

PINNACLE ACADEMY 2023-2024

THE K-12

Student- Parent Handbook

"A Glowing & Growing Learning Community"

Revised: August 2023





STUDENT PARENT HANDBOOK

14120 Newbrook Drive | Chantilly, VA | 20151

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From the Principal's Desk;

It is my pleasure to welcome you and your family to Pinnacle Academy! PA provides a safe, nurturing, high-quality learning environment and advanced curriculum to families with children between the ages of 3 and 18 years in Pre-S through 12th grade.

As you have entrusted us with the care and education of your child, we consider ourselves an extended family and treat our students with the same care and respect that we would our own children.

The staff of Pinnacle Academy are highly qualified, extremely committed, and dedicated to the well-being and academic success of its students. They spend countless hours before, during, and after school to instruct, tutor, and support their students in mastering academic, life, and social skills.

Pinnacle Academy provides its students the opportunity to grow, learn, and play in an environment conducive to fostering academic growth. Every aspect of our curriculum and school environment has been constructed to provide an innovative framework in which our students can build upon their knowledge, skills, and successes to realize their fullest potential.

We implement our academic programs with unique and innovative methods designed to develop advanced logic, high-level reasoning, greater material retention, and creativity. Pinnacle Academy is a reflection of all of us. All of our school policies and procedures are intended to provide a safe and orderly environment that will be conducive to learning.

We hope your family's experience at Pinnacle Academy will be an enriching and fulfilling experience and that we will enjoy the opportunity of educating your child for many years to come! On behalf of the entire Pinnacle Academy staff and community, best wishes for a great school year!

Mr. Mustafa Akpınar, M. Ed.
Principal

MISSION

Pinnacle Academy is a STEM-focused school, immersing students into a multicultural learning environment that promotes critical thinking and problem solving and encouraging students to apply this knowledge in real world situations.

We believe that our graduates will be:

- Adept learners who will master the knowledge and skills they need to think critically, work collaboratively, and maintain focus on their goals.
- Actively engaged in their school and community, raising awareness of contemporary issues, and contributing to their resolution.
- Respectful of others and themselves and act as role models for their families and communities.
- Top-notch graduates who are fully equipped with intellectual and social skills, in addition to moral values, who can serve as leaders in tomorrow's world.

UNIFORM POLICY

School uniforms keep students focused on their education, not their clothes. School uniforms create a level playing field among students, reducing peer pressure and bullying. Wearing uniforms enhances school pride, unity, and community spirit. School uniforms may improve attendance and discipline.

Pinnacle Academy has a uniform policy to provide a safe and orderly environment, reduce the chance of competition and distractions often caused by different dress styles. Students are expected to wear the PA uniform at all times, to dress and groom themselves in such manner to reflect neatness, cleanliness and safety. Students and parents are expected to honor the uniform code to prevent valuable school time spent in examining student attire to determine appropriateness. Uniforms can be purchased from the uniform store or online through Land's End. Students are not permitted to change out of their uniforms during or after school unless participating an after-school activity that requires non uniform clothing.

Uniform Tops:

- White or blue polo shirts (short sleeved or long sleeved). Navy blue cardigans, sweatshirts, or jackets are allowed indoors. Coats of any color are acceptable to wear outdoors in the cold months. No coats indoors. No hoodies.

Uniform Bottoms:

- Khaki, black, or navy blue pants. Khaki, black, or navy skirts or jumpers are also allowed for girls. Skirts and shorts must be at least knee-length. No jeans.

Shoes:

- Shoes should be closed toe, closed heel, or athletic shoes. No Heelys (shoes with wheels) or Crocs. Shoelaces must be tied at all times. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes may be one solid color, or two-toned, as long as the majority of the shoe is one solid color. The acceptable colors are white, black, or navy blue.

PE Uniforms:

- For PE, the same rules apply, with the addition of the following: A cobalt or navy blue t-shirt may be worn, and black or navy sweatpants are also acceptable for the length of the PE class.

UNIFORM POLICY CONTINUED

Personal Appearance

- No tattoos (permanent or temporary).
- No facial and body piercing.
- Wallets connected with a long chain are not acceptable due to safety concerns.
- Head coverings, such as hats, scarves or bandanas are only permitted for religious or medical reasons.

Dress-Down Days

All the regulations described above about the PA dress code also apply to dress-down days. The only exceptions are instead of wearing uniform tops, bottoms and shoes, free choice of clothing and shoes are permitted.

The following additional regulations apply to dress-down days:

- Short skirts and short shorts are not permitted; they must be at least knee-length.
- Sleeveless shirts are not allowed.
- Pajamas are not allowed
- See-through clothing is not permitted.
- No improper, offensive, or provocative language or images on clothing.
- On theme dress-down days (such as Spirit Days), the majority of student's outfit must fit the theme.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

Before- and aftercare services are available for students. Before care is from 7:00-8:00 am and Aftercare is from 3:45-6:00 pm. Please see the office for further information and costs.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Before care services are offered from 7:30 – 8:00am. Regular arrival begins at 8:00am and ends at 8:25am. Students who arrive before 8:00 AM must enroll in before care services and pay the appropriate fees. Students who arrive before 8:00am who are not enrolled in before care services will have the requisite fees added to their tuition bill.

Students will be dismissed at 3:15 PM. Parents and car pools should pick up their students between 3:15 – 3:45 PM, unless the student is staying for after school club or after school care. Any student who has not been picked up by the appropriate dismissal time will be charged the requisite fees for after school services, \$1.00 per minute.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

CELL PHONES

Use of cell phones is NOT permitted at ANY TIME during the school day. We recommend that all devices be left at home. Students who choose to bring a cell phone will be required to leave it in the front office until dismissal time. In case of emergency or illness, students will be permitted to call a parent or guardian using the office phone. Parents needing to reach their children may contact the office. Any student who retains their cell phone during the school day will have it confiscated and held by administration until a parent or guardian can collect it. Students repeatedly bringing phones onto school grounds will face escalating consequences, including the possibility of community service, detention, and suspension. Students with required health monitoring devices on their cell phones are exempt from this policy.

