn unless they are for religious reasons or are part of an existing therapy. Graham Academy Administration and parents/guardian will need to discuss this prior to permission being granted to wear a hat.
- No string tank tops, halters, mesh; see through clothing or any clothing which exposes the midriff.
- No skirts or dresses that do not have shorts or leggings worn underneath.
- No bedroom slippers or cleats.

Students will be requested to go outside for recess on a daily basis through the course of the school year. It is asked that the student be dressed appropriately according to the daily weather conditions. Students will not go outside for recess in severe cold weather, rain, snow, or extreme heat.

Lunch/Food Policy

The Graham Academy does not provide meal service for our students at this time. Students are required to bring in their own lunch and snack to school and are prohibited from sharing food with their peers. The Graham Academy does provide access to microwaves to warm each student's meal when appropriate. Please provide all necessary utensils, dishes and paper products your student may need to eat their meal.

The Graham Academy will provide food for special events as well as cooking opportunities in the classroom setting consistently. Due to the various food allergies and dietary restrictions providing treats for a class to celebrate birthdays or special events is not permitted.

School Health

In order to provide a healthy and safe environment for all students at the Graham Academy we have established these policies and ask they are adhered to.

Allergic Reactions: Staff are to be notified of any and all student allergies. If your student has anaphylactic response to any allergens, please provide a doctors note and any additional materials that may be needed to address this severe condition (i.e. epi-pen, inhaler, benadryl, etc.). Please note that if your student is identified as being anaphylactic, emergency medical procedures will take place, including parental/guardian contact, distribution of medication, and calling of emergency services. Please make sure that you provide the school with a list of any food allergies your student has or has acquired during their time at the Graham Academy. This information will be placed on file for their safety.



Hygiene: Please make sure your student is sent to school in a clean manner. This includes sending them in clean clothes, regular bathing, and attending to any open cuts or scratches. By following this, you help us to greatly reduce the risk of the spread of preventable illness and head lice among the student body. Screening for head lice will occur as needed at The Graham Academy.

Seizures: If your child has a history of seizures or has an epilepsy diagnosis, Administration will schedule a meeting to discuss symptoms and actions taken regarding your child's seizures. If your child has a seizure in school, the school will first call 911 and then the parent.

Illness: If your student is sick, please maintain them at home rather than sending them to school. If your student develops an illness throughout the course of the day, you will be contacted to pick up your student from school. If your student has a history of feigning illness, please make the school aware and we will take it into consideration before a call is made to have your student picked up from school.

Illnesses that would require a student to be kept at home or sent home from school include, but are not limited to, the following conditions:

- Green Discharge from the nose or ears
- Fever of 99 degrees or more
- Vomiting or Diarrhea
- Unexplained rashes, impetigo, hives or unidentifiable skin conditions
- Allergic reactions
- Chicken Pox
- Measles
- Scabies
- Head lice or Body Lice
- Pink Eye
- Any communicable illness threatening the health and safety of the school population.

Injury: If your student is injured at school, parents/guardians will be contacted regarding needed medical attention. Staff will use the emergency contact list in the students records to inform parents and guardians of the situation. Keep all emergency contact information current with the School office. If a parent or guardian can not be reached during an emergency, the school will proceed with all emergency procedures that may apply, including transportation to a local hospital for treatment. If your student is injured at home or

school, please provide the school administration with a doctor's note verifying that your student may return to school. If an injury has created limitations for your student, please provide a doctor's note outlining those limitations. Staff at the Graham Academy are trained in basic First Aid and CPR. First Aid Kits are available on throughout the school to assist with accidents, illness, or injury. If emergency first aid is provided, parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible to assist in addressing the student's needs.



