



Dear Students and Parents/Guardians:

Welcome!! We look forward to developing a partnership of education and wellness with you and your child! We are happy that you are a part of The Watson Institute Friendship Academy, and we want to help you understand our school's policies and procedures. To have a successful year, it takes everyone---parents/guardians, students, and staff---working together.

The guidelines, rules and regulations support but do not replace the judgment or discretion of school officials. When there is a problem in the school, please follow these steps:

- Consult the *Student/Parent Handbook*;
- Talk to your student;
- Call the social worker, teacher, or program supervisor;
- If the problem continues, call the Program Director or Educational Director. We are all here to help you.

If you have any questions, you may call your social worker, teacher, or program supervisor at 412-365-3800. You may also visit our website at [www.thewatsoninstitute.org](http://www.thewatsoninstitute.org) where you can find the school calendar, information about our program and the Watson Institute, and a schedule of upcoming events.

In the meantime, please take a few moments to review this book with your child, and sign the last page in acknowledgment of our school rules and procedures. **Your child will earn a special treat for returning the signed form (located in your Welcome Packet) which indicates that you reviewed this handbook.**

We are looking forward to a wonderful year filled with excitement, fun, learning, and growth for everyone.

Sincerely,

Alexandra M. Wilkes LSW, HSV  
Program Director

Heather Bigney, Ed.D.  
Education Director

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## School Closings

In case of bad weather or other emergency, Friendship Academy closing or delays will be on KDKA TV - [www.KDKA.com](http://www.KDKA.com), WTAE TV - [www.WTAE.com](http://www.WTAE.com), and WPXI TV

– [www.WPXI.com](http://www.WPXI.com).

Information will also be sent out through our school communication system called, “E2CAMPUS.” Using this method, information can be sent to many people across their phone, text, and email. \*Please make sure we have your most current contact information or you will not be able to receive messages through E2CAMPUS and may miss important information. \*

### What if Friendship is open but my home district is closed or delayed?

If your school district is closed for weather or other reasons, your child’s bus service will not pick them up. This will be an excused absence. If your school district has a delay, the bus will pick up your child later. This will be an excused tardy.

**\*\*Please note that breakfast is not served on days where we have a 2 Hour Delay\*\***

## Flexible Instruction Days

When you receive notice either through e2campus or “School Closings” which are listed on local television stations, that Friendship Academy has a “Flexible Instruction Day” this means that there is NO SCHOOL for your child, but that they are to COMPLETE SCHOOL WORK which is sent home with them, or is available to them on the Friendship Academy page of the Watson Institute website

## Student Responsibilities

As a student of Friendship Academy, I will honor the **RISE** commitments:

- **Respect**
  - Use appropriate language/interactions (NO profanity, gang, drug, or sex talk)
  - Calm tone, appropriate words, encouraging attitude
  - Say what you mean without being mean
- **Integrity**
  - Doing the right thing
  - Following directions

- o Following RISE expectations
- **Safety**
  - o Stay in area
  - o Keep hands, feet, body to self
  - o Use school materials safely (put things where they belong, do not damage furniture, books, materials, or the building in any way)
  - o Let staff open the door
  - o Drug/weapon free
- **Engagement**
  - o Actively participate
  - o Actively listen
  - o Raise your hand/Ask for help

### **Major Rule Violations**

(The following behaviors will result in an immediate level drop)

- Physical aggression (including spitting)
- AWOL
- Out of Area (in the hallway without permission, open the door of the classroom)
- Vandalism
- Possession /use of controlled substance
- Bullying/harassment (peers or staff)
- Refusing any staff directive related to safety

### **Student Rights**

You have the right to attend Friendship Academy regardless of your nationality, race, religious belief, or identity.

1. You have the right to an education of the highest quality which will be provided to the specifications of your Individualized Education Plan
2. You can expect Friendship Academy to be a safe place, that includes but is not limited to, daily safety screenings and therapeutic interventions to keep you and other students and staff safe at all times.
3. You have the right to know about any recommendation for medicine that may be prescribed for you by attending a meeting with the doctor, nurse, and your parents. You can talk to the doctor about your medicine at any time. You can refuse the medicine, but then Friendship Academy may not be able to help you.
4. You have the right to participate in all meetings regarding your work at Friendship Academy and to be well informed about your education and treatment goals.

5. Your treatment program is confidential within the limits of the law.
6. Friendship Academy cannot send information about you to anyone without your (if you are 14+) and your parents' authorization, except the police or law enforcement bodies like juvenile court, or hospitals in case of medical emergency. Also, the State Departments of Education and Welfare, and Community Care Behavioral Health, (the HMO that pays for some of the costs of your program at Friendship Academy), can review your record.
7. The State Department of Education and your school district have a right to your academic, discipline, and school health records.

## **Academic Program**

Friendship Academy is an Approved Private School licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. We follow the same guidelines for your child's education as your home school district. Students may be scheduled for classes in the following subjects: English and Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Career Education, Health and Physical Education, Music, Art, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Technology. We also have a beautiful library in which we offer reading support and many activities. The academic program, behavior program, and mental health programs are included in the school day. Each period, we work on IEP goals and treatment goals. This is how we meet the academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of every student.

If you have a concern about your child's academic program, please do not hesitate to call the teacher to set up a parent-teacher conference. Please contact your social worker to update your contact information when you move, change your phone number or have a change in your emergency contact person/information.

**PLEASE NOTE\* We do not retain or share taped footage from our school camera system, as this may violate the rights of other students\***

## **Special Education**

The Special Education regulations in Pennsylvania are under the 22 PA Code, Chapter 14. Chapter 14 tells schools what they must do to follow the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and its regulations. Chapter 14 ensures that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education designed to enable them to participate fully and independently in the community, including preparation for employment or higher education. Chapter 14 also protects the rights of students with disabilities and the parents/guardians of these students.