LOCKERS

Students in grades 6-10 will be assigned a locker for his/her individual use at PA. This locker is for storing books, coats, and personal items necessary for school. Students should not bring valuable items from home. PA will not be liable for personal items students leave in your locker or bring to school. To keep school items safe, PA strongly advises students to bring a lock and keep their locker combinations and space private. **Please note that locks are not provided by the school.**

Do not trade lockers with another student. Do not let another student share lockers. It is the student's responsibility to see that their locker is kept locked and in order at all times. Students should report any damage, vandalism or the inoperable condition of the locker to the office. If students do not report vandalism, damage or the inoperable condition of his or her locker, he or she will be held responsible for it. Please remember that lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school. Students, however, have full responsibility for the security of their locker and what is in it.

Lockers must be kept neat at all times. School officials may make inspections. No item considered dangerous by the administration may be kept in the lockers and will be removed if found there. This includes glass or any other objects that may be potentially dangerous. Students attending PA should not expect privacy in regard to the contents of their lockers, desks, or other school property. Due to the small size of PA's lockers, book bags must be small enough to fit within the locker. Extra large book bags are not advised.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance on a daily basis is a mandatory requirement for all students. The Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-254, requires all children who have reached their fifth birthday on or before September 30 and who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday must attend school.

Absences and Tardiness

PA recognizes two kinds of absences and tardiness: excused and unexcused. Please carefully read through the definitions. Also, please be very aware of student responsibilities regarding all missed work (homework, quizzes, and tests) when a student has an excused absence and the consequences for unexcused absences.

Excused Absences

Parents or guardians must notify the school before **8:15 a.m.** in the morning any and every day their child is not attending. Parents must call or email the Administrative Assistant by 8:15 a.m. to inform us of the child's absence. The excuse shall be submitted to the school office and filed as part of the student's school record.

An excuse for absence from school may be approved for one or more of the following reasons/conditions:

- **Personal Illness:** Personal illness of the student which would endanger the health of the student or the health of others is excused.
- **Serious Illness or Death in the Family:** Serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating the absence. When returning to school, an explanatory note from the student's doctor may be required.
- **Special or Recognized Religious Holidays:** Special or recognized religious holidays observed by the faith of the student. Parents or guardian must notify the office **two days** in advance to inform the school of the holiday and estimated time of absence.
- **Medical Appointment:** Parents are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, and other necessary appointments outside of the school hours, whenever possible. If not possible, please notify the office on the day of absence explaining the dismissal time and duration of the appointment.

ATTENDANCE CONTINUED

- **Weather or Environmental Conditions:** Weather or environmental conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to the student's health or safety may be excused. A parent or guardian must call the office, explain the situation and estimated time of absence.
- **Out of School Suspension:** School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall be counted as excused.
- **Other:** Other absences to be determined by, and at the discretion of, the Governing Board may be excused. In the event of extended absences, Pinnacle Academy reserves the right to retain a student for the subsequent academic year.

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is a part of a student's school record. Students will be marked for an unexcused absence for failure to attend school, with or without the knowledge of the parent/legal guardian, for reasons other than those specifically outlined as excused. Examples of reasons that will result in an unexcused absence include travel and vacation, oversleeping, traffic or non-school-related activity.

School or Class Tardiness

A student is tardy when he/she is not in his/her homeroom by 8:30 am, at the beginning of the school day, or is not in the assigned class at the official beginning of the class period. A note, phone call from a parent or a professional note related to tardiness will be required to verify the excuse for tardiness. Once the student gets a tardy slip, he/she will be admitted to class.

Excused Tardy: Late arrival to school or class as a result of reasons defined herein as excused absences or as a result of events physically out of one's control shall be excused. Such circumstances include inclement weather, documented transportation delays, health related emergencies, power outage, compliance with court order, illness, doctor/dentist appointment, etc.

ATTENDANCE CONTINUED

Unexcused Tardy: Arriving late to school or class as a result of oversleeping, parent errands, car problems, baby-sitting, athletic workouts, socializing, hanging around in the halls, etc. shall result in an unexcused tardy. Please note that five (5) unexcused tardies are considered the equivalent of one (1) unexcused absence.

Class Tardy: Students are considered late if they are not in their classroom when the bell rings. Students are responsible for making up work missed due to tardiness. Students may receive demerits and other consequences for class tardiness.

Make-up Work for Absences

An excused or unexcused absence from school, even for several days, does not remove any student from responsibilities in the classroom on the day he/she returns to school. Students who have been absent will be given the same number of days that they were absent to make up missed work. For unexcused absences, makeup work receives no credit. Unexcused absence may result in a “zero” for any missed test or quiz depending on the decision of the teacher and administration. It is the student’s responsibility to find out what work is required and when the work needs to be completed and returned to school – failure to do this will result in a zero for each of those assignments.

For students who have been absent, make-up tests will be scheduled, within a week, at a time designated by the teacher. It is the students’ responsibility to take the test at that time. If the student fails to do this, the teacher is not obligated to set another time for the make-up. If the student fails to make up a test without making other arrangements, the teacher is not required to give the student the test.

If you have a planned absence, you are required to make arrangements with your teachers for assignments prior to your absence.

ATTENDANCE CONTINUED

Requests for Early Dismissal

Being removed from classes and leaving the school prior to the official end of the school day with a parent or legal guardian is considered an early release. The parents are required to call or email the school office the morning of the early dismissal.