Assisting with Medication

Students at The Graham Academy occasionally require the distribution of medication during the hours of school operation. We are working with the Wyoming Valley West School District to provide a school nurse to administer medication on a daily basis. A student who receives medication during the school day will have their medication distributed while the provided nurse is onsite. Please call the school office to make arrangements if your student receives medication during school hours. Prior to the distribution of any medication, a parent or guardian must contact the school office to make arrangements for medication to be delivered to the school. All proper forms are to be completed before the distribution of medication will begin, including a parental release for distribution of medication and a doctor's order for the medication to be distributed. Medication transported to the school by a student is not recommended. All medication must be received in a prescription bottle with readable information regarding the medication (Medication type, dosage, instructions for administration, and time of distribution). On days Wyoming Valley West has half days or early dismissal, they will not provide a nurse. Please contact school for procedures in administering your child's medication.

If any changes in a student's medication occur including those distributed outside of school, please contact the school administration to make them aware of changes. For medication changes that occur with medication distributed at school, please provide an updated list of changes to the school administration, which will record all changes in the student's records. In case of a medical emergency, it is critical we have access to this information for the well-being and appropriate treatment of your student.

School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

Positive Behavior Supports will be provided under the theme of Responsibility, Value, and Safety. Responsibility teaches accountability to class and school expectations. Value encompasses how students respect themselves, others, and the environment. Safety teaches students safe practices and how to avoid danger. Each teacher will complete an expectation matrix to determine the expectations across different school environments. Students will receive points as positive reinforcement for adhering to the expectations. When a student accumulates enough points, rewards may be purchased in the classroom or at the school store. Students who require a higher degree of positive behavior support, specific behaviors will be targeted through a positive behavior support plan. Students will be taught replacement behaviors that will eventually lead to the desired behavior. Finally, if a more intensive level of support is required, students will be referred for either behavioral health rehabilitative services, or other services determined by the IEP team.

Detention

The Graham Academy encourages the least restrictive intervention when intervening with students who exhibit behavior that is unsafe or undermines the culture of the school. Proactive interventions are the first choice. There are times when students do not respond to the system. When this occurs, detention is a disciplinary tool used to address the behavior. School collaborates with parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine the best day. Detention is always given on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 3:00-3:50. Parents are invited to pick the child up at 3:45.

Exclusion from School

Suspension will be used as a disciplinary action when a student engages in behavior that cannot be addressed appropriately within the framework of the school day at the Graham Academy. Suspensions may be given for



one to three days. Any suspension exceeding 3 days will require an informal hearing, where the IEP and Positive Behavior Support Plan will be reviewed to determine any other possible strategies that should be put in place. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and LEA will be notified in writing of the suspension, the reason(s) for the suspension, and the length of the suspension.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to meet with Graham Academy personnel at any point of the suspension process to receive clarity.

For more information regarding suspension, please refer to the PA code at <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter12/s12.6.html>

Objects Brought to School by Students (student property)

We understand our students come from various school districts and their transportation to and from the school can be a long journey. Some students bring toys or other objects from home including electronic devices. Students are expected to place any item inside of their backpack while on school grounds and their backpacks are to be placed either in the classroom or the locked closet where students are able to store their personal belongings for the school day.

Electronic high-value items (tablets, Phones, mp3 devices, etc) should be signed in at the school during arrival. If a student brings personal property into the facility and refuses to sign in or use appropriately according to The Graham Academy, staff will follow the procedure below:

First Offense: the property will be confiscated until the end of the day.

Second Offense: the property will be confiscated and held until the end of the week.

Third Offense: the property will be confiscated and held until the end of the school year or until a parent or guardian can arrange to pick it up from the school administration.

Lost and Found

The Graham Academy is not responsible for the loss, theft or damage of student property. The Graham Academy will maintain a "Lost and Found" for students. If your student has lost something, please notify school staff. All clothing reported lost but is then found will be returned promptly. In order to limit the loss of student clothing, please mark or label the clothing with your student's name.

Damage or Theft of School Property

As a small private school, stewarding our resources is very important in order to continue to provide quality services for our current students and for those who will eventually enter the program at the Graham Academy. Therefore the intentional or unintentional removal of school property is unacceptable. If a student is caught removing school property, an evaluation of the situation by the Behavioral Health Coordinator and additional staff will occur. Based upon their evaluation, individualized consequences for the behavior will be put in place for the offending student. Each situation will be processed with the student and their family and consequences



explained. We ask all of our parents to be aware of what is coming home with your student. If you find something belonging to the school, would you please promptly return the property to the school. Our goal is not the punishment of a student but rather to improve a students' perspective and their actions regarding personal property.