### **Individualized Education Program**

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised according to federal and state regulations. It is the result of an essential process to ensure that individuals with disabilities have appropriate educational planning to accommodate their unique instructional needs.

The IEP Team makes the decisions about the student's program and placement. The student's parent(s)/guardian, special education teacher, and a representative from the school district are required members of this team.

Changes to the IEP can be made at any time. If you have concerns or would like to revise the IEP, please call your home school district to discuss your concerns and schedule an IEP meeting.

### **IEP Progress Notes**

IDEA requires that parents be informed of their child's progress on a regular basis. Review of progress is a mechanism for determining whether the child is progressing during the year, to ensure the IEP is consistent with the child's instructional needs, and if appropriate, to revise the IEP. Progress is reported quarterly to the student, parent and school district.

### **Reports Cards and Grades**

Parents will receive several reports on their student's progress. Interim reports come home halfway through each nine-week grading period. A report card will come home four times a year at the end of each nine-week grading period. All reports are mailed home.

The student's performance and progress in their classes will be assessed on a system of points. These scores will be converted to percentages and letter grades. The grades will help to show you how your child is performing. Class participation will count for 20% of grade, classwork will count for 50% of grade, and tests/quizzes will count for 30% of grade. Teachers will share comments on the report card about how each student is learning or performing in the classroom. Letter grades, percentage grades, and comments will appear on the report cards.

The grading scale is as follows:

A = 90–100%

B = 80–89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

Failing = 0-59%

Students will be provided a retest option for partial credit when they fail a test. Students can earn a maximum of 80% when they retake a test. Retests must be completed within 5 school days. Students may also earn extra credit. The extra credit may count for no more than 10% of the final grade. Classwork and tests/quizzes can be made up in the five days that the student

attends after the student's absence. The secondary student must ask the teacher for the work, giving the student some responsibility for making up their work when they are absent.

## **Library**

Friendship Academy has a well-stocked library for students to use as part of their classes or to use during scheduled time during the day. We hope your child will sign out library books to read at home. The librarian (who is also a certified Reading Specialist) works individually with some students, holds Reading groups for others, and supports the teachers with special projects in the classroom.

## **Lost or Damaged School Materials**

Students or parents may be required to pay full replacement cost for any library book or other school material lost or damaged.

## **Standardized Testing**

Friendship Academy administers the required state standardized achievement tests (PSSA, PASA, Keystone). Accommodations are used as outlined in students I.E.P.

### **Parental Requests to Preview the Tests**

1. Parent calls school and requests to preview the test. The request must be made to the Education Director.
2. The School Administration Coordinator will arrange a scheduled time for the parent to come into the school to review the test.
3. The parent will be required to sign the PDE security statement.
4. The parent will be required to turn in any electronic devices to be locked up during the review.
5. The School Administration Coordinator will remain with the parent during the review.
6. When the parent has completed the review, the School Administration Coordinator will remind the parent of the importance of test security.
7. The test booklet will be taken out of the room and returned to the secure location.
8. Any digital device will be returned to the parent who will then be escorted out of the building.

## **Behavioral Program**

A Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) is developed. This plan is a guide for staff working with your child in the program. This plan will help staff understand your child and provide positive ways to teach appropriate behaviors and prevent inappropriate behaviors.

Together, the FBA and PBSP will help us work with your child. They also will provide a starting point for data collection. As time goes by, staff will be able to determine progress through data collection and comparison. If your child is not making progress, then we will revise your child's PBSP and try different strategies.



The Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Program is a nationally recognized systematic program that provides a framework for staff to develop quality positive behavior supports. PBIS focuses on teaching skills, preventing behaviors, rewarding appropriate behaviors, and consistent consequences for challenging behaviors.

PBIS hinges on the use of clear, consistent, school-wide expectations. Friendship Academy has identified the following expectations in our school motto “RISE.”

## ***Respect   Integrity   Safety   Engagement***

These expectations are reviewed throughout the school day by classroom staff and posted throughout all areas of the building. The expectations are actively taught using video modeling and lesson plans created by staff with consideration for the student’s developmental levels.

Another component of PBIS is the active review of data which is used to inform the teaching of expectations and identifying students who require more individualized supports. In addition, this ensures that consistency is used in providing disciplinary actions and rewards.

Friendship Academy has a school wide positive behavior support system. It is a level system or point system that encourages appropriate behavior but also teaches your child math, money skills, and allows your child to have some fun, too!

We call it *Watson Financial*, because it works like a bank. It is modeled after a bank system, so your child may talk about his deposits and spending at the Market. There is not real money, but students earn “pretend money” to spend on special items and awards. There are four levels (Purple, Green, Yellow and Red).

## **Mental Health Services**

Friendship Academy includes both a Psychiatric Partial Hospitalization Program, a very intensive school-based mental health treatment program, and a school-based Outpatient treatment program. During your intake we will evaluate which treatment option is best for your needs. We are excited that you and your child are here, and we look forward to working with you during the coming year.

## **Partial Hospital Program**

The partial hospital program is right inside Friendship Academy. It is called a partial hospital because we do not have anyone staying overnight as a regular hospital does. The partial

hospital supports your child's educational goals, and provides intensive mental health treatment. We want to help students with a successful return to a less restrictive education placement, like your neighborhood public school. You and your child will work to achieve personalized mental health and wellness goals developed with your treatment team. Each treatment team has a psychiatrist, nurse, psychiatric social worker, classroom therapist and teacher. You can meet your psychiatrist and psychiatric social worker as soon as you enter the program. The treatment team plans individual, group and family therapies, as well as medication management.

## **Partial Hospitalization Program Participation Policy**

It is the intention of the Watson Institute to be flexible in meeting our client and family needs, while also offering the best therapeutic care. We have established the following participation policy that will hopefully be reasonable and achievable, as we work together to provide partial hospitalization services to your child.

