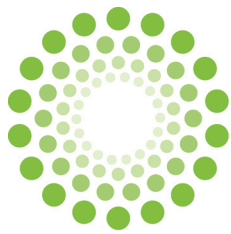


Florida Autism Center of Excellence

Parent/Caregiver Handbook

2011-2012



FACE

FLORIDA AUTISM CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to the Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence (FACE). We look forward to working with you to provide your student with a rewarding learning experience. This handbook is designed to provide you with specific information regarding the policies, procedures and programs at the FACE. Your student's success begins with your support of the school implementing educational and behavioral programs.

Please review this handbook with your student.

Following school policies is one of the most important responsibilities of a student. These policies allow every student at FACE to have a safe and enriching learning environment. Our policies inform the student about the rules of the school and the expected behavior of students while on the school campus or in the community. If unacceptable behavior does occur, these policies explain the actions that may be taken by the teacher, the Director, or other school staff.

You have a right, as the parent/caregiver of a student at FACE, to clear communication with your student's teacher or administrative staff on a weekly basis. This contact may be through phone calls, e-mail messages, notes, and/or conferences.

You have a responsibility to collaborate in making and implementing instructional and behavioral decisions.

Together, you and the FACE staff can make this a successful school experience for your student.

Sincerely,

Tom Porter
Director

Dear Student,

Welcome to FACE.

The purpose of this handbook is to guide you successfully through your placement at FACE. It contains many different rights and responsibilities that will enable you to have a safe, meaningful experience and allow you to attain the best possible level of academic achievement.

You have specific rights as a student;

You have the right to:

- A challenging curriculum and a written code of classroom rules
- Protection from any physical or verbal abuse
- A school climate free of violence
- Due process under the law
- Consequences to be given in a fair and humane manner

You have specific responsibilities as a student;

You have a responsibility to:

- Arrive at school on time
- Dress appropriately and practice good personal hygiene and safety toward yourself and others
- Respect the rights of fellow students and school personnel at all school related activities
- Respect school and community property
- Follow all school rules and city, state, and federal laws

Sincerely,

Tom Porter
Director

Introduction

Access to a free public education is both a right and a privilege. A positive learning environment can only be sustained through adherence to basic rules and regulations, which provide the necessary measures to ensure an orderly and creative learning environment and, at the same time, respect individual rights and differences.

The Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence asks students, parents/caregivers, and staff to adhere to the following FACE commitment and join in the effort to guarantee that a rewarding educational experience will be provided to every student.

Announcement of Nondiscrimination

The Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or religion in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This nondiscrimination policy complies with the requirements of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other Federal and State laws. Coverage applies to both (a) admission and access to, and (b) treatment and employment in, FACE programs and activities, including vocational education. The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in the vocational education or any other FACE program.

Students, parents/caregivers, or any other individuals having questions or concerns regarding FACE's non-discrimination policy or the filing of discrimination complaints should contact your school's Director. Discrimination complaints should be filed in a written format, i.e., a letter addressed to the Director.

General Information

Hours of Operation

The Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence staff is present and available to you from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM Monday through Friday (except holidays and vacations). Students are present from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Monday through Friday. For your convenience, we also have voice mail available at the school before and after school hours. Please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Telephone Numbers

Phone Number 813-621-FACE-(3223)

A copy of the FACE annual calendar is included with this handbook. Dates of all holidays and school days are listed. In addition, staff development days are marked.

FACE Mission Statement

The Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence believes that all children can learn. We utilize research-based practices to educate children with autism so that each student has the opportunity to achieve his or her highest potential, and we value the partnership with families and members of the autism community.

FACE Philosophy

The Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence's educational philosophy is based on the belief that all individuals can learn and lead productive lives in the community when provided with the proper learning environment. However, even the clearest vision is useless without effective teaching strategies. FACE has developed an educational and behavioral improvement model well known for its effectiveness and accountability. This model emphasizes assessment of students' motivational variables; positive and proactive teaching strategies, student-teacher interaction, clear measurable teaching objectives, data-guided teaching, empirically demonstrated teaching methodologies, and strategies for successful collaboration between all participants in a student's educational environment (peers, teachers, parents/caregivers, administrators, and support staff).

Positive Behavior Intervention Plans

It is the policy of FACE to assure that students with serious and pervasive behavior problems are provided teaching strategies which: 1) result in lasting positive change; 2) provide greater access to community, social, and public events; 3) do not cause pain or trauma; and 4) respect the dignity and privacy of the individual.

Before a plan can be implemented, parent/caregiver consent must be obtained for behavioral assessment. Once the assessment determines the reason for behavior, a positive behavior intervention plan (BIP) is written. The goal of behavioral intervention is to replace maladaptive behavior with alternative acceptable behavior and instill in the student a greater level of independence and self-control. This plan describes what and how positive behaviors will be taught to replace inappropriate behaviors. The IEP team (parent/caregiver, case manager, school district, education co-coordinator, teacher, and others) then comes together and if the plan is agreed upon, this becomes part of the IEP.

Crisis Prevention

The philosophy of the Safety-Care program is to provide the best Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security for all individuals, in crisis moments. Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training is a competency-based crisis prevention training program for professional staff who work with individuals who have the potential for aggressive behavior. It was developed and is provided by QBS, Inc. The Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence implements positive behavioral supports, functional behavior assessment and function based interventions, re-direction, time and space, and active student engagement. We also focus on skill building such as self-monitoring and management. If a student has become a danger to themselves or others a safe, non-harmful, supine restraint position to safely control an individual until they can regain control of his/her own behavior may be implemented only as a last resort.

What is an IEP?

