

Friendship Academy



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Watson
INSTITUTE

*Exceptional Children
Achieving Exceptional Results*



Watson Institute Friendship Academy

The Watson Institute has been recognized for more than 100 years as the premier provider of educational services for children with special needs. Watson provides additional supports outside of the traditional school setting to support students with severe behavioral and emotional challenges, for whom academic success is difficult, through outcome-driven programming at the Watson Institute Friendship Academy. Friendship Academy, an Approved Private School (APS) with a Partial Hospitalization Program, provides students from 5-21 years of age experiencing these challenges with a comprehensive program of therapeutic and positive behavioral support services in addition to a certified educational program. Individualized services provide the student an opportunity to learn in a supportive environment, reinforcing their ability to achieve their academic goals. Friendship Academy is a state-of-the-art school located in the Friendship area of Pittsburgh. A full range of educational services are provided through the special education curriculum which serves the needs of students from elementary, middle and high school academic levels.

Educational Programming:

As an Approved Private School, Friendship Academy provides extensive support for children with emotional and behavioral issues that may have difficulty achieving academic success in a traditional school setting. Watson provides the following key components to their program:

- Highly specialized instructional services are provided to children to assure that each child has the necessary attention through a maximum 4:1 student-to-staff-ratio to reduce frustration and foster success. Services provided are closely aligned to each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure they are achieving their goals.
- A Certified Teaching Staff is employed both in special education as well as in key content areas for English, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, family and consumer sciences and technology education.
- Research-based standards are at the core of educational instruction to ensure best practices within reading, writing and math instruction that encourages a student's personal growth and confidence in their abilities.
- Artistic enrichment classes are available to enhance the academic skills and help to provide students with a creative art or musical outlet for their talents. These components foster a desire to attend school and afford our students a sense of mastery to build self-esteem.

Partial Hospitalization Program:

Friendship Academy offers a psychiatric hospital program that provides intensive treatment during the day to children and adolescents with a focus on:

- Skills-Based Approach is emphasized in the treatment program including emotional management and problem solving. Students are also taught cognitive behavior therapy skills to improve perception of self, situations, and critical events.
- Customized programming includes autism and emotional support for students to reinforce life skills practice.
- Medication Management and specialized clinical therapies are conducted in a trauma-sensitive environment.

Positive Behavior Support:

A continuum of positive behavioral support programs are utilized on an individual and school-wide basis including:

- CHAMPS, a nationally-recognized proactive and positive approach to classroom management.
- Olweus, an international, research based, bullying prevention program.
- Data-driven, individualized, positive behavioral support plans.
- A school-wide positive behavioral intervention and support program.

Friendship Academy is perfect for my child. I couldn't be happier with the staff and support."

Parent of a Friendship Academy Student

Trauma-Informed Organizational Philosophy:

Friendship Academy embraces the organizational philosophy of the Sanctuary Model,[®] the process of providing a safe and healing environment for children who need to recover from adversity in their childhood experience. This trauma-informed model provides security and safety for students and staff.

Transition Services:

Preparation for transition into adulthood is an important component of Friendship Academy's programming to help students learn necessary skills to prepare for careers, citizenship, and lifelong learning. Components include career path identification, vocational assessment, and job skill acquisition. Watson's Community Based Instruction Program provides opportunities to learn lifelong vocational and community social skills in an employment setting at local businesses.

Outpatient Psychological Services:

As part of its comprehensive supports to students, Friendship Academy also offers outpatient psychological services. Outpatient therapy provides mental health services for children and adolescents with less intense behavioral health needs. Outpatient therapy can support students preparing to return to public school or moving toward independence. Services can include a combination of individual, family or group therapy as well as medication management. The clinical team will determine the best level of care for the child.