Our policy is based upon the belief that in order for your child to show progress on his/her treatment goals and objectives, the therapeutic care has to be delivered consistently and in collaboration with the family. It is important to know that our partial hospitalization program maintains its licensure with the Department of Human Services who defines clear expectations regarding the frequency and quality of the services provided at this level of care.

Therefore, our policy is as follow:

- While enrolled in the partial hospitalization program, your child will participate in group therapy twice a week. Additional services (Individual therapy, art-therapy, music therapy, family therapy, and medication therapy) will be provided as needed depending on the treatment team recommendations and your input;
- Parents are expected to maintain frequent communication with their child's treatment team and to participate in a monthly treatment meeting with their child's social worker and psychiatrist;
- Treatment plans and encounter forms are to be signed every 20 days of treatment (a calendar can be requested from your child's psychiatric social worker) by client and/or parent/legal guardian. For children under 14, parents must sign these documents before the due date.

### **Please note that your child might be at risk of being discharged from the partial hospitalization program following any of these situations:**

- If a child does not attend individual OR group therapy (refusal, attendance issues) for more than 2 periods of treatment (2 months);
- If a parent fails to participate in two consecutive monthly treatment meetings;

- Other specific situations might also be reviewed at the discretion of the treatment team.

The length of stay at Friendship Academy depends on you/your child or teen's individualized treatment plan, how your child meets treatment goals, and progresses within the program. The treatment team, in collaboration with you, your family, and other involved agencies and services, assesses progress. Children and teens can come into the program any time throughout the year. Children leave the program when they have accomplished their treatment goals.

We are a school-based program designed to meet the mental health needs of children and teens (ages 5-21) with acute psychiatric disorders. Some examples of the types of problems we address are depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety problems, trauma and behavioral problems such as attention deficit disorder, and developmental disabilities. In the partial hospital program, you and your child will be invited to participate in individual (child), group and/or family therapy. Our experience is that family involvement in treatment helps tremendously in decreasing your child's behavioral issues and improving their emotional well-being.

The partial hospital program provides more intensive mental health services than typical outpatient treatment. The treatment team can see your child more often, since we are right in the school building.

The goal of the partial hospital program is to help you and your child or teen get along better in work, school, social life, at home, at school and in the community. Here are some goals we might work on together:

- Teaching you and your family about mental health challenges
- Helping you choose what coping skills/resources work to make you/your child feel better and be healthy
- Teaching you/your child about medicines that might help
- Stopping or reducing some of the behaviors or feelings that are making life harder for you and your child
- Helping you and your child learn new ways to communicate
- Learning evidence-based therapeutic skills inspired by Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) techniques, and other evidence-based treatment modalities.

Treatment in the partial program includes group, individual, and family therapies.

Techniques and skills built into the programs include:

- groups that deal with special problems such as grief and loss, how to manage anger and getting along better with adults and peers
- family interventions, so that you can enjoy healthy family time without so much stress
- parenting skills to help provide structure and safety for your children

- staff showing students how to try new ways to handle problems
- staff teaching and then letting kids practice their new skills
- learning how to spend free time in a good and healthy way
- learning how to get along better in the community, school, and at a job.

Two important types of therapy we offer are inspired by: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT); and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). CBT teaches you/your child or teen how to change many behaviors that have caused problems by looking at the feelings and thoughts that drive these behaviors. DBT teaches and improves skills to change behavioral, emotional, and thinking patterns that may cause problems in living. DBT also teaches children to stay in the moment and manage their feelings. Your child will develop and practice social skills necessary for his/her return to their home school.

Your child or teen may be prescribed medicine by one of our Child and Adolescent certified psychiatrists, because the doctor believes it will make a big difference in helping your child feel better. You will have a chance to meet with the doctor to see what is right. Usually, medicine works best when it goes along with therapy. Of course, we will not give your child any medicine without your permission.

It is program policy that when your child is admitted to the partial hospital program his or her medications are prescribed and followed by our program psychiatrist who is in charge of your child's treatment plan. The psychiatrist is the head of the treatment team and reviews your child's progress at a meeting every 20 days. He or she is in the best position to evaluate how medication is helping your child because of the amount of time your child is in the program each day. This is a nice benefit of the partial hospital program. The doctor, social worker, classroom therapist and teacher spend a good deal of time interacting with and observing your child on a daily basis. They have first-hand knowledge of your child's struggles and areas of improvement. When the team comes together they can make observation-based decisions about how medication is or is not helping your child. If your child is admitted to our program and has been under the care of another psychiatrist, our psychiatrist will collaborate with him/her to assure a smooth transition to our program.

As part of the Partial Hospital Program, a nurse may (with your consent) give out medicine during school. Our nurses will also monitor how students are responding to their medicines, under the direction of the psychiatrist. If your child is in the habit of taking medication at home and is able to do so consistently, then there will be no need to have the nurse give it at school. The medicine cannot work if your child does not take it on a schedule.

## **Outpatient Program**

Friendship Academy also offers outpatient services that are less intensive than the partial hospital program. Within the classroom your child will continue to receive

emotional support to help achieve his/her academic goals. Outside the classroom your child will have the opportunity to meet with a therapist as clinically necessary. Therapy could include individual, group and family therapy. Together you and your child's therapist will develop a mental health treatment plan that addresses his/her emotional and behavioral needs. Your child will also have access to a psychiatrist for medication management as necessary.

We want you to know all about any medicine prescribed for your child or teen. Be sure to ask any questions you may have.

### **No Outside Contact**

**Please note: Your child is not allowed to socialize or communicate with other Friendship students outside of school hours.** This can violate HIPPA and FERPA. Children are referred to Friendship Academy for a wide variety of reasons. They require support and specialized services in order to remain safe at school and benefit from education.

Your child receives intensive mental health services as a participant in either our partial hospital program or our outpatient program.

Parents cannot be made aware of the circumstances or mental health concerns of other students, and cannot be expected to provide the support and services that those students need.