No early dismissal allowed after 3:00PM.

A photo ID is required to check a student out of school. Only those persons who have been previously approved by the parent(s)/guardian(s), and officially recorded on the student's records at school will be allowed to check out a student. **Anyone not included in the student's records as someone approved for authorized pickup will not be allowed to pick up the student without confirmation from the student's parent or guardian.**

Parents need to come to the Main Office to sign out their child and to fill out an Early Dismissal Form.

To be considered "in attendance" for a school day, a student must be present for at least one-half of the school day, excluding the lunch period. Students leaving school before meeting that requirement will be considered absent for the day. A parent or legal guardian may be asked to bring appropriate documentation showing the necessity, such as a doctor's appointment, of an early checkout at the time the student is released from school.

Truancy

Any child who is subject to the compulsory attendance law who has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences during the calendar school year is considered truant. Truancy shows a deliberate disregard for the educational program and is considered a serious matter that will have immediate consequences. If you are truant, no credit will be recorded for work you missed as a result of truancy.

ATTENDANCE CONTINUED

Truancy Continued

- After 2 unexcused absences: The parent/legal guardian will be notified by a school administrator explaining consequences of continued absences and requesting a conference to develop a plan to resolve the truancy problem. Parents can provide documentation to explain prior unexcused absences.
- After 4 unexcused absences: The parent/legal guardian will be notified by a school administrator that the student is in danger of violating the state attendance requirements. A conference with school officials and parents will be arranged.
- After 6 unexcused absences: The parent/legal guardian will be notified by the school administrator that the student is in danger of violating the state attendance requirements. A conference with school officials and parents will be arranged.
- When a student accumulates more than six (6) unexcused absences in an academic year, the school reserves the right to retain the student and have him repeat the grade based on an Administrative and Teacher conference reviewing student's grades and performance.
- After 7 unexcused absences: When a student accumulates seven (7) or more unexcused absences in an academic year the case will be referred to juvenile and domestic relations court to enforce the provisions of the Code of the State of Virginia, Section 22-1-258 by either or both of the following: (1) filing a complaint alleging that the student is in violation of the compulsory school attendance law and is a child in need of supervision or (2) instituting proceedings against the parent for failure to comply with the law.

Perfect Attendance

Students are recognized each quarter if they maintain perfect attendance. Perfect attendance is considered as zero absences and zero tardiness to school and zero absences and zero tardiness to each assigned class; whether the absence/tardy is excused or unexcused is not a consideration.

CODE OF CONDUCT

It is our belief that good discipline is one of the cornerstones of a good education, and that to ensure good discipline a close, cooperative relationship must exist between the home and the school. It is our goal to provide close communication with parents at the onset of discipline problems; so that together we can find alternatives for students and they can experience success in relationships at home and school.

For this discipline program to be successful, students must make choices for themselves and be responsible for their own behavior as well as for their academic performance.

Students who make poor choices cannot, and should not, place blame on the environment, parents, the school, and/or peers. While the school will help students develop good decision-making skills, ultimately, the future is determined by each student's own actions. The procedures in the discipline program will be followed in a fair and consistent manner.

Responsibility for Individual Actions

It is expected that every individual will accept responsibility for his/her own actions, whether intentional or unintentional. Often harm caused to other persons or their possessions is unintentional, or the result of careless behavior. This, however, does not excuse or diminish the personal responsibility of the student (and/or his/her parent/guardian) to make appropriate restitution.

When known and verified by an administrator, any harm caused to another will be reported to parents. PA, its employees, and its Governing Board do not assume any liability for the intentional or unintentional harm caused by any student to another individual or his/her possessions.

CODE OF CONDUCT CONTINUED

PA has as its goal to help every student fulfill his/her intellectual, social, physical and emotional potential. Everything in and about the school has been designed to create an orderly and distraction-free environment in which all students can learn effectively and pleasantly.

PA administrators and teachers shall not allow inappropriate, distracting, or disorderly behaviors to occur during school, on school property, or at any school-sponsored activities. Students who continuously disregard the code of conduct may be recommended to the Governing Board for expulsion. Our ultimate goal is to develop a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in the students.

Firm but fair is the basis for the Pinnacle Academy PRIDE-ful Citizenship discipline program.

Guidelines are provided in order to foster mutual respect and cooperation within the school setting. PA takes seriously its responsibility to educate its students in a safe and drug free school where they are free from fear, harm or intimidation. Weapons, drugs and gang activity will not be tolerated. Students, who violate PA rules, or State laws related to these offenses, will be suspended or expelled from school.

Violators will also be reported to police and may be arrested. These rules apply to all students at school or school-sponsored activities, including field trips and on buses, athletic fields, library, parking lots, and other sites used for school-sponsored activities. Realizing that every situation cannot be anticipated, anything not covered in this handbook will be left to the discretion of school administration. PA administration reserves the right to determine consequences for actions and behavior not included in this handbook.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The Pinnacle PRIDE-ful Citizenship model encourages students to engage in positive, helpful behavior at school. Teachers establish and teach expectations and give frequent praise for meeting those expectations. Incentives and rewards are offered for exceeding expected behavior. Teachers may also enhance the classroom behavior management by offering class-wide incentives, which may vary by classroom.

The expectations for Elementary Grades is that all students will **Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe.**

For Grades 6-10, the expectations are for students to demonstrate **Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Discipline, and Enthusiasm.** Show Puma Pride at school every day!

Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior

When a student breaks a Pinnacle Academy school rule, the teacher will work with the student to clarify what rule was broken, and what the expected behavior is. Teachers will employ a progressive intervention system for students who repeatedly break school rules or stray from expected behaviors. Pinnacle Academy believes that all students can demonstrate exceptional, positive behavior and be model citizens of our community. It is the sincere wish of the staff at Pinnacle Academy to address and remediate minor misbehaviors before they escalate into major misconducts.