IEP stands for Individualized Education Program. IEP's are developed each year and more frequently to accommodate a change in the student's or parent/caregiver's needs. The IEP lists student educational goals, teaching strategies, and current levels of performance in the following domains: academics, independent living, community, vocational, recreation/leisure, speech and communication, behavior, social, and transition. We solicit parent/caregiver input and participation in the development of the IEP. Please call us for more information, and talk to your student's teacher frequently about his/her progress.

What is a Transition IEP?

The Transition IEP is a plan developed in conjunction with the student's IEP to facilitate the student's move from school to a quality adult life. Successful transition includes plans for meaningful employment, continuing education, living arrangements and participation in the community through social activities and recreational opportunities. The initial TIEP is written when the student is 15 years old.

Progress Reports / Report Cards

Progress reports are completed four times per year as based on your student's school district requirements. The student's teacher writes the reports. Progress on each individual IEP goal is assessed and reported. Again, please feel free to call your student's teacher if you have any questions about the progress reports. In addition to the more formal progress report, we also utilize individual data sheets to assess progress on goals on a more frequent basis, so please call for updates.

Safe School Policy

Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence is committed to the maintenance of a learning environment where students may attend a school free from acts of violence, aggression, terrorism, intimidation or harassment.

Actions such as the use or possession of a weapon, criminal behavior, or gang activities in the school, on the school grounds, at school sanctioned activities, or when students are being transported in vehicles dispatched by the school or districts will not be tolerated.

Parent/Caregiver Rights and Procedural Safeguards for Special Education

The fundamental principle of our behavioral interventions is non-aversive or positive interventions, designed to develop and strengthen desirable behaviors. These should be used to the maximum extent possible and are preferable to the use of aversive and more restrictive procedures.

All of the procedural protections available to students with disabilities and their parents/caregivers under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including notice and consent, opportunity for participation in meetings, and the right to appeal, shall be observed when implementing/developing behavioral interventions.

Classroom and School Expectations

To maximize each student's academic and behavioral success, students are expected to abide by school rules. These rules are developed and encouraged in order to maintain student safety by being safe, responsible and respectful when in all school environments.

Students are expected to:

- **Walk** at all times with a staff member. Students who have demonstrated appropriate hallway behavior and have obtained parental permission may earn access to independence outside of the classroom within line of sight. Students who have access to walk in the hallways must carry a visible pass that must be presented to any staff member who requests to see it.
- **Use appropriate language.** Students are expected to treat staff and students with respect. Repetitive and excessive incidents of verbal harassment, threats, provoking and/or gestures to harm staff and other students will not be tolerated. Consequences for such behavior may require:
 - change in supervision level
 - change in the instructional area away from peers until appropriate behavior is demonstrated.
 - a conference with the parent/caregiver and student
 - change and/or development of a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan

Students may always ask a staff member for help if they are upset or frustrated with an academic, social, or other problematic situation.

- **Respect personal and school property.** Students are expected to keep all of their personal belongings in a backpack, desk, or lunchbox. Students should bring and only use materials needed to complete their work successfully at school. Students may not destroy the property of others or the school. Destruction of property and vandalism may result in restitution (repayment for damaged items), a conference with the parent/caregiver and student, an Emergency IEP meeting, etc. Students are encouraged to ask for a break, ask for help, or request to problem solve with staff in lieu of damaging property.
- **Remain on campus during the school day.** Students are expected to remain with their assigned classroom for the duration of the school day. Students will be able to leave the classroom when they are with a staff member or have a pass, staff permission, for restroom breaks, P.E., or with peers, etc. Students may leave campus only to implement community or vocational IEP goals or participate in community based activities. Students transitioning back to a less restrictive school setting may leave campus as deemed appropriate by the IEP team. Students who run out of their classrooms or off of campus will be considered to be endangering the safety of themselves or others, and emergency procedures may be used depending on the severity of the situation.

Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence Rules & Procedures

Visiting the School

Note: All visitors must report to the office and sign in before going into any classroom. Before going to a classroom, you will receive a visitor's pass; we ask that you prominently display the pass. FACE strongly encourages classroom observations by parents/caregivers, and county representatives. We do request that at least one day's notice be given to the Director or the classroom teacher to be observed. Due to a variety of positive behavioral intervention plans and the need for consistency, a staff member may be assigned to accompany you into the classroom. When attending a class, we ask that visitors respect the classroom rules and be as quiet and as unobtrusive as possible.

Should a student need lunch, a change of clothes, or other items brought to him/her during school hours, it should be labeled and taken to the office. School staff will deliver it to the student.

Picking Up a Student Before Dismissal Time

If your student needs to be taken out of class early, please call the campus and/or send a note stating the time and reason you will be taking your student out of class. Be sure to indicate who will be picking up the student. If it is someone other than the parent/caregiver, be sure the person picking up your student is listed on the emergency demographic sheet. For the protection of our students, anyone coming in to the building to pick up a student must first sign in at the front office of the school site and show valid identification. Please use this same procedure if a student is to be picked up rather than ride the bus/van for any reason.

Only persons who have been authorized in writing by the parent/caregiver will be permitted to pick up a student from school.

School Conferences

A parent/caregiver may request a meeting with the teacher at any time.

Joint Custody Guidelines - At the request of either parents/caregivers, conferences can be arranged with the student's teacher. Both parent/caregiver can also request a copy of the progress reports, transcripts, midterm reports and school newsletter.

We encourage parents/caregivers to contact the school at any time. Good communication is essential. Often what may appear to be a problem or misunderstanding can be cleared up by clarification of facts. Please keep in mind that teachers may not be available to talk during school hours.