In the past, contact between Friendship Academy students outside of school has led to very unsafe conditions. The safety of our students is of utmost importance, and we want to be certain that no student is placed at risk as a consequence of their attendance at Friendship Academy.

Consequently, we have adopted a policy of **no contact between students outside of school**. This includes not only in person contact, but contact through phone, texting, email, social media, video games or any other form of contact. Simply put, when students leave the building, they are expected to stop interacting with each other in any way until they return to school. If after-hours contact between student leads to disruptions during the school day the following consequences will be implemented:

1. First offense: Lunch detention
2. Second offense: Focused Study (In-School Suspension)
3. Third Offense: Parent Meeting

We understand that exceptions may need to be made, for example for students who have family relationships, are neighbors, attend the same religious services or community activities, or otherwise are likely to come into contact with each other in the ordinary course of their lives outside of school. Such circumstances must be disclosed to the school **in advance**, so

that staff can anticipate any problems and reach an agreement with the students and families about how to handle these situations on a case by case basis.

## **Wellness Policy**

Friendship Academy is committed to the optimal development of every student. Friendship Academy believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create a positive, safe and health-promoting learning environment.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks. In addition, students who are physically active do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

The Wellness Policy details Friendship Academy's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in Friendship Academy have access to healthy foods throughout the school day through reimbursable school meals
- Students are provided a comprehensive nutrition program consistent with federal and state requirements that is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, national origin, sex, age, or disability;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during school;
- Friendship Academy engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physically active behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of Friendship Academy in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and

- Friendship Academy establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

## Breakfast and Lunch Program

The School Breakfast and Lunch Program receives money from the Federal government to provide breakfast and lunch in school. Schools must serve meals that meet Federal nutrition requirements. They also must offer free or reduced-price breakfasts to eligible children.

Any child who attends a school with a Federal breakfast or lunch program can participate. Breakfast and lunch at Friendship Academy are free even for students that do not financially qualify.

Your child may bring a lunch from home. We ask that you only send healthy food.

**\*Please note, microwaves and refrigerators are not available.\*** Friendship Academy will provide your child with water, milk or juice, so you do not need to pack drinks. **Students may not bring soda pop or junk food, as snacks, to school. These items will be taken as they enter the building and returned at the end of the school day.** **PLEASE NOTE:** If soda or junk food are included in lunches that are brought from home, they may only be consumed during lunch time. Students will not be permitted to “graze” on snacks or soda outside of scheduled meal times at Friendship Academy.

School breakfast and lunch meals contain milk, fruit, vegetables, and protein. Breakfast is served in the classroom and lunch is served in the cafeteria. **Friendship Academy is a nut/peanut free school.**

## USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

**For all other FNS nutrition assistance programs, state or local agencies, and their subrecipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination Statement:**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

[http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at USA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington,  
D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442: or
- (3) E-mail: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. If a person reports to a supervisor, teacher or other individual on staff at The Watson Institute Friendship Academy, the person who receives the complaint will refer them to the above information on how to file a complaint, or if they are unable to complete it, the person will transcribe the complaint and submit the letter to the program Discrimination Complaint Form as noted above.

## Health Services

Nurses work at our school to ensure the good physical health of our students and to carry out health screenings required by the Department of Education. The Friendship Academy nurses provide vision, hearing, and dental screenings. Even though they do some of these screenings, our nursing staff are not a substitute for your child's primary care physician (PCP).

Physical illnesses and accidents are assessed by our highly trained nurses. They decide what the next steps should be. Often, they can treat a minor illness or injury so that your child does not miss any school. If your child presents with a serious health concern, you will need to pick up your child and take him or her home and if appropriate, you will need to take your child for treatment.

If an injury or illness is too serious to handle at school, we will call you. Please be sure that you tell us your correct emergency telephone numbers. However, if it is an emergency, we



will call you and 911 to take your child to the hospital. We will do everything we can to take care of your child in an emergency.

## **Immunizations**

Please review the guidelines below regarding your student's immunization requirements. If you have any questions about these guidelines as they relate to your student, please contact the nurses.

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Programs/Immunizations/201819%20School%20Procedure%20Manual%20Communications%20and%20Final.pdf>

## **Responsibilities of schools and school administrators**

At the beginning of the school year, immunization records will be collected by the nurses. If immunization records are not up to date, the parent/guardian must provide up to date records within 30 days from the first day of school. If immunization records are not provided within the 30 days, the home school district will be informed and the student will be marked with an unexcused absence until proper immunization paperwork is obtained.

Students who are not feeling well should tell their staff as soon as possible. A small variety of simple first aide items will be kept in the classroom (Band-Aids, peppermints, lip balm, hygiene items) for minor issues. The nurses may either come to the classroom to check on the student or request that staff bring the student to the Nurses' Office. Students who appear unexpectedly at the Nurses' Office alone or with a staff member (**outside of an emergency situation**) may not be admitted. A supply of water will be kept in the Learning Communities. Students will not be permitted to appear at the Nurses' Office for water or other drinks or snacks.

We do not allow students to bring medication which is prescribed by outside doctors, or over-the-counter medicine to school. We do this so that everyone will be safe.

We do not want your child to take non-prescribed/unauthorized medicine, too much of a certain medicine, or share medicine. The nurses will give out non-prescription medicine if the parent or guardian has signed a permission form when your child comes to Friendship Academy. This form needs to be completed yearly.

For any medication prescribed by an outside doctor, a prescription signed by the prescribing doctor is needed, along with a parent signed permission slip for the nurses to administer at school. For example: if your child is prescribed an inhaler for asthma, you (the parent) may bring the inhaler to the nurse along with the prescription from the doctor who prescribed the inhaler, at that time you the parent will also sign a permission slip allowing the nurses to administer this medication. Feel free to call the nurse's office with any questions regarding medications being administered at school.