If a student intentionally destroys, damages or defaces any school property on a regular basis, The Graham Academy administration will schedule a meeting with the parent to discuss compensation. The school's ultimate goal is to provide a suitable outcome for both the family and the school to compensate of the destroyed property. The school requires the parent/guardian of the offending student to restore or replace the damaged property to the satisfaction of the school administration or to pay all costs to restore or replace the damaged property by the market value established by the school administration.

Weapons

Students are not permitted to bring knives, weapons, or anything that resembles a weapon to school. Any object deemed a weapon in the Graham Academy will be immediately confiscated and reported to the Administrative staff. Parents/guardians and home school districts will be contacted and appropriate determination will be reached.

Mandated Reporting

The Graham Academy places the physical and emotional safety of the students as its first priority. There are instances, due to disclosure or observation, staff are obligated to report suspected abuse or neglect to Children and Youth Services. All employees of The Graham Academy are mandated reporters. All individuals working in the school have a legal and ethical obligation to report any suspicion of abuse and neglect. Even if the individual does not personally believe an abuse has occurred, a report must be made. Failure by professionals to report is a criminal offense ranging from a misdemeanor to a felony of the third degree. We understand the hardship this places on families; however the law is in place to protect your child.

For more information about the laws, definition, and legal obligations of mandated reports regarding abuse and neglect, visit <http://www.pa-fsa.org/Mandated-Reporters/Understanding-Mandated-Reporting/Frequently-Asked-Questions>

Withdrawal

We are aware that families move or life circumstances change. In the instance that a family needs to withdraw their student from the Graham Academy, it is critical you notify The Graham Academy administration prior to the removal of the student. This is important because appropriate educational arrangements must be made with your student's home school district, which includes transferring required paperwork and the cancelation of transportation and other services. This can be executed quickly to accommodate a families needs or wishes.

Fire Drills

A fire drill will occur in school on a monthly basis. Each room in the school has a documented fire evacuation plan which is reviewed with the students. Fire drills consist of a siren and blinking lights. If your student is epileptic or light sensitive, please notify school staff. Fire procedures are reviewed with staff and students on a



regular basis to maintain a high level of preparedness in case of a real emergency. In the event of an emergency which requires evacuation from the building, the fire drill procedure would be used.

Internet Safety

The electronic information available to the students while at the Graham Academy does not reflect an endorsement by the Graham Academy staff. Teachers will provide a list of approved sites for their students internet access based upon their individual classroom needs. Downloading programs/games, etc is prohibited and The Graham Academy reserves the right to review or restrict any content created or accessed by a student while using school owned property. Students who violate school or classroom internet policies may lose their internet access for a period of time.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

All students in attendance at The Graham Academy have an Individualized Education Plan. This document is reviewed at least once a year and is established to make sure a student is having their educational needs met. In accordance with Pennsylvania law, parents, guardians, school administration or any other contributor to an existing IEP can request an IEP meeting as needed. In the event an IEP meeting is requested, all involved parties (including parents) will be contacted to arrange a meeting.

The Graham Academy recognizes that each student has individual educational, behavioral, and sensory needs. We work to meet those needs through specifically designed instruction and support through the IEP document.

If your student needs to be assessed for any special programs, including, but not limited to, Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy, please contact the Graham Academy so that an IEP meeting can be held to discuss additional services.

In the event that either school staff or a TSS worker is involved in an Emergency Safety Procedure with a student while at school, an IEP meeting will be offered (as required by law) to the parent/guardian of the student to discuss the situation and adapt the IEP if needed to meet the specific needs of the student. As a parent/guardian you have the right to accept the IEP meeting or to refuse it under no penalty.