Release of Student Information

Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence maintains strict confidentiality of all student information and records. In accordance with privacy acts and laws, all individuals have a right to privacy of information pertaining to them and access to all student information must be strictly limited to protect that privacy and civil rights of the student. Written Consent (informed consent by parent/caregiver, conservator, or student over 18 years of age who have no conservator) is required before student information can be shared with individuals outside of the Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence. Federal law allows for the waiver of written parent/caregiver consent in release of information only under very specific conditions (FERPA 99.31) including:

- A. To education institution/ LEA school officials/ teachers with legitimate educational interests.
- B. To officials of another school/school system where a students seeks to enroll.

- C. To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- D. To parents/caregivers of dependent students (“Dependent” meaning in this case, minors in custody of the state).
- E. To comply with judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- F. To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency.

Information concerning FACE students is not shared outside the school without written consent except as waived by law. A record of all approved transfers of information is kept in the student’s cumulative file. This transfer of information is limited to documents in the cumulative file, which have been generated by FACE and does not apply to documents in the cumulative file, which have been generated by other agencies or professionals.

Inspection of Student Records

Student cumulative (CUM) files are stored in locked file cabinets in the school office. FACE will not make these student records available, nor disclose any confidential information regarding the student, to any individual or agency other than parent/caregiver with educational rights and appropriate FACE representatives without a signed release from the parent/caregiver except as waived by the law (See FACE Release of Student Information). All personnel with access to student files must sign the Confidentiality Agreement.

Attendance

Regular student attendance is extremely important. Days missed can never be duplicated. Absences should be restricted to illness and medical/dental appointments.

1. Students may attend a public school within their attendance area. Students may attend a vocational or special education center when they qualify and are accepted for enrollment. Students may also wish to participate in one of the other choice options – Magnet, Choice, Charter, etc.
2. Students have the right to:
 - receive information concerning attendance policies at their school; these policies should clearly define excused and unexcused absences and tardies;
 - make up any work missed because of excused absences; participation in any school sponsored activities shall be considered an excused absence;
 - request a transfer to another school outside their attendance areas when severe hardships are involved, such as medical conditions or the need for certain academic or vocational courses; all appeals must be submitted to the Department of Pupil Administrative Services;
 - homebound instruction if not attending school due to extended illness (longer than thirty days).
3. Students have the responsibility to:
 - attend classes daily and on time unless circumstances beyond their control prohibit such attendance;
 - request make-up work from their teachers after the absences have been adequately explained to the school by their parents
 - attend school until the age of sixteen. Students aged 16-18 who desire to leave school prior to graduation may do so only upon completion and filing with school “*Intent to Terminate Enrollment*”.
 - All students shall abide by school board attendance policies; parents shall inform the school when there is a change of the student’s residence; have the responsibility to make an application for services with the Exceptional Student Services Office if they are eligible for homebound instruction.

4. Parents have the responsibility to:
- notify school personnel about their child's absence from school on the day of the absence.
 - notify the school of any change of address, phone numbers and emergency contact numbers.
 - make application to the Exceptional Student Education Office if a student is eligible for homebound instruction.
 - notify school personnel if the family is moving out of town or out of the school's attendance boundary.
 - be aware of school district calendar and coordinate trips, vacations and personal business to support attendance on school days

Please call your student's school between 8:00 AM and 9:00 AM if your student will be absent that day. If we do not have telephone verification for an absence, we will need a note stating the reason for the absence. The note should include the following information:

- Student's name
- Reason for absence
- Your name and signature

Absence Verification

The Education Code still requires the parent/caregiver to communicate with the school by phone or note as to the reason for a student's absence. The following are considered excused or acceptable absences for the purpose of Compulsory Attendance laws:

- A. Illness or quarantine
- B. Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments
- C. Jury duty
- D. Funeral services for one's immediate family (one day if services are in Florida and three days if services are held out of state)
- E. Exclusion from school for immunization needs for up to five days
- F. Appearance in court
- G. Observance of a holiday or ceremony for religious reasons
- H. Conference in regard to employment
- I. Conference with a lawyer
- J. Interview for a community college or university

Clearance of Absences

- Absences must be cleared within five school days of the date of the absence.
- After five school days, an un-cleared absence will be counted as unexcused.

Process for Absence Verification

- Notes, signed by a parent/caregiver should be obtained whenever possible.
- Phone calls may be accepted and logged.
- Other sources of information may be used if they are satisfactory to the person making the verification.

- It is acceptable for 18-year-old students to document their reasons for absences, either in the form of a note or phone call.

Dress Code Policy

It is the mission of FACE to provide every student with an educational program that meets his or her individual needs. FACE recognizes that, within certain limits, each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. The purpose of this dress code is to encourage students to come to school prepared to participate in the educational process. FACE authorizes the Director to enforce school regulations prohibiting inappropriate student dress or grooming practices.

The following Dress Code is required for FACE students:

- Navy or white polo shirt with shirrtails tucked in. **The only logo permitted on shirts will be our school logo.**
- Khaki, black, navy or grey slacks, shorts, skirts, **worn at the waist**, or jumpers. Baggy or tight clothing, overalls, jeans (unless there is a designated Casual Day) or pants or shorts that sag, will not be allowed. Shorts, skirts and jumpers must be of a length that is no more than 3 inches above the knee.
- Belts, if the pants, shorts or skirts have belt loops. **Belt loops may not be removed.**
- Closed toed shoes or sneakers. Shoelaces must be navy, black, white or brown and must be tied. Velcro flaps must be fastened. Platform sandals or shoes, beach sandals or slippers will not be allowed.
- **NO HOODED GARMENTS.** If weather necessitates, jackets or other types of outerwear may be worn to school but must be removed once inside the building.
- Jewelry or accessories that distract from the learning process will need to be removed and given to the teacher.
- Hats or head coverings are not allowed inside the building.