## Attendance

State law requires that students be in school for 180 days each school year.

Coming to school is very important for helping students learn and feel better. If your student is absent, you must send us a written excuse when your child returns to school. The parent or guardian must write, or email after each absence. The excused absence must be for a legitimate reason (We follow district criteria for absences). **All absences are considered unexcused unless written notice is received.**

Additionally, PA has enacted new state legislation regarding school attendance.

Truancy is now defined as an accrual of **three (3) unexcused absences per current academic year**. These absences do not need to run consecutively. Letters will be sent home after student's first unexcused absence. After the third unexcused absence, the parents/guardians will be notified and, as required by law, the school will schedule a meeting to develop and discuss an Attendance Improvement Plan in hopes of raising your student's attendance.

If a student accrues 6 or more unexcused absences per current academic year, they will be considered habitually truant.

### **Consequences for Students who do not come directly into the building during Arrivals:**

- Breakfast is served from 8:45 to 9:00. Students who enter the school after 9AM will not receive breakfast.
- The AWOL/Pursuit procedures will be implemented. (Student will be encouraged to return and parents and police will be called as appropriate). Students who go AWOL will not get their phone back at the end of the day.
- For safety, extensive scan must be completed. (if the student refuses to participate in the scan, they must leave the building until compliant)
- Tardy students may not earn their arrival Watson Financial points.

If your child needs to leave school early, you must send us a signed note telling us why your child needs to leave early and what time you will pick up your child. Be sure to give us a phone number where we can call you to check on the early dismissal. Students may not write their own excuses.

No persons other than people identified on the emergency contact list may pick up your child. Written permission must be provided. You must come into the visitor's entrance to sign your student out. There is parking available in the rear of the building. Please do not park in the front of the building along Negley Avenue.

## Transportation

Students usually come to Friendship Academy and go home on school buses provided by their home school district. Transportation is a service that is contracted by the school district. **Friendship Academy does not operate or control the vehicles that transport students. Please call your home school district with any transportation concerns.**

If a specific behavior is unsafe or inappropriate, Friendship Academy staff will work with the parent and school district to take corrective action. See the section on ***Bus Rules of Conduct.***

If you have a problem with your child's bus, you should call your **home school district's transportation department.** Although Friendship Academy is not directly accountable for student's behavior on the buses, we work closely with the school district, bus company, and you to resolve transportation problems.

Students may not travel to and from school in personal cars that belong to other students or their families. Students have to travel in the bus or van that the school district provides. Students **may not** drive to school.

If your family moves, please let Friendship Academy know and let your home school district know. Your bus route/transportation company may then change. If you have moved to a new district **you will need to register your child in the new district before your child can have transportation to/from school.**

## Safety

Many students attend Friendship Academy because of difficulty managing their behavior and emotions. We want you to know that your child's staff has received Comprehensive Crisis Management training to de-escalate situations that may be unsafe for your child or others.

Each year our staff has training in Comprehensive Crisis Management. This training teaches us how to calm your child with words. Staff learn to listen to children, to

help them solve problems, and to show children how to handle problems in a safe, calm way. This training also teaches us how to move your child safely to a better space if needed.

### **Restrictive Procedures**

A restrictive procedure is what we call any staff intervention that limits or restricts a student's ability to move or act. Physical restraints fall under this category. As required by state laws, Friendship Academy has a policy and procedure for therapeutic restraints. We use therapeutic restraints as a last resort, and only when we believe it is best for the safety of your child and others.

It is the policy of Friendship Academy that therapeutic physical restraint is justified only in situations of emergency. We use therapeutic restraint only as a last resort when there is imminent danger of bodily harm to the student or others and when all other attempts to help the student calm down have failed. Simply stated, "imminent danger" means if staff does not act immediately someone may be seriously injured.

- It is state mandated to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting to discuss the incident, the current Positive Behavior Support Plan and interventions. This meeting will be conducted within 10 days of the restraint. Notification is sent to your home for your signature and input. You may waive this meeting if desired.

### **Fire and Safety Drills**

To protect the welfare and safety of all students, we have one unannounced fire drill every month. This is required by county and state laws and rules. Students must follow the exit routes displayed in each room and leave the building in a quiet and orderly way. Tampering with fire and safety equipment, such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and evacuation signs is against the law. If your child violates the law and tampers with fire and safety equipment, the Fire Marshall will get involved and may prosecute your child.

### **Police**

The administration exercises broad discretionary authority to conduct investigations and ensure the safety of all students and staff. Friendship Academy staff may be assisted by the following:

- Zone 5 Police;
- Any others as seen appropriate by the administration.

On those occasions when it is necessary for police officers representing the federal, state, or local governments to interview or apprehend students during school hours, it is the

responsibility of the school to represent and safeguard the rights and interests of the students in attendance.

Any time the police are involved with a student at Friendship Academy, the parent/guardians will be notified by the student's program supervisor or an administrator.

### **Safety Screening**

Friendship Academy uses safety screening tools like public schools, office buildings, amusement parks, and airports now use. We do this to be sure that our school is safe for every person.

When students come inside, they must pass through a safety screening. The screening is done by trained staff members who use a walk-through metal detector and hand-held metal detector wands. These wands detect any metal objects. In addition, the staff will check student's pockets, hoodies, and other belongings physically or visually. Students will be asked to remove their coats, outside sweaters, hats, and shoes for a closer check.

Students who arrive late (or come back to the school after they leave) must wait in the visitor's lobby (the back entrance of the school) to be scanned. Students refusing to be scanned will not be permitted to stay in the building. **If your child refuses a scan, you will have to pick him or her up at school. No book bags or purses should be brought to school. Small, handheld clutches only are permitted for personal items.**

If students have items that are not permitted in the school (cell phones, other electronic devices, etc.), they must give them to staff until the end of the school day. If the item is a weapon or something illegal, staff will take it and not return it. If it is not legal, we may turn it over to the police.

