



## PARENT HANDBOOK

*Parents and Guardians,*

*We look forward to working with your child this year 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 child while they attend the school. This document is not intended to answer all your questions. We encourage you to contact the school with any additional questions.*

*In addition to this document, parents are kept informed regarding their child's 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 child, email, newsletters, social media pages, 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. Please review the handbook and sign and return the Acknowledgement page which can be found on page 15.*

### **School Hours:**

The school day runs from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM Monday through Friday, excluding holidays and half days. On half days, school is in session from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

### **Calendar:**

To promote and maintain a high level of professional excellence, and to best support our students, a half day is scheduled once a month for continuing education, and certification in various areas of education, and behavior management. Our current calendar is included in this information packet for your ease of reference.

### **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. If your child's home school district is closed and the Graham Academy is open, your child is eligible to come to school; however, transportation for your student may not be provided by the school district. If this is the case and your child 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.

1 Institute Lane, Kingston, PA 18704

Phone: 570-283-0641 | Fax: 570-283-1643 | Email: [carol.mcgrane@sesischools.com](mailto:carol.mcgrane@sesischools.com) | Web: [thegrahamacademy.com](http://thegrahamacademy.com)



### **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. We kindly ask that you contact the office if your student will be tardy or absent for the day.

### **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 child will not be riding district provided transportation, please notify school staff and your home school district's transportation office. If your child is to be picked up early, please notify your transportation office. The Graham Academy will have a copy of your child's transportation number, but it is also requested that the parent/guardian obtain and maintain that number. If your child is not attending school, it is the parent/guardian responsibility to contact and cancel transportation. If your child 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 your child.
- C. **Student Refusal to Transport** - If your child refuses to take scheduled transportation from school at the end of the day, someone must be available to pick up your child. The emergency transportation form is included in your information packet.

### **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 into the school office by a parent or guardian.

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 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 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, prospective 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 child for school. Please review the following guidelines for their attire:

- a. T-shirts with inappropriate pictures or sayings including, but not limited to alcohol, drugs, sex, profanity, adult situations, ethnic references, or racism of any kind are not allowed.
- b. All shirts must have sleeves. No string tank tops, halter tops, mesh, or any see through clothing or any clothing which exposes the midriff.
- c. Shorts or leggings should be worn under skirts or dresses.
- d. Shoes must be worn at all times, unless the student is working with OT/PT on goals that specify a need for shoes to be off.
- e. Hats may be worn in the building **ONLY** if they are for religious or therapeutic purposes.
- f. Boys may not wear earrings and facial piercings are not allowed for any students. Girls' earrings must be no larger than a dime.
- g. Necklaces are permitted to be worn inside of their shirt.
- h. Watches are acceptable.
- i. Any clothing/jewelry item that becomes a distraction to the educational process may be removed or replaced at staff discretion.

*Students will be requested to go outside for recess on a daily basis throughout the course of the school year. It is asked that students be dressed appropriately according to the daily*



*weather conditions. Students will not go outside for recess in severe cold, heat, rain, snow, etc.*

### **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 child may need to eat their meal.

The Graham Academy will provide food for special events as well as cooking opportunities in the classroom setting. 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 child has anaphylactic response to any allergens, please provide a doctor's 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 child is identified as being anaphylactic, emergency medical procedures will take place, including parent/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 child 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 child 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 a diagnosis of epilepsy, Administration will schedule a meeting to discuss symptoms and formulate a seizure action plan. If your child has a seizure in school, the school will first call 911 and then the parent.
- **Immunizations:** According to 28 PA Code 23.83, The Graham Academy is responsible for ensuring that a child has been immunized in accordance with the requirements set forth prior to admission to school for the first time.

The following immunizations are required as a condition of attendance:

1. Diphtheria



2. Tetanus
3. Poliomyelitis
4. Measles (rubeola)
5. German measles (rubella)
6. Mumps
7. Hepatitis B
8. Chickenpox (varicella)
9. MCV

- **Illness:** If your child is sick, please maintain them at home rather than sending them to school. If your child develops an illness throughout the course of the day, you will be contacted to pick up your child from school. If your child 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 child 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 100 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 child is injured at school, parents/guardians will be contacted regarding needed medical attention. Staff will use the emergency contact list in the student's records to inform parents and guardians of the situation. Please keep all emergency contact information current with the school office. If a parent or guardian cannot 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 child is injured at home or school, please provide the school administration with a doctor's note verifying that your child may return to school. If an injury has created limitations for your child, 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 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. 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 the original prescription bottle with readable information regarding the medication (Medication type, dosage, instructions for administration, and time of distribution).

**If any changes in a student's medication occurs, including those distributed outside of school, please contact the school administration to make them aware of any 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 child.**

### **School-wide Positive Behavior Supports:**

Positive Behavior Supports will be provided under the theme of CASE – Considerate, Accountable, Safe and Engaged. According to PA Code 14.133, behavior support programs and plans must be based on a functional assessment of behavior and utilize positive behavior techniques. When an intervention is needed to address problem behavior, the types of intervention chosen for a particular student or eligible young child shall be the least intrusive necessary. The use of restraints is considered a measure of last resort, only to be used after other less restrictive measures, including de-escalation techniques, in accord with subsection (c)(2).

Positive behavior support plans (PBSP) —A plan for students with disabilities and eligible young children who require specific intervention to address behavior that interferes with learning. A positive behavior support plan shall be developed by the IEP team, be based on a functional behavior assessment, and become part of the individual eligible young child's or



student's IEP. These plans must include methods that utilize positive reinforcement and other positive techniques to shape a student's or eligible young child's behavior, ranging from the use of positive verbal statements as a reward for good behavior to specific tangible rewards.