All clothing must fit appropriately. Any student wearing or carrying satanic, tobacco, alcohol, and other drug related clothing or symbols should be referred to an administrator. The administrator will ask the student to make the appropriate corrections. If the student refuses, the student's parent/caregiver shall be contacted, and the student may be sent home to change clothes or required to change clothes using clothing available on campus.

2. Student's and Parent/Caregiver's Responsibilities

- A. Be aware of what clothing is considered appropriate and inappropriate (including shoes).
- B. Abide by the school's dress policy.

Emergency Contact Information

An emergency fact sheet and demographic sheet must be completed and updated annually. The parent/caregiver or care provider must complete these forms. These forms request the phone numbers of each parent/caregiver's employer and the name and phone number of persons to contact if parent/caregiver cannot be reached. Also, the sheet requests a physician name and phone number and other vital information you think we should be aware of. Help us keep this information current by notifying us of new names or numbers throughout the year

You, as the parent/caregiver or legal guardian are responsible for providing this emergency information to the school, as well as informing us of any changes. In the event of a medical emergency, the school will contact you first. If you cannot be reached, we will begin calling those designated as alternatives on the emergency fact sheet. However, if none of these emergency numbers are successful, it will be necessary to call 911.

Incident Reports

An incident report is a written report that is completed for the following reasons: 1) an incident occurred which resulted in any physical contact with the student that was not part of the student's approved Behavior Intervention Plan, 2) an incident resulted in injury or property damage of any kind, 3) a student attempted to run away or was missing from the classroom/activity, 4) an incident which involved the public in any way, or, 5) there was an indicator of possible neglect or abuse. These reports are to document incidents as well as provide information needed to prevent behavioral crisis and other student-related issues. These reports are then sent to the district, Education Coordinator, and parent/caregiver. Follow up is provided as needed.

Emergency Procedures

The campus has an Emergency Preparedness Plan developed so that emergency procedures are established before any crisis occurs. These include plans for hurricanes, safety breaches, fire, etc. In the unlikely event that a major disaster occurs during the school day, which precludes students from going home or prevents parent/caregiver from picking up students, we are prepared to stay onsite for several days. Any medications your student may need for an extended stay at FACE should be sent in and be in compliance with the medication policy. Local emergency services and parent/caregiver will be contacted as soon as possible. Call the Administrative Office in Tampa at 813-621-3223 if you are unable to reach your student's campus.

We need your help in providing a safe school environment for your student. We also want to inform you of health services that are required by law. A safer environment can be accomplished by:

- A. Workable emergency telephone numbers
- B. Emergency Contact Information

We cannot release a student or obtain direction in case of an emergency from a person who is not listed on the emergency contact sheet. Please complete the emergency contact sheet with all important health and physician information.

School Closings, Cancellation, Delayed Opening, or Early Dismissal

When the School District of Hillsborough County is closed or being evacuated due to a weather emergency, FACE will do the same. For information regarding such, listen to your local TV/radio stations or call the school.

Student Illness Policy

In an effort to minimize the likelihood of exposure to contagious illness, the following will specify the conditions under which students should remain at their homes/residences or if at school, be sent back home or to the residence due to a contagious illness.

A. Contagious symptoms:

- Fever: any temperature above 100 degrees.
- Diarrhea: any occurrence of abnormally frequent intestinal evacuations.
- Vomiting: NOTE** in the case that vomiting is being treated in a behavior plan, it will not suffice as a reason for sending the student home unless the topography of the behavior, as determined by the Program Coordinator has changed and is in this case thought to be a medical issue.
- Runny nose: excessive nasal discharge, which has a yellow or green color.
- Coughing: severe and/or frequent coughing.
- Skin irritation/rash that is consistent with a contagious illness (e.g., ring worm)
- Exposed rash or fungus: an untreated and/or uncovered fungus
- Lice

B. Procedure:

- When a student comes to school with these symptoms, we will call the parent/caregiver and promptly send the student home.
- In the event the determination has been made that the student should be sent home, the teacher or other assigned staff member will contact the home or residence to make arrangements for student pick-up.
- The home or residence will supply the school with a written note explaining the reason for the student's absence from school.
- In addition the school may request written medical verification that the student is no longer contagious.
- In addition to written verification, the home or residence will supply the school with a written letter explaining the reason for the student's absence from school.

Administering Medication

In those instances when it is necessary for a student to receive medication at school, the following procedure must be followed:

- A. Provide the school with a written authorization form from the physician (Consent form available from your school)
- B. Parent/caregiver must provide written permission for school staff to dispense medication (Consent form available from your school)

- C. The most current prescription must be brought to school in the original prescription bottle. Medications should be given to the classroom teacher so that they may be locked in the designated area and managed by the Office Manager.
- D. The prescription bottle must be clearly marked with:
 - Doctor's name
 - Student's name
 - Name of medication
 - Dosage
 - How and when to give
 - Date of the most current prescription
- E. Only the number of pills to be given at school should be sent in the original prescription bottle. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to contact the doctor who prescribed the medication.
- F. Signed consents for FACE staff to provide medication to your son/daughter are valid for 1-year from the date they are signed.

Over the counter drugs to be given at school must also meet the above requirements. These will only be administered when the proper forms are completed and an unopened, sealed container marked with the student's name is provided by the parent or caregiver and delivered to the school office. A consent form for giving over the counter drugs is available from your student's school.

Sexual Harassment

FACE has zero tolerance for any form of sexual harassment in the schools. Action will be taken against any employee or student who engages in unlawful sexual harassment.

Teachers shall discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure students that they need not endure any form of sexual harassment.

1. Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

2. Forms of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may occur as a pattern of degrading sexual speech or action ranging from verbal or physical annoyances or distractions to deliberate intimidation and frank threats or sexual demands. Forms of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Verbal Harassment- Spreading of sexual rumors, derogatory comments, jokes, slurs, and graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body/dress or sexually degrading words used to describe an individual.
- B. Physical Harassment-Unnecessary or offensive touching or impeding or blocking movement. Visual Harassment-Derogatory or offensive posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, drawings, or gestures, suggestive or obscene letters, objects, notices or invitations.
- C. Reprisals-making threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.

3. Consequences for Engaging In Sexual Harassment

The Director, with assistance from clinical personnel, administrative personnel, and the teacher shall determine the appropriate course of action for a student who engages in sexual harassment toward others.

4. Complaint Procedures

Any student who feels harassed should immediately contact the Director. If a situation involving sexual harassment occurs, a complaint can be filed. The Director shall determine which procedure is appropriate.

FACE prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complaint or any participant in the complaint process. Each complaint of sexual harassment shall be promptly investigated in a way that respects the privacy of all parties concerned.

5. Reporting Procedure

Students who feel they have been sexually harassed by an adult or a student should report the harassment to an adult who will help file a written complaint with the Director.

Suspected Student Abuse Reporting

Persons required to report student abuse or neglect include:

Any school employee of FACE, who observes, has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a student has been subjected to abuse or neglect, as defined in the Student Protection Act, is required by law to report that suspected instance of student abuse to the Director.

ONLY ADULT OR STUDENT PROTECTIVE SERVICES CAN CONDUCT THE INVESTIGATION.

Definition of Student Abuse or Neglect

Student abuse is defined as: a.) A physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means; b.) Student sexual abuse including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation; c.) Willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, including: inflicting or permitting unjustified physical pain or mental suffering, or the endangerment of the student's person or health; d.) Unlawful corporal punishment or injury, willfully inflicted, resulting in a traumatic condition; e.) Neglect of a student, whether "severe" or "general", must also be reported if the perpetrator is a person responsible for the student's welfare.

School Accountability Report

As FACE comes into compliance with the No Student Left Behind Act in 2006-2007 parent/caregiver/s may then request a school accountability report annually from the school site.

Anti-Discrimination

FACE prohibits discriminatory behavior directed toward staff and/or students.

Classroom Expectations

Students' Responsibilities

- Attend class regularly
- Respect the rights of other students to learn by not being disruptive.
- Bring to class all of the materials required and be prepared to participate in the daily lessons.
- Seek assistance from the teacher when having difficulty understanding the class work.

Parent/Caregiver Expectations

- Be aware of your student's progress in class; sign and return daily home notes.
- Attend parent teacher conferences (at least) during the first quarter and the last quarter of the year.
- Contact the school for additional conferences with the teacher(s) regarding any questions about the curricula or the student's progress.
- Attend the Back-to-School event in the fall to learn about the course outline, class procedures, expectations, and to view student work that will be displayed.
- Be aware that Progress Reports are issued quarterly.
- Participate in school events and volunteer to help the school as you are able.

Homework

Homework is an extension of learning that takes place in school. If a teacher assigns homework it may be part of an assignment that receives a grade, for practice or enrichment, or it may be just a sampling for parents/caregivers understanding of a student's skills.

Classroom teachers will notify parent/caregiver of their individual homework expectations.

Review of Curricula

A prospectus of curricula, including titles and descriptions used in classrooms, is available at the school campus upon request from the Director.

Testing for Proficiency

Students in grades 2-11 will participate in Standardized Achievement testing as determined by the IEP team. If parent/caregiver does not want to have their student participate in the testing, they may indicate in writing to the Director. Students on track for a standard diploma will participate in the FCAT, with accommodations made as indicated by their IEPs.

HIV/AIDS and Growth Development Instructions

Depending upon the educational activities occurring in a classroom and the age of students, education in the areas of HIV/AIDS and sex education may be appropriate for some students. The topic of sexual education may occur in a student's IEP meeting or during the course of the year when a teacher communicates with parent/caregiver about the potential for this area of coursework to be included in the lesson plans for the classroom.

Instruction in HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted disease, human sexuality, health, growth and development, or family life education may be presented by trained classroom teachers, or guest speakers.

Parents/caregivers will be notified of the date(s) of instruction at least 2 weeks before instruction. Parents/caregivers may request an outline of the topics to be covered in a lesson plan and/or preview all materials, which will be used for this instruction.

Any parent/caregiver who wishes that a student does not receive such instruction should notify the school in writing to ensure the student is not included in this instruction. An alternative education activity will be made available to a student whose parent/caregiver has made such a request. The student shall not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanction if the parent/caregiver declines to permit the student to receive said instruction.

Graduation Requirements

The school year is divided into 4 quarterly periods for progress reports. The specific schedule for progress reports is discussed in each student's IEP. Progress reports are mailed home.

Students pursuing a Special Diploma will attain predetermined benchmarks at three levels of functioning.

- Independent Level: Students are able to perform the behaviors for each benchmark on their own.
- Supported Level: Students require ongoing use of assistive aids, prompting, or supervision in order to perform the behaviors for each benchmark.
- Participatory Level: Students require extensive assistance to be able to participate in activities of daily living as indicated in the benchmarks.

A student with disabilities is expected to master each standard at a level of functioning that is appropriate for the individual student as determined by the transition IEP team.

Transfers/Transitions

1. Transition Back to the District of Residence

Transitioning back to a public school may be discussed at each IEP meeting. As identified challenges are remediated, training plans will be discussed.