Minor Infractions

Minor, correctable behavior infractions include, but not limited to, dress code violations, chewing gum in class, being loud, or being unprepared in class. PA administration reserves the right to determine consequences for actions and behavior not included in this handbook.

1ST INCIDENT

- Teachers will use a variety of techniques, including redirection and cueing, to redress the 1st incident of minor behavior infraction.

2ND INCIDENT

- In addition to using a variety of techniques, including redirection and cueing, teachers will give students a Think Sheet to complete upon the 2nd incident of minor misbehavior. The Think Sheet will be completed by the student, signed by a parent, and returned to the student's homeroom teacher the following day.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES CONTINUED

3RD INCIDENT

- Upon the 3rd incident of minor misbehavior, students will redress their behavior through Community Service or after school detention. Students may need to stay at school until 4:30 pm to perform Community Service or attend detention.

4TH INCIDENT

- Upon the 4th incident of a minor behavior infraction, students will receive demerits according to the gravity of the offense, together with community service or detention. Students may also be referred to the Discipline or PBIS Committees to discuss their behavior and reasons for misbehavior with the faculty counsel. The Committees consists of faculty and administration who will work with the student to identify an appropriate plan for correcting repeated behavioral concerns.

Major Infractions

Major behavior infractions include, but are not limited to, disruptive behavior, fighting, and insubordination. PA administration reserves the right to determine consequences for actions and behavior not included in this handbook.

1ST INCIDENT

- Students engaging in a major behavior infraction will be referred to the Vice Principal and will receive demerits according to the gravity of the incident. The Principal may take additional actions to address the misbehavior as needed, including but not limited to a Parent Conference, referral to the Discipline or PBIS Committees, and suspension.

2ND INCIDENT

- Upon the 2nd incident of a major infraction, students will receive demerits and a referral to the Discipline or PBIS Committee. The Committee consists of faculty and administration will work with the student to identify an appropriate plan for correcting repeated behavioral concerns. Community service, detention or suspension may also be assigned depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES CONTINUED

Demerits

Throughout the semester, student demerits will be reviewed by the Administrative Assistant. Students who are unable to correct their behavior, and thereby continue to accrue demerits, will receive consequences including after school detention (for students accruing a total of -10 demerits or more in a quarter), in-school suspension (students accruing a total of -25 merits or more in a quarter), out of school suspension (students accruing a total of -50 merits or more in a quarter), and recommendation for expulsion (student accruing a total of -100 merits in a quarter). Parents will be notified of any such consequences by the Principal.

Regarding Technology Equipment in Computer Labs, Media Center or Laptop Carts

Students must respect all of the technological equipment. Any mishandling or tampering with computers, chromebooks, or systems will result in losing computer privileges at school. In addition, disciplinary action, including suspension, may occur for situations considered serious by the school administration. Any damage, requiring repair to hardware or software will result in financial charges being assessed. Students shall not alter or attempt to alter school or private property, including technology hardware and software. Students may not bring computer software to campus to be used on school computers without prior approval of the school administration.

Students are not allowed to Instant Message, E-mail, write BLOGs or visit personal websites on school computers. Students should not bring food items or beverages into the classroom setting. Students may not use any school computers, copiers without permission from teachers and/or without supervision.

Beepers, Pagers and Cellular Phones, Radios, Tape or CD Players, Electronic Games, and/or similar devices are not allowed in the building at any given time including the after-school program. **Use of cell phones is NOT permitted at ANY TME during the school day.** We recommend that all devices be left at home. Students who choose to bring a cell phone will be required to leave it in the front office until dismissal time. Any student who retains their cell phone during the school day will have it confiscated and held by administration until a parent or guardian can collect it. Students with required health monitoring devices on their cell phones are exempt from this policy.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES CONTINUED

Consequences for Technology Misuse

1ST INCIDENT

- Demerit points will be issued. Confiscation of the devices with retrieval only by parents/guardians.

2ND INCIDENT

- Demerit points will be issued. Confiscation of the devices with retrieval only by parents/guardian. Additional consequences such a community service or detention may apply.

3RD INCIDENT

- Demerit points will be issued. Additional consequences such a community service or detention may apply. Parent conference will be scheduled.

Note: The student with the phone during the time of confiscation is held accountable for the phone regardless of whether the phone belongs to him/her or to another student.

BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is when one or more people repeatedly harm, harass, intimidate, or exclude others. Examples of bullying include hitting, name-calling, excluding, malicious teasing, and frightening. Bullying is a severely harmful behavior and is extremely disruptive to the learning environment. It must be reported to a teacher immediately. Students may always confidentially report incidents of bullying to any teacher or administrator and the report will be investigated. If an incident of bullying is determined to have occurred, appropriate action will be taken.

Pinnacle Academy endeavors to create a safe learning atmosphere for its students, and bullying interferes with students' ability to feel safe. Bullying is considered serious, and therefore the consequences for such an action are serious. The Principal will review the form and complete any additional follow up, including interviewing additional students, within five (5) school days.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES

Upon the determination that bullying has occurred, the following series of consequences will be applied:

1ST INCIDENT

- Conference with the student(s) at fault and issuance of 5 demerits for Bullying. Depending on the severity of the incident, additional consequences such as a parent call, parent conference, detention, community service, or suspension may also apply.

2ND INCIDENT

- 1 day In-School Suspension on student's permanent record and parent conference.

3RD INCIDENT

- 1 day Out-of-School Suspension on student's permanent record and parent conference.

4TH INCIDENT

- 3-day Out-of-School Suspension on student's permanent record and expulsion hearing with the Governing Board.