School staff will conduct a search of each student and his/her belongings when there is reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of contraband. For this policy, "contraband" includes drugs, alcohol, weapons, or other materials possessed by a student in violation of federal, state, local law or school policy. Such a search shall consist of a pat down and search of outer garments, book bags, purses or any other personal possessions of the student. The search shall be conducted by a designated school official of the same gender in the presence of another member of the school staff. All contraband found during searches by school officials will be seized and used as evidence against the student in disciplinary proceedings.

### **Searches of Students and Student Lockers**

Students are protected by U.S. laws, including the Fourth Amendment. Yet, they **are** subject to reasonable searches and seizures by school officials. Drugs and weapons are not allowed in schools, according to laws (Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 and Pennsylvania Act 26 of 1995). These laws are for the welfare and safety of students.

### **Use of Video**

Friendship Academy has video cameras throughout its facility including entrances, hallways, and classrooms. For safety, Video Surveillance is monitored during all school hours. Video cameras may be used for clinical supervision and teaching/training purposes within the school, to help train other therapists/therapy students/and teachers.

Video surveillance is used to provide protection from outside intruders, to protect staff and students while at the school, and to investigate staff and students.

Upon intake parents are provided a consent/authorization to use and disclose video. This consent/authorization is limited to only the use for education. Parents have the right to revoke this consent/authorization to use video of their child **for educational purposes** at any time by submitting such a request in writing. Refusal to consent to the use video/audio taping will not interfere with Client's treatment or education in any manner.

### **Rules of Conduct**

#### **AGGRESSION-verbal, sexual and/or physical**

Any intentional form of aggression will result in one or more of the following actions:

- Lose privileges in the behavior support system.
- Parent notified
- In-school supervised study
- Out-of-school suspension
- Consequence at the discretion of administration
- Police report filed
- Arrest

#### **AWOL (Leaving the building without permission)**

Students who leave the building without permission put themselves in danger.

Students returning from AWOL status may put others in the building in danger because they may bring into school something unsafe.

- Every student returning from AWOL must go through the scan and empty and/or show what is in their pockets, purses and backpacks before going to class or getting on a school bus. Remember, our job is to keep your child safe.
- If your child leaves the building without staff permission, they will lose privileges in the behavior support system
- Electronics (including cell phones) may not be returned to them until the next day.
- If the student continues to leave without permission, we will call you in for a meeting to problem solve.
- Parents are contacted by phone when their child is AWOL. Friendship Academy has the right to notify the police if a student's AWOL poses a safety risk.
- Consequence at the discretion of administration

### **Bus Rules of Conduct**

To maintain a high standard of safety, students must follow these rules and any other rules set by the bus company or by the school district sending the bus:

- Enter and exit the bus from the front entrance only (Do not open emergency door except for a bus emergency).
- Keep aisles clear, bus clean, and free from damage
- Remain in seats facing forward when the bus is moving.
- Please treat others with respect at all times-Remember RISE!
- Please keep your hands, feet, body/bodily fluids, and belongings inside the bus.
- Please do not throw litter/garbage out of the bus windows.
- Consequence at the discretion of administration

Students reported for breaking the bus rules may be subject to the following corrective actions as determined by the home school district and/or the transportation company:

- Lose privileges
- Warning to student
- Parent notified
- Conference at Friendship Academy with parent, student and staff of the school district and bus company
- Temporary loss of bus riding privilege
- Other school disciplinary action
- Citation to magistrate
- Filing criminal charges

### **Cell phones and other electronic devices or non-school items**

We urge parents to have students leave electronic devices at home as these items get lost or broken and are a distraction in the classroom. **Friendship is NOT responsible for any damage to personal electronic devices.** In general, these items include:

- Cell phones
- Smart watches
- iPads/tablets
- Electronic gaming devices/thumb-drives/headphones/Airpods

Therefore, students may not have these items during the school day. This includes field trips outside of the building. If students bring these items to school, we will place them in a safe container with the student's name. Classroom staff will keep the items until the end of the day and return them when the student is ready to go home. Students are responsible for adhering to this procedure.

**If a student uses a cell phone to record another student either on the bus or on school grounds, they will lose the privilege of bringing a cell phone to school.**

**First Violation:** The student will not be allowed to bring cell phone or electronic items to school for **two weeks** under any circumstance.

**Second Violation:** The student will not be allowed to bring cell phone or electronic items to school for **one month** under any circumstance. Parents will be expected to come to school for a conference with the Program Director and Education Director.

If parents need to get in touch with their child during the day, they should contact the student's social worker or learning community program supervisor. If a student needs to contact their parent/guardian the program supervisor and/or social worker will assist them with this call from their office.

### **Computer Use**

Computers at Friendship Academy are for students to use for schoolwork. Tampering with, vandalism to, or unauthorized use of computers or other electronic equipment (printers, cables, drives, monitors, keyboards, mice, televisions, Smart Boards, etc.) or software or associated documentation is prohibited. This includes inappropriate use of the Internet, network, and e-mail on school computers. Violations by students may constitute violations of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code or other statutes, subjecting violators to serious criminal prosecution. This policy is intended to be at least as broad and encompassing as Section 3933 of the Crimes Code (as of January 1995).

Student violators will be subject to discipline. This may include any of these:

- Lose privileges



- Loss of computer use privilege
- Parent notified
- Parent conference at Friendship Academy
- In-school supervised study/ other school disciplinary action
- Criminal charges filed
- Consequence at the discretion of administration

## **Dress Code**

Students are expected to wear neat, clean, and generally weather-appropriate clothing at all times. If you need assistance with providing clothing for your child, please contact your social worker.