2. Transfer to Another School District

If a student moves to another district, the parent/caregiver:

- A. Must enroll the student at the new district.
- B. An IEP that places a student at FACE is no longer valid if the student changes districts.
- C. Enrollment at a new district does not guarantee that the student will continue to attend FACE or their previous school placement.
- D. The parent/caregiver may contact FACE and speak with the Director regarding the move and any contact information he/she may have regarding the new district.

Community Outings and Field Trips

FACE is a community-based program. Most students have at least one IEP goal in the community domain. Each student will receive a general permission slip from his/her teacher to address IEP goals (by signing the IEP you also give permission for us to take your student to the specific destinations listed on the plan). For other trips, you will receive individual permission slips each time a teacher schedules such an event.

Student Use of Electronic Devices or Technological Resources

1. Student Use of Technology Policy

The Director shall oversee the maintenance of each school's technological resources and may establish guidelines and limits regarding their use. He/she shall ensure that all students using these resources receive training in their proper use as well as copies of related FACE policies and regulations. Students should be aware that access to, and use of school technology, is a privilege, not a right.

2. Computers, On-line Services, Networks, and the Internet

Students are authorized to use school computers and on-line services in accordance with user obligations and responsibilities as specified below. Teachers may develop specific guidelines for supervision of students while using the Internet (e.g., staff sitting next to the student).

- A. The system shall be used only for purposes directly related to education to include positive reinforcement procedures. FACE uses active Internet filtering and monitoring technology and reserves the right to monitor and view any on-line communications, files, or documents to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Students and users understand that work or email accessed or stored on school computer systems and servers is not private. **Personal use of the school's computer system is strictly prohibited.**

- B. Users shall not use the system to encourage the use or sale of drugs, alcohol or tobacco, nor shall they promote unethical practices or any activity prohibited by law or FACE policy.
- C. Users shall not create or transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive or sexually explicit, or that could be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on race, national origin, gender, appearance, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or political beliefs.
- D. Copyrighted material may not be placed on the system without the author's permission. Unless specified otherwise, users may download copyrighted material for their own educational or instructional use. However, such material shall not be distributed or duplicated without the author's written permission.
- E. Users shall not read other users' mail or files without permission; they shall not attempt to interfere with other users' ability to send or receive electronic mail, nor shall they attempt to read, delete, copy, modify or forge other users' mail or files.
- F. Password sharing and account trespassing are strictly forbidden and may result in the student losing access to computer services. The sharing of documents and data (unless authorized by the teacher), selling, or purchasing of term papers, book reports and other forms of student work is strictly prohibited.
- G. Students and users will not participate in any acts related to credit card fraud, online transactions, electronic forgery, and other forms of illegal and unacceptable behavior. FACE will not be responsible for unauthorized costs incurred by students or users, nor will the school or district vouch for the accuracy of information obtained through the Internet, nor will FACE be responsible for students' or users' negligence, acceptable use policy violations, or mistakes.
- H. Users are expected to keep all network and email messages brief and use appropriate language and decorum.
- I. Students will not have school issued email accounts.

Note: Any violation that is determined to be illegal may result in criminal prosecution. Parent/caregiver may be held financially responsible for costs incurred as a result of their student's act of intentional vandalism or damage to software, computers, or related hardware. Teachers may develop specific guidelines for staff supervision of students while using the Internet (e.g., sitting next to student).

Items from Home

Students may **only** bring school related items from home. This is to ensure the academic success of all students. These items include any clothing needed for school activities (i.e. sneakers for P.E., a jacket, sweatshirt, etc.), toothbrush and toothpaste (if needed), lunch, extra soft drinks or water, backpack, notebook, and writing instruments. Electronic devices are allowed.

Pets at School

Pets in the classrooms can create problems at school. It is impossible to predict what a normally docile animal will do when in a room with many students. Your cooperation in keeping pets at home will help maintain a safe school environment. If your student wants to bring a small animal to school to show his/her class, he/she must have permission from the Director. Pets are to be taken home after sharing; they may not remain in school.

Student Discipline

FACE is committed to the goal of a positive, effective and orderly process of instruction. FACE school administrators, teachers, parent/caregiver, support personnel and students assume their share of the responsibility for the attainment of this goal.

Consequence-based practices at FACE are founded on positive behavior. Parents/caregivers can communicate with the student's teacher to learn more about how to maintain consistent consequences at home.

Implementation for Searches and Seizures

The following guidelines should be observed by all authorized FACE personnel conducting or involved in searches or seizures in connection with any situation in which FACE is authorized to conduct searches and seizures.

1. Basis for Personal Searches

- ▶ Fourth Amendment: Prohibition against *unreasonable* search and seizures without **probable cause**.
- ▶ Public School/Nonpublic School Administrators work under a lesser standard called **reasonable suspicion**.
 - A. No personal search should be conducted except upon a reasonable, individualized suspicion by the school Director or staff member that the student is in possession of contraband in violation of state or federal law or of FACE policy. Such reasonable, individualized suspicion shall be reported to the Director for further action.
 - A reasonable, individualized suspicion is one based upon objective, observable facts. Examples: (1) Observation that a student had a small plastic bag in his hand, and when the student saw the staff member approaching he hurriedly stuffed the bag down the front of his pants; (2) Observation that student's gait was impaired, speech slurred, etc.
 - When possible, the observations upon which a Director or staff member bases a reasonable, individualized suspicion should be confirmed by another administrator or staff member.
 - Before initiating a personal search, the Director or staff member should explain the basis of his or her suspicions to the suspected person and give the person an opportunity to explain the observed behavior upon which the administrator or staff member bases his or her suspicion. A referral for a search is appropriate if

the student fails to provide a satisfactory explanation.