See Appendix for more details.

Cyber – Bullying

Cyber-bullying is defined as the use of information and communication technologies—such as e-mail, texting, and social media sites—to support deliberate, hostile behavior intended to frighten, degrade or humiliate others.

Under Virginia law, intent to coerce, intimidate, or harass someone using a computer network or to communicate obscene, vulgar, or indecent language or threaten any immoral or illegal act may be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. **Cyber-bullying that takes place during school hours, or using school equipment will be subject to disciplinary action.** Any violation of this type will result in loss of computer privileges and may also result in additional disciplinary consequences, as determined by school administration, or possible prosecution through the judicial system. If cyber-bullying happens at home or when the student is not under school supervision is not regulated by the school. Parents and/or guardians reporting this type of out of school behavior will be referred to the police to file charges if desired.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Cheating & Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are deceptive choices made by students to misrepresent the student's true knowledge of the subject material (cheating) or misrepresenting information as their own ideas/concepts/words by not giving proper credit to the original source (plagiarism).

All papers or projects submitted at PA are required to be in the student's own words unless stated in writing by the teacher otherwise. Therefore, any copying of information from the Internet or any other source (i.e. "cutting & pasting", etc.) is considered plagiarism. However, drawings and/or pictures may be taken from an Internet or other source as long as they are properly cited in the document.

Cheating and plagiarism demonstrate a deliberate disregard for the educational program and are considered a serious matter.

Students who cheat or plagiarize will immediately be given a zero (0) on the assignment/project and referred to the administration for possible disciplinary consequences. Repeated incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism will incur increased consequences, including demerits, detentions, suspension, or even expulsion. Please note that any unauthorized or unacknowledged use of Artificial Intelligence programs in the completion of assignments is considered academic dishonesty and will receive the same consequences as cheating or plagiarism.

Conferences

Parents and teachers should maintain a good working relationship to help students get the best possible education. Conferences are good communication tools. Our most important form of communication is the parent/teacher conference. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled three times throughout the school year. Specific dates may be found in the academic calendar. Additional conferences may be requested at any time during the school year. If you would like to have a conference with any staff member, please contact the school and arrangements will be made.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Grading Scale

98 – 100	A+
93 – 97	A
90 – 92	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
77 – 79	C+
73 – 76	C
70 – 72	C-
67 – 69	D+
64 – 66	D
61 – 63	D-
0 – 60	F

Report cards will be distributed at the end of the quarter. Progress reports will be given at the middle of each quarter.

Parents should contact their child's teacher if there are any questions concerning grades recorded or information contained on the child's report card. The PA Governing Board, in compliance with State Standards, approves the grading scale. Any grade below 60 is failing.

Any student receiving a grade of D or lower in any course must attend tutoring and will not be eligible to participate in competitions.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Homework Policy

Homework is an essential part of our successful educational program at PA. Doing homework will help students develop many valuable skills such as good study habits, time management, responsibility, and perseverance. Teachers assign homework that will foster individual learning and growth and that is appropriate for the subject area. Homework is part of all students' regular evaluations.

It is each student's responsibility to complete and turn in homework on time. If it is not, a grade of zero (0) may be given.

In case of conflict regarding homework assignments the teacher's record is final. If students or their parents have questions about homework, immediately contact the teacher who assigned it. Students who choose to participate in extracurricular competitions are expected to maintain an appropriate level of attention to all schoolwork, whether during the school day or for homework.

Promotion

At the end of each academic year students who have made satisfactory progress in academic subjects are promoted to the next grade level. In cases where promotion is questionable, the school notifies parents in advance and a cooperative/partnership approach is implemented to ensure student success.

Students are recognized on a regular basis and rewarded for accomplishments. Outstanding student achievement will be recognized each quarter in three distinct categories:

- Principal's Honor Roll - students achieving a weighted academic average of 93 or above in all subjects.
- Honor Roll - students achieving a weighted academic average of 89 to 92.9 in all subjects.
- Achievement Roll - students achieving a weighted academic average of 83 to 88.9 in all subjects.

Calculations are carried out up to one decimal point, and standard rounding rules are applied. Core classes and specialty classes have different weights. A student must maintain at least a "C" grade in citizenship in order to be eligible for recognition.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Services for Students

A number of extracurricular clubs and/or enrichment activities are offered for students. The forms will be given to students describing clubs offered and after school.

Eligibility for clubs will be determined based on the academic and citizenship grades of the students in the previous quarter. For the first quarter of the school year last quarter grades of the previous year will be checked.

A student must maintain at least a “C” grade in all the classes in order to participate in any extracurricular activity.

Students who have been suspended will not be allowed to participate in any activity during the quarter in which the suspension occurred. Nominal fees may be charged for participation in order to cover the cost of materials and/or supplies.

There is no better way for students to enrich their education than by taking part in clubs and after-school activities or through working with a teacher. These opportunities will allow you to explore things you already enjoy and to try other areas that sound interesting.

In order to participate in any after school extra-curricular activity, including music performances, plays, etc., students must arrive on time to be counted present during the school day. Students serving in-school suspension may not participate in after school activities on the day(s) the suspension(s) is served.

Students staying for after school activities will be expected to follow the following rules or they may be banned from all after school activities

- Students may not stay after school to wait for another student.
- Students must be with a teacher or other staff member at all times.
- Students must abide by the PA Code of Conduct while participating in the activity.
- School activity privileges will be cancelled if discipline becomes a problem.
- Students must clear the school building immediately following after school activities by using the front door.
- Students must arrange for transportation to arrive promptly at the end of the activity.

Signing up for after school activities is required for each semester in order to be eligible to participate.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Communication

Every effort will be made to ensure good communication between the home and the school. Parents may communicate directly with the school's staff members via e-mail, voice mail, written request, or by accessing the school's web page.

