



Parent-Student Handbook

2026-2027

One School. Multiple Campuses. One Shared Mission

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook apply to all Pine Springs Preparatory Academy (PSPA) students and families. Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is one unified public charter school with multiple campuses that share a common mission, vision, values, and system of policies.

PSPA publishes one official Parent-Student Handbook for all students and families. To address the unique operations of each campus, this handbook is accompanied by a linked Campus Addendum that provides campus-specific information, including grade levels served, school hours, daily schedules, attendance procedures, arrival and dismissal expectations, communication practices, extracurricular opportunities, and other operational details. While certain procedures may vary by campus, all students and families are expected to follow the shared policies and expectations outlined in this handbook.

Enrollment at Pine Springs Preparatory Academy signifies agreement by students and parents/guardians to abide by the expectations, policies, and procedures contained in this handbook and the applicable Campus Addendum. Together, these documents are intended to support a safe, respectful, and academically rigorous learning environment for all students.

Elementary Campus	Middle School Campus	High School Campus	Blended Option
220 Rosewood Center Dr. Holly Springs, NC 27540	1729 North Main Street Holly Springs, NC 27540	420 Green Oaks Parkway Holly Springs, NC 27540	420 Green Oaks Parkway Holly Springs, NC 27540
919-439-9448	984-217-1724		
Elementary Addendum	Middle Addendum	High Addendum	Blended Addendum

www.pinespringsprep.org

Important Notice: The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are subject to change as required by federal law, North Carolina law, North Carolina State Board of Education requirements, or action by the Pine Springs Preparatory Academy Board of Directors. Families will be notified of any significant policy changes that occur during the school year.

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A signature contained in the Appendix of this document is legally binding and indicates that the signatory has carefully read the terms and conditions and understands its significance.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Pine Springs Preparatory Academy (PSPA). This Parent-Student Handbook serves as a resource for students and families by outlining the school's policies, procedures, expectations, and available resources. It is intended to promote a shared understanding of the standards that support a safe, respectful, and academically rigorous learning environment.

At PSPA, we believe student success is achieved through a strong partnership among students, families, faculty, staff, the Board of Directors, and the school community. Together, we are committed to fostering academic excellence, strong character, and responsible citizenship while preparing students for success in college, career, and life.

The policies and expectations outlined in this handbook apply to all PSPA campuses. Additional campus-specific information may be communicated through campus addendums or other school communications as needed.

MISSION STATEMENT

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is dedicated to improving the lives of its students by providing authentic learning experiences in a collaborative, nurturing environment that will build a foundation for students' success in school, career, and in life.

PSPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PSPA is a non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board of Directors provides oversight to ensure the school fulfills its mission, establishes Board policies, oversees the strategic plan, and approves the annual budget." The board is also responsible for the hiring and termination of employees at the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Meeting Schedule

The board meets monthly, and the meeting schedule is posted on the school website. Board meetings follow NC Open Meetings Law.

Requests to Address the Board

In order that the board may fairly and adequately discharge its overall responsibility, PSPA provides the opportunity for members of the public to address the Board of Directors during their regular public meetings.

- Those who wish to provide public comment must sign up prior to the meeting beginning. While the board chair will establish the rules for public comment, as a general rule, for meetings held in-person, public comment sign-up will end 5 minutes before the meeting is called to order. For remote meetings, public comment sign-up will end 30 minutes before the meeting is called to order.
- Public comment is typically offered at the beginning of board meetings, though the Board Chair may place public comment at any part of the meeting agenda. Those wishing to make public comments must be present at the time that the public comment portion of the agenda is being offered.
- The Board reserves the right to establish a time limit or halt public comment at any time.

Public comments shall not interfere with the board's duty to conduct orderly and efficient meetings. Individuals who address the board shall not use language that is obscene, vulgar, contains fighting words or otherwise disrupts the orderly conduct of business. Discussions regarding employees, litigation, student records or other potentially confidential matters may not be discussed during the public comment session. Persons who willfully interrupt, disrupt or cause disturbances at official meetings of the Board may be

directed to leave by the board chair. The board chair shall determine whether matters of discussion are inconsistent with these restrictions or other requirements for public comment, and may rule the speaker out of order, if necessary. Disruptions by any person or persons of a public meeting shall be subject to action in accordance with G.S. 143-318.17.