A full list of your rights as the parent/guardian of a special education student is available via the procedural safe guard notice offered at every IEP meeting or online at www.parent.pattan.net. Quarterly progress reports are sent home pertaining to your student's IEP goals. Upon receiving a quarterly report, please sign and return the envelope to the school the next time your student reports to school.

Testing

Through the course of the school year, testing will be provided to your student. This may included standardized testing such as the PSSA or PASA and/or local assessments as determined in your student's IEP meeting.

Field Trips and Special Events

The Graham Academy makes many efforts throughout the school year to provide our students with opportunities that will foster greater social interactions and support their educational experience. For these events, a written permission form will be sent home with your student explaining the event and any expenses or



responsibility on the part of the parent/guardian. This will also be posted to the school website for download. This form must be signed and returned to the school in order for the student to participate in the activity.

Students must demonstrate consistent and positive behavior within their individual capacity to participate in special events and field trips for their safety and for the safety of other students involved in the activity. If your student is unable to participate in a special event or field trip due to behavioral issues, a phone conference will be held to discuss this issue.

The school administration reserves the right to prevent a student from participating in field trips based upon their behavior and how it could potentially affect the safety of the student body. If a student is not allowed to participate in a field trip, Graham Academy Administration will call to discuss strategy with the parent.

Students whose behavior on a field trip places themselves or other students at risk may not be allowed to participate in subsequent field trips. The Graham Academy reserves the right to have students who are acting out during a field trip transported back to the Graham Academy. If this occurs, a meeting will be set up to discuss the behavior with parents and school staff.

Additional Services

The Graham Academy strive to maintain a high level of professionalism between our school and those who work with us. With appropriate release forms for a student's parents/guardians, we will work with any community-based services supporting your student in providing any needed information, attending outside meetings and communicating freely. This can include but is not limited to TSS, BSC's, MT's, Psychiatrists, and Doctors. We request notice five (5) business days prior to scheduling any meetings that may need to occur except for emergency meetings.

Contacting Teachers

Parents and guardians of our students can schedule a meeting with their teacher at any point to discuss their student. We encourage our parents to be involved in the process of their student's education. If questions arise that you would like to discuss with your child's teacher face to face, do not hesitate to schedule an appointment with your teacher through the school office.

If you have a question you want answered but do not feel the need to interact with your teacher face-to-face, you can schedule a phone conference or email your teacher. Your teacher's school email address is located on each classroom newsletter. You can also contact the school office for more details at (570) 283-0641.

Student Records

The parent has a right to request and review a copy of their student's permanent file or their anecdotal file completed by their teacher. A written request should be provided to staff five (5) days prior to parental review.

Under Federal Law contained in the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, Title 34), either parent has access to all educational records unless the Graham Academy has been provided with a copy of a court order specifically revoking such rights. Therefore no parent/guardian can restrict the other parent/guardian access to



educational records, including directory information without a court order. Copies will be provided at .25 cents per page.

Requesting Information from the School

Occasionally parents or school districts request documents or information from the school. In these instances, all requests must be made through the school office. Permission to release information to third parties must be granted by a parent or guardian in accordance with state and federal regulations. The Graham Academy charges a fee of .25 cents per page for copies made at our school office.

The Graham Academy PTO

The Graham Academy Parent-Teacher Organization is a group of dedicated teachers and parents working to provide additional resources and activities for Graham Academy students. The PTO meets once a month and regularly schedules extracurricular events such as Family Movie Nights, Family Dinner Nights, and other fundraising events and activities. For more information on the PTO and how you can get involved, please email the organization at pto@thegrahamacademy or contact the Main Office.

We look forward to providing exceptional academics and services for your student. Our team is comprised of qualified and dedicated individuals that work very hard to provide positive growth for your student. While working with The Graham Academy, you can expect a collaborative team approach which focuses on the best outcomes for your child.

If you have any questions regarding any section in this handbook or additional questions that were not covered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact The Graham Academy.

Important contact information:

Main Office - 570-283-0641

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8am to 4pm

Email - info@thegrahamacademy.com

Fax - 570-283-1643