A weekly school newsletter will be sent home by e-mail announcing upcoming events, activities and announcements. Additionally, teachers will provide a weekly newsletter that will be posted on the classroom portal or via digital forms.

Field Trips

Field trips offer exciting ways to learn. PA students will have the opportunity to participate in field trips on and off campus at various times throughout the school year. Grade level and/or team sponsored day field trips are offered to most students. Students who have received an out-of-school suspension (OSS) during the school year, will not be eligible to participate in any overnight field trips for the rest of the school year and any fees or deposits paid earlier are non-refundable.

In addition, any student who has demonstrated the inability to follow rules may be prohibited from participating. This determination will be made by the administration on an individual basis. Any fees or deposits paid earlier are non-refundable. For all field trips, students will be expected to follow these rules:

- Students must abide by the PA Code of Conduct and Discipline Plan while on the field trip.
- Students must follow the PA Dress Code, unless otherwise specified.

Students must turn in the Field Trip Permission Slip, signed by a parent or guardian, plus any additional fees by the specified date. No phone calls or e-mails will be accepted as permission unless a permission slip form is received. Please be aware of dates and deadlines. **NO LATE PAPER WORK OR MONEY WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

School Pictures - A contracted photographer will photograph students in the school during the fall and/or spring semesters. Parents may purchase the entire package of photos or a partial packet.

HEALTH & SAFETY

PA will have a first aid-trained staff member available to discuss or assist with medical problems or concerns. **Pinnacle Academy is a nut-free school. No foods containing nuts are permitted on site.**

Medication Policy

Medication must not be brought to school unless it is essential to the health of the student. If a student must take medicine at school, these procedures must be followed:

- 1) **Parents must bring medication into the office.**
- 2) **The school must receive a Medication Administration Directions Form signed by the student's physician and parent/guardian.**
- 3) **The following information must be printed clearly on the medication container:**
 - **Student's Name**
 - **Name of the medication**
 - **Dosage**
 - **Time the medication must be taken.**

Parents should bring in only the amount of medication that is needed for a school day. In the case of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period such as one week or one month.

Extra medication will not be sent home with a student. All medication will be kept in a secure location in the office.

PLEASE NOTE: If a student has allergies, asthma, epilepsy, or any other medical condition that could cause them harm without emergency medication or an emergency plan, the student MAY NOT attend school until their emergency medication/plan is on site, complete, and up to date. If they require emergency medication (ex. an Epi-Pen), the medication MUST be kept on site at the school, along with all the required paperwork. If a student attends school before their parent/guardian has supplied medication, paperwork, or both, they will be sent home.

Emergency Drills (In-Person Classes) - Regular emergency preparedness drills will be held throughout the school year so that students will be trained to act properly in an emergency. These drills will include fire, tornado, and other crisis emergency drills. Please view [PA Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Management Security Plan](#) for further details.

HEALTH & SAFETY CONTINUED

Building Visitors & Security

Parents must use the Main Office (front) door for all late arrivals and early dismissals, or any other necessary visit. All visitors must first report to and sign in at the Main Office and wear a visitor's badge before going to other parts of the building.

Health Procedures

If any student suffers from a major injury or medical event requiring professional medical attention, parents will be contacted immediately by phone. Minor injuries will be reported on an incident report. The incident report will be sent home with the student, signed by a parent, and returned to the school office.

Students will not be allowed to attend school if they have contagious symptoms such as, but not limited to, those listed below:

- Fever of 101° or higher
- Fever plus nasal discharge, cough, sore throat, sneezing, swelling, or rash
- Red, watery, or draining eyes
- Ear drainage
- Lice
- Skin lesions
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (2 or more instances in one day)
- Fainting, seizures, persistent headache

After an instance of the above, students may be readmitted to school only if ALL of the following conditions are met:

- Fever free for at least 24 hours
- No eye drainage (or doctor's note indicating the condition is not communicable)
- No ear drainage (or doctor's note indicating the condition is not communicable)
- In cases of lice, student may only be readmitted AFTER receiving lice treatment, and once they are free of all lice and nits.
- No skin lesions (or doctor's note indicating the condition is not communicable)
- Free of upset stomach or vomiting for 24 hours
- Free of diarrhea for 24 hours
- Free of any symptoms for 24 hours

HEALTH & SAFETY CONTINUED

Health Procedures for COVID-19

Pinnacle Academy's COVID-19 Pandemic Response Plan is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Virginia Department of Health, Fairfax County, and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), including standards related to COVID-19.

Procedures for Anyone Experiencing Symptoms

- **Anyone who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should isolate at home, contact their doctor for medical guidance, and inform the school office immediately.**
- If a test is deemed necessary by the physician and a positive result is received, please follow the guidelines outlined by your physician and our Procedures for Anyone Tested Positive for COVID-19 outlined below.
- If a negative test result is received, please follow the guidelines outlined by your physician and provide proper documentation before being allowed to return to campus.
- Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19

Procedures for Anyone Tested Positive for COVID-19

- **Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should isolate and inform the school administrative assistant immediately.**
- **A negative COVID-19 test AND a written physician's release will be required before a student can return to school.**

HEALTH & SAFETY CONTINUED

Procedures for Anyone Experiencing COVID-19 Symptoms at School

If a student is sick or experiencing symptoms at school, the student will report to the initial screening area: the front office. If deemed necessary, the student will be moved to the isolation room. In the isolation room, every student will be provided a face covering and social distancing, and the parents will be informed right away and asked to pick up the child immediately. If not deemed necessary, then the student will be taken to the nurse's suite for regular checks and regular clinic procedures will be followed.

Employees who become sick or experience symptoms while at the school should follow the same procedures as students.