If the student refuses to comply with the search when there is reasonable cause, the parent/caregiver will be contacted. In addition the local police may be contacted to search the student. **FACE does not conduct the search unless the student agrees.**

- B. In no instance should any school personnel resort to any type of physical constraint, force, or threat, and no one should be physically compelled to submit to a search.** If at any point in the search, the student refuses to cooperate with the search, the searcher should explain that such refusal could be the basis for suspension and expulsion. If the student continues to refuse to cooperate, he or she should be referred to the School Director. Any student so referred may be subject to immediate, short-term suspension and to further action pursuant to the terms of FACE policies and the regulations of the Florida Department of Education.

Confidentiality

1. Nondisclosure

No information of any type that leads to or results from a search or seizure should be communicated, revealed, or disclosed by FACE personnel to any person, except as follows:

- A. Such information should be communicated to other school personnel only upon a "need-to-know" basis. A "need-to-know" basis means that the person to whom such information is communicated is authorized to take action on behalf of the school upon learning such information and needs the information to discharge his or her responsibilities.
- B. Such information may be communicated to the parent/caregiver of a student to whom the information relates; such information may be disclosed to law enforcement agencies only upon the authorization of the Director.

Gang Activity

FACE recognizes that the harm done by the presence and activities of gangs in the schools exceeds the immediate consequences of such activities such as violence and destruction of property. Gang activities also create an atmosphere of intimidation in the entire school community. Both the immediate consequences of gang activity and the secondary effects are disruptive and obstructive to the process of education and school activities.

It is therefore FACE policy that gangs and gang activities are prohibited at FACE, according to the following.

1. Definition

For purposes of this policy a "gang" is any group of two or more persons whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts or acts in violation of disciplinary rules of FACE.

2. Prohibitions

No student on or around school property or at any school activity shall:

- A. Wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign or other items that evidence or reflect membership in, or affiliation with any gang;
- B. Engage in any act, either verbal or nonverbal, including gestures or handshakes, showing membership or affiliation in any gang;
- C. Engage in any act in furtherance of the interests or any gang or gang activity, including, but not limited to
 - wearing certain known gang-colored clothing (all reds or all blues), do-rags, chains on pants pockets;
 - soliciting membership in, or affiliation with, any gang;
 - soliciting any person to pay for "protection," or threatening any person, explicitly or implicitly, with violence or with any other illegal or prohibited act;
 - painting, writing, or otherwise inscribing gang-related graffiti, messages, symbols, or signs, on FACE property;
 - soliciting any person to engage in physical violence against any other person.
 - engaging in violence, extortion, or any other illegal act or other violation of FACE policy;
 - exposure of any gang-related tattoos, gang-related skin branding, or other gang or member affiliated drawings or carvings on a student's skin.

3. Violations of Policy

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to the full range of FACE suspension/termination, in addition to applicable criminal and civil penalties.

4. Procedures for violation of this policy are as follows:

- A. Students will meet with the Director when a staff member or contact person has reasonable, individualized suspicion that a student is in violation of this policy.
- B. Upon determined policy violation, the Director will make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent/caregiver as soon thereafter as possible. Students will be suspended until the parent/caregiver attends a conference with the Director to choose consequences for policy violation.

5. Consequences for violation of this policy may include:

- A. The student will participate in educational programming about the dangers of gang activity,
- B. The student will sign a "no involvement in gang related activity" contract to be witnessed by the parent/caregiver,
- C. The student will be suspended for up to three (3) days. No grades will be earned during this time.
- D. The Director will call an emergency IEP meeting to address the student's gang involvement. Recommendations will be made by the IEP team to address the issue. Within seven (7) working days of the student's return to school a conference will be held with the parent/caregiver, Director, the student and the IEP member(s) to discuss

recommendations and develop an intervention plan. The parent/caregiver and the student will sign the intervention plan.

Controlled Substances

FACE prohibits students from using, possessing, distributing, or being under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, and from possessing, using or distributing drug paraphernalia, while on school property or at school-sponsored activities. Student use or possession of tobacco is also prohibited.

FACE reserves the right to search a student's person, personal effects, and vehicle when there is reasonable cause as per FACE's search and seizure policy.

1. Definitions

- **ALCOHOL:** Any liquor, wine, beer, or other beverage containing alcohol.
- **DISTRIBUTION:** Selling, passing on, or giving away any controlled substance.
- **DRUGS:** Any drug, including illegal drugs, legal prescription, over-the-counter drugs, marijuana or inhalants that are used, possessed or distributed for unauthorized purposes, including counterfeit (look-alike) substances.
- **DRUG PARAPHERNALIA:** Equipment or apparatus designed for the purpose of measuring, packaging, distributing, or facilitating the use of drugs.
- **SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE:** The use of alcohol and other drugs are in violation of state or federal laws, or in violation of FACE policy.
- **TOBACCO:** Any product containing tobacco, which can be smoked or used in, non-smoking form (e.g., snuff, chewing tobacco).

- **CLOTHING:** Hats, jewelry, slogans or clothing displaying or representing drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products

All prescribed medication to be taken at school shall be kept in a secure centralized location

2. Possession/Use/Under the Influence of Drugs, Drug Paraphernalia or Alcohol

A. First Offense

- The staff member will inform the Director immediately.
- The Director will make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent/caregiver as soon as is possible.
- The Director will arrange a conference with the parent/caregiver and the student.
- The student will sign a "no-use" contract to be witnessed by the parent/caregiver.
- The object will be held for evidence.
- The student will participate in educational programming about the dangers of using, abusing or selling drugs/ alcohol.

B. Second Offense

- The staff member will inform the Director immediately.
- The Director will make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent/caregiver as soon thereafter as possible.
- The Director may notify the police after consultation with the Director.
- The Director will arrange a conference with the parent/caregiver and the student.
- The student will sign a "no-use" contract to be witnessed by the

parent/caregiver.