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 enhanced positive behavior support, will have these behaviors 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.

### **Emergency Safety Procedures:**

The primary focus of The Graham Academy is to teach students alternative methods to managing triggers within themselves and the environment which precipitate verbal or physical aggression. We strive to develop a culture among the students that is positive and proactive. There are times, however, that a student's behavior cannot be de-escalated by way of self or assisted de-escalation techniques and the student becomes a possible danger to him/herself or others.

In the event that a student is exhibiting behaviors that pose a danger to themselves or others, Graham Academy staff will utilize the least restrictive alternative to bring the situation to a safe resolution. This may include procedures up to and including Emergency Safety Physical Intervention. Parents will be informed immediately, and a meeting of the IEP team will be scheduled to review and/or revise the student's Positive Behavior Support Plan if emergency safety physical intervention occurs in the school. For more information, please refer to [pacode.com](http://pacode.com) (Title 22 CHAPTER 14 § 14.133) Graham Academy staff receive ongoing training by an instructor certified in JKM Training's - Safe Crisis Management.

22 CHAPTER 14 § 14.133 defines restraint as:

- (i) The application of physical force, with or without the use of any device, for the purpose of restraining the free movement of a student's or eligible young child's body.
- (ii) The term does not include briefly holding, without force, a student or eligible young child to calm or comfort him, guiding a student or eligible young child to an appropriate activity, or holding a student's or eligible young child's hand to safely escort her from one area to another.



(iii) The term does not include hand-over-hand assistance with feeding or task completion and techniques prescribed by a qualified medical professional for reasons of safety or for therapeutic or medical treatment, as agreed to by the student's or eligible young child's parents and specified in the IEP. Devices used for physical or occupational therapy, seatbelts in wheelchairs or on toilets used for balance and safety, safety harnesses in buses, and functional positioning devices are examples of mechanical restraints which are excluded from this definition, and governed by subsection (d) of PA CODE § 14.133

### **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 three days will require an informal hearing, where the IEP Team reviews the Positive Behavior Support Plan 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.

### **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. If a student brings personal property into the facility and refuses to place it in their backpack 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 child has lost something, please notify the 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 child’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/or designee 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 parents to be aware of what is coming home with your child. If you find something belonging to the school, 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 for 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 by the Graham Academy will be immediately confiscated and reported to the administrative staff. Parents/guardians and home school districts will be contacted, and the IEP Team will convene to determine the next course of action. Any infraction involving a weapon can result in immediate suspension.



### **Mandated Reporting:**

The Graham Academy places the physical and emotional safety of the students as its first priority. 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 can place on families; however, the law is in place to protect your child.

### **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 child'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 family's needs or wishes.

### **Fire Drills:**

The Graham Academy will conduct monthly fire drills. 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 student's internet access based upon their individual classroom needs. Downloading programs/games, etc. outside of the suggested list 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 (IEP). This document is reviewed at least once a year and is established to make sure a



student's 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, vocational, and sensory needs. We work to meet those needs through specifically designed instruction outlined in the IEP. If deemed necessary by the IEP team, your child may need to be assessed for additional related services such as:

- Speech Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Behavior Intervention Program
- Counseling
- Vision Mobility

Please contact the Graham Academy to discuss/evaluate any of the above additional services.

In the event that either school staff or a TSS worker is involved in an Emergency Safety Physical Intervention 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 safeguard notice offered at every IEP meeting. Progress reports are sent home pertaining to your student's IEP goals.

### **Testing:**

Throughout the course of the school year, testing will be provided to your child. This may include standardized testing such as the PSSA or PASA and/or local assessments as determined in your child'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 child explaining the event and any expenses or responsibility on the part of the parent/guardian.



This form must be signed and returned to the school in order for the student to participate in the activity.

The following will be enforced for all events on and off school premises.

- Students must demonstrate behavior consistent with IEP expectations.
- Parents/Guardians will be contacted if their child cannot participate in events due to behavior. School Administration reserves the right to determine if a student's behavior will have a negative impact on their safety or the safety of others during the event.
- Students whose behavior on a field trip places themselves or other students at risk may not be allowed to participate in subsequent field trips.

### **Additional Services:**

The Graham Academy maintains a high level of professionalism between our school and those who work with us. With appropriate release forms from a student's parent/guardian, the Graham Academy collaborates with external community-based service providers supporting your child. Collaboration includes providing requested documentation, attending outside meetings and effectively communicating academic and behavioral progress. The Graham Academy requests five (5) business days' notice for 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 child. We encourage our parents to be involved in the process of their child'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 contact information will be provided by your teacher in his/her introductory letter sent home during the first week of school. 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 child's permanent file or their anecdotal file completed by their teacher. A written request should be submitted 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 custodial 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.

### **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 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.

The PTO is self-sustaining. Use of funds raised from fund raisers sponsored and coordinated by the PTO is solely determined by the PTO. The Graham Academy will support the PTO as needed. For more information on the PTO contact the Main Office.

*We look forward to providing exceptional academics and services for your child. Our team is comprised of qualified and dedicated individuals that work very hard to provide growth for your child. 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, 8 AM to 4 PM

Email – [carol.mcgrane@sischools.com](mailto:carol.mcgrane@sischools.com)

Fax - 570-283-1643





**PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/legal guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) have received a copy of the  
**Parent Handbook for my reference. I understand that the Graham Academy reserves the right to  
change/update the handbook at any time and that I will be provided with a revised version should any  
changes be made.**

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_