Protecting Yourself and Others

To maintain a safe environment for everyone on campus, the school is implementing basic infection prevention measures for everyone to follow. These include, but are not limited to, the promotion of hand-washing and respiratory etiquette, use of social distancing where possible, and optional face coverings.

Hand-washing- Frequent hand-washing is critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Hand sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60 percent alcohol) are at entrances and other locations throughout the school.

All students and school employees are recommended to frequently wash their hands throughout the day for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, but especially at the beginning and end of their workday, before and after mealtimes, and after using the restroom.

The use of soap and water is the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Masks are optional.

HEALTH & SAFETY CONTINUED

Frequent and regular cleaning and disinfecting will be a vital part of our operation during Covid-19. Pinnacle Academy has a contract with a third-party cleaning company to clean and disinfect our campus in detail using EPA-approved products that are effective for Covid-19.

That service will continue with further attention to the cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces by students such as doorknobs, student desks, and chairs.

Recognizing that we will need more frequent and detailed cleaning and disinfecting during the school day, we have added more custodians to our facility team for the school year to ensure a clean and healthy school environment for our students including the detailed cleaning of restrooms and isolation room using EPA-approved products that are effective for COVID-19.

Touchless hand sanitizers with 60% alcohol rate will be available in areas that are used by middle and high school students for its effectiveness with Covid-19.

Elementary students are discouraged to use these hand sanitizers as it may not be healthy for their skin. Instead, elementary school students are encouraged to use soap and water. We have been working with our building contractors to ensure best practices with our AC and ventilation systems.

COVID Response FAQ and Mitigation Strategies

HEALTH & SAFETY CONTINUED

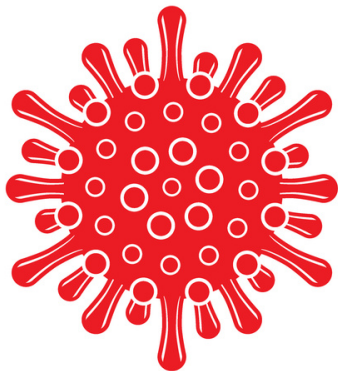
We have taken enhanced health and safety measures for the children, faculty, and staff, parents, and other members of our community. We ask that everyone who visits follow the [K-12 Schools safety guidelines](#) as well as any posted instructions.

An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present.

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and others with underlying health conditions are especially vulnerable. By choosing to come to our school, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19. Help keep each other safe and healthy.

Parents or students who wish to opt-out must do so in writing and prior to entering the school building. In the case of opting out, the student and parent must revoke their own right from entering the premises.



COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS

PARENTS RIGHT TO KNOW

In compliance with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind statute, PA informs parents that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the teacher has met the VA Standards requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which VA qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

Holiday Celebration Policy

Our school is a diverse community that includes families with many different beliefs and customs connected to holidays, celebrations, and other cultural traditions (referred to here collectively as "holidays") that occur throughout the year. It is our intent to honor this diversity of beliefs in our community as well as the diversity of beliefs around the globe. Therefore, we approach holidays primarily from an educational perspective, using holidays to teach about topics such as history and culture while not taking time away from education to celebrate holidays.

Guidelines for Non-Religious Holidays

We recognize non-religious holidays such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, New Year, Presidents' Day, Thanksgiving, and Veterans Day. Teachers should provide information regarding these holidays and provide appropriate educational activities.

DEFINITIONS AND/OR INTERPRETATIONS USED IN THIS HANDBOOK

For purposes of clarity, many terms and situations have been defined or explained in an effort to explicitly determine the exact meaning or context. The PA administration will determine and apply specific definitions and interpretations where necessary to provide maximum security, safety and educational opportunities for PA students.

No other definition or interpretation, nor any other source may be used or applied to terms or situations described within this handbook.

PA reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this handbook as needed throughout the school year. Changes or modifications made during the school year will be announced in the monthly newsletter. The latest version will always be available on our website at www.paedu.org.

APPENDIX: DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

Examples of Major Conduct Infractions

Disrespectful behavior

- Disrespect to teachers, staff or other students using inappropriate language and behavior. Examples of disrespectful behavior are; walking away, talking back, responding in a rude and/or impertinent manner, and challenging authority. Insubordination: Failure to comply with direction of a staff member, refusal to work in class, refusal of detention and refusal to report to suspension. Severely Disruptive Behavior and/or Extreme Conduct Violations

There are some behaviors which are extremely disruptive to the learning environment and must be immediately reported to the Principal. Such offenses are considered serious and therefore, the consequences for such actions will result in immediate short-term out-of-school suspension or long-term out-of-school suspension pending a Governing Board hearing for expulsion.

These behaviors are outlined below, but are not limited to:

- Bringing inappropriate materials;
- Pornographic, any sexually oriented, criminal, hate related materials, inappropriate reading materials, laser pointers, lighters, etc. Items will be confiscated and will not be returned to the student.
- Public displays of affection; Inappropriate physical and sexual behavior. Behaviors of affection which are not appropriate for public places include such as kissing, hugging, etc.
- Forgery; Any attempt by a student to sign teachers, administrators, parents or guardians, and/or student's name to any document will be considered forgery.
- Gambling and playing cards; Gambling includes but is not limited to card playing, dice shooting, and sports pools and involves the transfer of money or personal belongings or assistance from one person to another.