### **Prohibited clothing and items include:**

- Items with drug, alcohol, or other inappropriate messages
- Sunglasses or other items that cover the face, unless they are masks used to protect someone from the spread of illness
- Spikes, chains, or choke-collars
- Smart watches
- Steel toes shoes/boots
- Slippers
- Pets
- Bandanas
- Headphones/Air pods (except as directed by school staff)
- Wearing pants below the waist (i.e. no 'sagging')
- Items that promote racism or violence
- Items or combinations of clothing that have gang-affiliated significance
- Clothing considered sexually inappropriate (i.e. short shorts/skirts, spaghetti straps, low cut shirts, exposed midriff, exposed undergarments)
- Any item considered extremely offensive or disruptive to the learning process
- Blankets
- Stuffed animals or other toys- "Comfort items" may be allowed with permission from the floor supervisor
- Students may not wear jewelry that has words, signs, pictures or any combination thereof appearing on said jewelry advocates or promotes sexual activity or violence, or the use of alcohol or drugs, or demeans or degrades another because of race, sex, religious persuasion, national origin, handicap or disability. This rule applies during regular school hours and at any school sponsored event whether on or off school grounds.
- \*\*\*PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL WITH BACK PACKS OR BOOKBAGS\*\*

### **A Word About Hats and Other Head Coverings**

At Friendship Academy, we understand that self-esteem is often very closely linked to appearance. Hair is important to both males and females in our society, and frequently has cultural significance. We understand that due to cultural considerations and other circumstances, it may be necessary for students to wear bonnets, wave caps, beanies, or hair-coverings associated with religion. These situations will be considered on a case by case basis. PLEASE NOTE: Students who wear head coverings will be asked upon arrival (and may be asked at any time after) to allow staff to look underneath them to ensure that they are not being used to conceal contraband or weapons. If any type of head covering is used in an unsafe manner or becomes a distraction for students, they will be removed and may be prohibited.

### **Consequences**

All students at Friendship Academy are expected to comply with the dress code. Noncompliance may result in, but not be limited to:

#### **First Offense:**

- Schoolwork in homeroom with no class transitions until student agrees to wear an alternative clothing item, which school will provide
- Loss of 2 points for every period without transition

### **Drug and Alcohol Procedures**

A student shall not possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any intoxicant of any kind. This is a drug-free school; any amount of an illegal drug is unacceptable. Drugs include, but are not limited to:

- alcohol
- amphetamines
- barbiturates
- any form of cocaine
- hallucinogens
- designer drugs
- marijuana- **Including medical marijuana, CBD oil and gummies**
- narcotics
- nicotine
- vape

The possession of drug-related paraphernalia (example; vape devices, rolling papers, roach clips, hemostats, pipes, or other related devices) also constitutes a violation of this rule. Use

of a drug as authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician for the student for whom it is prescribed shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

\*If a doctor has prescribed a medical marijuana product to your child, please contact our school nurses ASAP. **Documentation from the prescribing doctor will be required\***

The consequences of a student found in violation of this rule shall include:

- Confiscation of the drugs
- In-school supervised study
- The doctor may decide to discontinue medications if child is using unauthorized substances
- Notification of parent or guardian- school will call CYF if the child appears to be altered at school three or more times
- Provide information about how to obtain a drug and alcohol assessment for your child
- Compliance with recommendations from drug and alcohol assessment
- Notification of police
- Other school disciplinary action

If a student is suspected of drug or alcohol use, the student will be taken to a private area to conduct a search of his/her belongings. The support staff will escort the student to the nurse's office for a wellness check. The wellness check is simply a gathering of data. No determination of drug/alcohol use will be made at this time. If the student is not medically stable, medical protocol will be implemented. If the student is stable and there is a suspicion that the student is under the influence, the nurse will call the student's home, talk to the parent and inform them that their child arrived to school appearing to be under the influence (of whatever substance is suspected). Nursing will offer resource information to parents seeking drug tests or treatment for suspected drug use. The student will return to their learning community where the supervisor will return the student to their classroom unless on a case by case basis it is determined otherwise.

### **Smoking, Vaping, and Tobacco Use**

Under state law, students may not use or have cigarettes, vape devices, other tobacco products, lighters or matches on school grounds. Act 128 of 2000 requires school districts to prohibit the use of tobacco by persons in school buildings, school buses, and on school property. Act 145 of 1996 permits school authorities to prosecute students for possession or use of tobacco. After all, using tobacco is dangerous for our health.

Tobacco includes a lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, vape device or other smoking product and smokeless tobacco product in any form. Smokeless tobacco products include but are not limited to, any chewing tobacco, snuff, or similar product that is used, chewed, sniffed, inhaled, or ingested.

The following actions may occur for violations of the smoking policy:

- Lose privileges
- Confiscate the tobacco product, lighter and matches
- Notify parent
- Referral to program/class to stop smoking
- Citation to magistrate or fine.

### **Fighting**

A student shall not engage in physical violence, aggression, or confrontation to settle disputes or resolve conflicts. The consequences for fighting may include:

- Lose privileges
- Processing with staff
- School community service
- In-school supervised study
- Parent notification
- Student Mediation (students and staff only)
- Other school disciplinary action, including suspension
- Law enforcement may be notified

### **Gambling**

Students may not gamble by playing cards, dice, games of chance or other games deemed inappropriate by school staff. This rule applies to all areas of the building, surrounding school property, and school buses. The following consequences may occur for students determined to be in violation of the no gambling rule:

- Lose privileges
- Warning/reprimand
- Confiscate items used to gamble
- School community service
- In-school supervised study
- Parent notification
- Restorative dialogue
- Mediation
- Parent conference

## Harassment and Bullying

At Friendship Academy, all students and employees should enjoy learning and working in an environment free from all forms of discrimination. Harassment is defined as intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student or staff member. This includes verbal acts and name-calling, as well as nonverbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Harassment includes sexual harassment and is defined as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or verbal, visual or physical contact of a sexual nature.