C. Third Offense

- The staff member will notify the Director immediately.
- The Director will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/caregiver as soon thereafter as possible.
- The Director, after consultation with the Director, may notify the police, and the student may be released into the custody of the police.
- The student will be suspended until an emergency IEP meeting to request alternative educational placement is requested.

3. Distribution of Drugs, Drug Paraphernalia or Alcohol

A. First Offense

- The staff will inform the Director immediately.
- The Director will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/caregiver as soon thereafter as possible.
- The Director, after consultation with the Director, may notify police.
- The student will be suspended for a minimum of three (3) days. No grades will be earned during this time.
- The Director will contact the parent/caregiver and arrange for a conference. The Director will call an emergency IEP meeting to address drug issues.
- Recommendations will be made by the IEP team to address the issue.

Within

seven (7) working days of the student's return to school a conference will be held with the parent/caregiver, Director, the student and the IEP member(s) to discuss recommendations and develop an intervention plan. The parent/caregiver and the student will sign the intervention plan and a "no - use" contract. If the parent/caregiver and/or the student refuse to follow the recommendation of the IEP team, the IEP team will report such non-compliance to the Director in writing. The Director may recommend short-term suspension and/or alternative placement of the student to the IEP team. Reinstatement to the school would necessitate compliance with IEP team recommendations.

- FACE may take other actions as deemed appropriate.

B. Second Offense

- The staff member will inform the Director immediately.
- The Director will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/caregiver as soon thereafter as possible.
- The Director, after consultation with the Director, may release the student into the custody of local authorities.
- The student will be suspended while procedures for expulsion are activated.
- Expulsion will be recommended to the IEP team as per FACE student termination/exit policy.

Weapons in School

FACE prohibits students from bringing weapons onto school property, or carrying or keeping any weapons on school property while attending or participating in any school activity that includes transportation to and from such activity.

1. Definition

- Any firearm, knife, explosive, or other object, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose, that has a potentially violent use,
OR
- Any "look alike" object that resembles an object that has a potentially violent use
AND
- If, under the surrounding circumstances, the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use, as a weapon.

2. Violations

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to the full range of FACE suspension/termination, in addition to applicable criminal and civil penalties.

3. Procedures for violation of this policy are as follows:

- A. Students will meet with the Director when a staff member or contact person has reasonable, individualized suspicion that a student is in violation of this policy.
- B. Upon determined policy violation, the Director will make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent/caregiver as soon thereafter as possible. Students will be suspended until the parent/caregiver attend a conference with the Director to choose consequences for policy violation.

4. Consequences for violation of this policy will may include:

- A. The student will participate in educational programming about the dangers of gang activity,
- B. The student will sign a "no involvement in gang related activity" contract to be witnessed by the parent/caregiver,
- C. The student will be suspended for up to three (3) days. No grades will be earned during this time.
- D. The Director will call an emergency IEP meeting to address the student's gang involvement. Recommendations will be made by the IEP team to address the issue. Within seven (7) working days of the student's return to school a conference will be held with the parent/caregiver, Director, the student and the IEP member(s) to discuss recommendations and develop an intervention plan. The parent/caregiver and the student will sign the intervention plan.

Probationary System

If your student has involvement with the criminal justice system, and has a probation officer assigned, FACE will request that the parent/caregiver provide FACE with any copies of court reports, juvenile hall records (i.e. incident reports, grades, transcripts, etc.) and citations. The purpose for FACE to obtain and review these reports is to adequately design an educational and behavioral program that would meet your student's needs. It is also FACE's intent to maintain the safety of your student, as well as the safety of FACE staff and students.

If your student does have a probation officer, FACE will work collaboratively with the student, family, probation officer and any other community service providers (i.e. Mental Health) to maintain your student's educational and behavioral program at FACE.

FACE may request the probation officer and other service providers attend any IEP meetings held for your student.

If your student exhibits a behavior that is considered to be a violation his/her probation, FACE will notify the probation officer as soon as possible. In addition we will notify the authorities if necessary, and you, the parent/caregiver as soon as it is possible.

Restitution for Property Destruction

Students, who purposefully destroy, vandalize, set fire to, or break property after being reminded that their behavior is unsafe, may be responsible for repaying FACE for a portion of the costs to repair or replace the items. The Director will determine restitution on an individual basis.

Emergency and Medical Information

FACE requires all parents/caregivers to complete an Emergency/Medical Information form for each student being transported. If your student has a specific individual need (i.e. epilepsy, diabetes, incontinence/toileting needs, etc.), it is required that this information be given to your bus driver on the form available from the bus company.

Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence
Parent/Caregiver Handbook Receipt

Please Print

Student Name: _____

Parent/Caregiver Name: _____

To: Parent/Caregiver

The Florida Autism Charter School of Excellence has a Parent/Caregiver Handbook, which reflects important policies for our school and the students who attend. These policies are designed to guide our students through successful school experiences by stating our expectations in areas including, but not limited to, attendance, dress code, progress reports, receiving credits for coursework, sexual harassment policy, and access to the Internet.

We require that all parents/caregivers return this cover sheet acknowledging that this document has been received and read.

We also encourage parents/caregivers to contact the Director with comments and questions about our Parent/Caregiver Handbook.

Thank you,

Tom Porter
Director

Please sign and return this form to the school office.

I have received and read a copy (either a printed copy or on the website) of the FACE Parent/Caregiver Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures as described in the handbook and I understand that if I have any questions about the Parent/Caregiver Handbook, I will consult the School Director.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This form will be kept on file at the school office.