APPENDIX: DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

- Gang Symbols; Disruption and/or intimidation caused by the wearing of any type of clothing/jewelry, or by the writing of any signs identified as or associated with gangs.
- Fights and Arranged fights, hitting, or physical touching; School is not a place to arrange fights, whether those fights take place on or off school grounds. Fighting is any instance of physical contact in anger, regardless of whether fists or weapons are used, possible prosecution by legal authorities.
- Stealing and/or Vandalize and/or Possession of Stolen Property: This means to cause or attempt to cause damage to private property, steal or attempt to steal private property either on school grounds or during a school activity, function, or event on school grounds. Students and their parents or guardians will be held responsible for any theft/vandalism that their student commits on school property.
 - Please Note: The school may file a police report in cases of theft and vandalism; either offense can carry heavy legal penalties.
- Smoking or Use of Tobacco Products and/or Bring Such Products to School; Possession and use of tobacco products which includes cigarettes, cigars, herbs, lighters and smokeless tobacco.
- Drugs and/or Alcohol and Sale or Intention to Sell Drugs and/or Alcohol; Use of drugs or alcohol means to knowingly possess, consume, use, handle, give, store, conceal, offer to sell, sell, transmit, acquire, buy, represent, make, apply, or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, tranquilizer, non-prescription or prescription drug (except when under the direction of a physician/parent and within school procedure), alcoholic beverage, intoxicant, solvent, gas, or any mood-altering chemical, drug of abuse or any counterfeit-controlled substance of any kind including butane lighters. This prohibition also applies to any type of drug related paraphernalia.
- The sale, distribution, possession, or use of drugs, alcohol, fake drugs, steroids, inhalants, and look alike drugs is prohibited anywhere on school grounds, at any school activity, and on any school transportation.

APPENDIX: DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

- If a student(s) has seen or heard that another person has drugs on school grounds and does not notify and tell the school personnel promptly all of the information they have, student(s) may have consequences
- Display Threatening Behavior/Bullying; Threatening behavior can include written threats, verbal threats, such as bullying or name calling, both face to face and over electronic media (phone (texting) and/or computers) and non-verbal threats, including - stares, gestures, and so on, that cause or attempt to cause any student, teacher, administrator, or staff member to feel frightened or intimidated. This also includes cyber-bullying. Any inappropriate materials in regard to any students or staff over the Internet such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. are strictly prohibited regardless of whether it was private or public information.
- Harassing another Student and/or a Teacher, Administrator, or Staff Member; Harassment means making unwelcome advances, or any form of improper physical contact, or sexual remark, and any speech or action that creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive learning environment. Harassment is a violation of Federal law.
- Hazing Students; Hazing means to plan, encourage or engage in any hazing activity. Hazing is defined as doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk or causes mental or physical harm to any person. Permission, consent or assumption of the risk by an individual subjected to hazing does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy.
- Arson; Having possession of lighters or matches, starting any fire or combustion on school property.
- Willful or dangerous acts (examples: firecrackers, stink or smoke bombs, and throwing objects such as bottles or rocks) with intent to do harm.
- Extortion
- Trespassing
- Violation of state or federal laws or Governing Board policy
- Technology tampering
- Creating or organizing a conspiracy of any kind with regard to the school and/or its employees.

APPENDIX: DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

- False Fire Alarm/Bomb Threat
- Possession/Use of Weapon; A weapon includes, but is not limited to, conventional objects like guns, pellet guns, knives, smoke bombs, fireworks, or club type implements as well as mace, tear gas, or other chemicals. It may also include any toy that is presented as a real weapon. It also includes objects converted from their original use to an object used to threaten or injure another. The Administration reserves the right to all final decisions regarding the definition of what is a weapon. School personnel may search lockers, book bags, coats, and/or any other containers if they suspect the presence of a weapon.

Suspension

In-School Suspension is a formal disciplinary action that can only be assigned by a PA administrator and requires written correspondence to parents. In-school days of suspension may increase on successive occasions where it becomes necessary for the same student to be placed in OSS.

All students under in-school suspension are prohibited from participating in after school activities and are therefore required to leave the school campus immediately upon dismissal. ISS is documented on the student's permanent discipline record.

If a student does not attend scheduled ISS without any confirmed excuse, then the student will have 1-day OSS and attend rescheduled ISS. If it occurs again, it may result in expulsion from the school. If a student does not turn in the Parent Notification form on the due date without any confirmed excuse, he/she will have 1-day OSS. Failure to comply with the rules will be reported to Administration for further action. This further action may result in 3 days of OSS.

APPENDIX: DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

Out-of-School Suspension is a formal disciplinary action that can only be assigned by the PA administrator and requires written correspondence to parents.

Out-of-school suspension may increase on successive occasions where it becomes necessary for the same student to be expelled from school. OSS is documented on the student's permanent discipline record.

A meeting between a parent and an administrator is required prior to the return to PA of any student serving an out-of-school suspension.

Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be able to participate on any overnight field trips for the rest of the school year and any fees or deposits paid earlier are non-refundable.

A student who is suspended from the school is not allowed on school property and is prohibited from participating in after school activities. A student who is suspended is responsible for all make-up work missed.

If the incident is severe, then the Principal or other administrators may keep the student in the office, until parents are notified and pick up the student. Some suspensions may be extended, if further evidence is revealed. In such a case, parents or guardians will be notified either by phone or by mail. Failure to follow School Suspension Rules may result in extra disciplinary action.

Expulsion

Expulsion is a formal disciplinary action that can only be approved by the PA Governing Board after receiving a recommendation by the PA administrative team due to the student's involvement in a serious discipline offense or the student's involvement in repetitive discipline offenses. A written correspondence to the student's parents containing the date and time of the Governing Board hearing will be mailed to the parents within ten days of the suspension.

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2023-2024 Student Parent Handbook Acknowledgment of Receipt

All families **are required** to complete this form stating their acceptance and promise to abide by the policies in this Handbook.

Please click here to electronically sign:

1. Acknowledgement (acknowledgements must be filled out separately for each student enrolled in the school)
2. Permission for use of student images, videos, and other media for the 2023-2024 school year