We will investigate all allegations of harassment and bullying confidentially. If it is determined that an individual engaged in harassment or bullying, he or she shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. For students, this may include:

- Lose privileges
- Warning to student
- Conference with school officials
- School community service
- In-school supervised study
- Parent notification
- Parent conference at school
- Other school disciplinary action, including suspension
- File police report

If you think your child is being bullied, please call the school and let your social worker or administrator know. We will investigate the problem and get back to you. We cannot stop bullying if we do not know about it, so tell your child to report any bullying to us.

## Threats

A threat is a statement about intending to harm or cause pain to someone or his or her property. Threats can happen through talking, writing, or using computers. At Friendship Academy **we take all threats very seriously**, because we are committed to the safety of all of our students and staff. We also use the Safe2SaySomething (S2SS) app where concerns can be shared anonymously.

Students may not threaten other students, school staff or bus personnel. Any student who hears or reads a threat must report it to a school staff member right away.

Students who break this rule may face these actions:

- Lose privileges
- Conference/Reprimand
- School community service

- In-school supervised study
- Parent notification- You may be notified about ANY threat made by your child
- Parent conference
- Other school disciplinary action, including suspension
- Citation issued to magistrate
- Police report filed

Friendship Academy takes threats seriously. We will investigate any threat carefully. Call the school right away or use the S2SS app if you believe that your child was threatened.

### **Vandalism or Theft of School and Private Property**

Respect for the environment is an important skill for students to develop. Property destruction is an ineffective skill for dealing with anger. A student shall not intentionally cause or attempt to cause substantial damage or destruction to school or private property, or steal or attempt to steal school or private property. Valuable private property should not be brought to school. **Friendship Academy assumes NO responsibility for the loss or theft of property.**

Consequences for damage or theft of school property may include any of these:

- Lose privileges
- School community service
- In-school supervised study
- Parent/guardian notified
- Parents/guardians billed for costs of the damage or theft
- Citation to magistrate
- File police report
- Other school disciplinary action

### **Weapons**

Any student found in possession of/or transporting a weapon during school hours or activities on school property, regardless of intent, will be disciplined in accordance with the Pennsylvania Act 26 of 1995 and the Federal Gun-Free School Act. These Acts require local educational agencies to adhere to certain discipline and recording requirements in the event a student is in possession of a weapon and/or firearm.

**The term weapon refers to any tool, device, item or instrument that could inflict bodily harm including but not limited to: loaded or unloaded firearms (including pellet guns, BB guns, and look alike firearms); explosive devices of any kind; any type of knives; chains; brass knuckles; night sticks, axe handles, tasers, stun guns, or student-made items intended to, or which could inflict harm.**

If a student is in possession of an illegal or banned item(s) under this section, when such item is found on the person of the student, or under his/her control, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, or any school event held away from the school, or while the student is on his/her way to or from school, the student is subjected to this policy.

The consequences for students possessing, using or distributing weapons shall include:

- Confiscation of the weapon
- Immediate notification of police
- Notification of parent or guardian
- In-school supervised study
- Other school disciplinary action
- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) will be conducted.
- Out of school suspension

## **Client Resolution Procedure**

### **(If you are not satisfied with services)**

Definition:

Client/Consumer: For the purposes of the following Policies and Procedures a Client/Consumer is considered any student enrolled in the Friendship Academy program receiving educational or mental health services, including social work services to the parents.

#### **Preface:**

If the clients of Friendship Academy are not satisfied with any aspect of the services that they are receiving, they should request a meeting with school staff. Possible areas may include, but are not limited to:

- dissatisfaction with the program
- discharge from the program
- refusal of services
- perceived violation of rights

#### **Accessibility to Resolution Procedure:**

The Resolution Procedure is on the bulletin board in the lobby. The Client Resolution Procedure is included in this Student/Parent Handbook and the parents are given a copy of the Client Resolution Procedure at their intake meeting prior to admission.

**Procedure:**

1. When a concern is presented by parents to the social work staff the social work staff will attempt satisfactory resolution at their level in concert with their immediate supervisor.
2. Failing resolution at this level, the client will be asked to list the concern in written form. However, a concern may be made either orally or in writing.
3. The social work staff will assist the client in documenting oral concerns or helping the client gather their thoughts and develop them in written form.
4. A meeting is scheduled within one week (5 working days) with the client and the appropriate leadership members.
5. The client will be notified in writing of the date and time of the meeting. A meeting will be held to discuss the client's concerns at a time agreeable to the client.
6. After the meeting is held with the client, all facts will be studied and the Leadership group will make a ruling. The ruling shall include terms of the resolution and whether the decision or decisions reached by Friendship Academy are in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations as well as generally accepted tenets of sound therapeutic intervention, common courtesy and educational requirements.
7. A decision shall be made within 5 working days after the meeting. The basis of the decision is shared with the client in written form specifying any and all changes in treatment or outcome.
8. Once Friendship Academy Resolution Procedures have been exhausted, if desired, a client shall have the opportunity to take advantage of the County Review Appeals Procedure. Information is located in the Watson Grievance Procedure, which is provided at admission and is available upon request.

The procedure regarding the educational portion of the program of Friendship Academy is in accord with PL 94-142 due process. Procedural Safeguards are provided annually to parents. If you need a copy, contact the office staff.



**Please send back to Friendship Academy with your child**

Please go to the Watson Institute website, and review the Friendship Academy Student-Parent Handbook with your child. The handbook is located on the Watson Institute website, under the Schools tab, on the Friendship Academy page.

By signing this form, I \_\_\_\_\_ (print parent/guardian name) attest that I reviewed the Friendship Academy Student -Parent Handbook with my child, and my child agrees to follow all rules and expectations listed in the handbook as well as those communicated to him/her by Friendship Academy staff.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and involvement!

**Please print and sign below and return this page to Friendship Academy**

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**Parent/Guardian Name (Print)**

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**Parent/Guardian Signature**

**Date**

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**Student Name (Print)**

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**Student Signature**

**Date**