Compliance with Applicable Laws

The School shall comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to such laws and regulations governing employment, environment, disabilities, civil rights, children with disabilities, transportation, and student records. The School shall comply with all applicable health and safety laws and regulations, whether federal, state or local. Neither the State Board of Education nor the local board of education assumes the duty to oversee the operations of the School except as may otherwise be required to monitor the charter School for compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

PSPA SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

School Administrative Team

- Bruce Friend, Superintendent
- Stephanie Needham, Chief Operations Officer
- Lauren Johnson, Elementary School Principal
- Dr. Lora Street, Middle School Principal
- Craig Tucker, High School Principal
- Gina Newell, Elementary Assistant Principal
- Jodi Rubin, Middle School Assistant Principal
- Cletis Gore, High School Assistant Principal

Additional Administrative Team

- Michelle Cardillo, Human Resources
- Mariquel Roberts, Business Manager
- Monique Richter, SIS Administrator
- Arika Barnes, Director of Continuous Improvement
- Sue Yench, Director of Testing and Accountability

Office Managers

1. Elizabeth Coomer, Central Office Manager
2. Rebecca Stephenson, Elementary Office Manager
3. Suzi Marsico, Middle Grades Office Manager
4. Jenn Hagen, High School Office Manager

Nurses

1. Amanda Justian- Elementary School
2. Leslie Brothers- Middle School
3. Leena Doret- Middle School
4. Susan Lange- High School & Blended

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The PSPA School Calendar meets State of NC requirements for the number of instructional hours that schools are required to provide. The most up-to-date School Calendar is found on the school website.

STUDENT AND PARENT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

To accomplish our mission, PSPA requires the support and cooperation of the parents and guardians of our students. PSPA has the following expectations of its students, parents, and families.

The PSPA Student Honor Code

I promise to be honest, trustworthy, and diligent in my studies, and to complete all work assignments to the best of my ability as assigned. I promise to behave appropriately in school, respect the rights of others, and treat them with the same courtesy that I expect for myself and in accordance with the school mission and values. I will be respectful toward my teachers and all staff, remembering always that they are here to assist me in becoming the best person and citizen I can be. I promise to tell the truth, do my own work and not take things that do not belong to me.

As a Pine Springs Student, I will

- Follow all school rules and expectations.
- Treat others the way I would like to be treated.
- Complete assignments as assigned to the best of my ability.
- Show pride of place and respect all school property.
- Exemplify the Core Values of PSPA “PIONEERS” becoming a great American Citizen.



“Creating Great American Citizens”

P	I	O	N	E	E	R	S
Prepared to lead the world	Informed on current events	On the path of excellence	Navigating our historical roots	Exploring future opportunities	Engaged in the community around us	Responsible to create a just society	Sharing goodwill with others

On my honor, I pledge that I will abide by the terms and conditions of PSPA’s Honor Code.

As a parent/guardian of a PSPA student, I agree:

- To support the PSPA Honor Code expectations.
- To exemplify the Core Values of PSPA “PIONEERS” by modeling what it means to be a great American Citizen for my student(s).
- To purchase the required uniforms as specified in the PSPA uniform policy and ensure my child properly wears the required uniform every day.
- To supervise my child’s homework habits and see to it that assignments are completed to the best of their ability, neatly, and on time.
- To take good care of all school books and materials and agree to pay for any lost or damaged books or equipment.
- Complete my 10-hour volunteer requirement each year (this is per family).
- To provide all Medical/Immunization Records to the office as required by North Carolina State Law. (G.S. 130-A153).
- To provide lunch for my student.

- To arrange transportation for my child to and from school each day on time.
 - Instructional day begins at 8:00 AM (K-5): **This means that students should be in their classroom ready for instruction by 8:00 AM** or they will be counted tardy.
 - Instructional day begins at 8:30 AM for 6th-8th grade: **This means that students should be in their classroom ready for instruction by 8:30 AM** or they will be counted tardy.
 - Instructional day begins at 8:45 AM for High School: **This means that students should be in their classrooms ready for instruction at 8:40 AM.**
- That my child will be accountable to follow the school discipline policies and school-wide expectations.
- To bring my student to school on required testing days.
- Follow attendance policies.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action when their behavior violates the Student Code of Conduct, the PSPA Honor Code, classroom expectations, or other school policies. School administration will consider the nature of the violation, the student's age, developmental level, disciplinary history, and other relevant circumstances when determining appropriate consequences.

Serious or repeated violations may result in more significant disciplinary action, including long-term suspension or expulsion, in accordance with North Carolina law and PSPA policies. School administration reserves the discretion to determine appropriate disciplinary measures based on the individual circumstances of each incident.

Student Code of Conduct

PSPA's expectations for student behavior are based upon the following governing principles:

- Students will act with courtesy, consideration, tolerance, and patience in all interactions with others, both at school and during school-sponsored activities.
- Students shall treat school property and facilities with care and respect.
- Students shall treat the property of others with care and respect.
- Students will follow PSPA's Honor Code and be honest in all academic and social situations.
- Student behavior will reflect positively upon PSPA by a display of manners, pride, and ownership of PSPA core values.

Discipline

Good discipline is imperative to the success of the school: it is helping a student adjust to the requirements of his/her environment rather than punishment for his/her not having adjusted, it is turning unacceptable conduct into acceptable conduct, and it is not humiliating or embarrassing. The ultimate, unique achievement of good discipline is self-discipline on the part of the student. Each teacher/team has a plan for managing student behavior that incorporates effective strategies consistent with the purpose and principles established by Board policies regarding student behavior. Teachers are encouraged to seek positive, innovative, and constructive methods of correcting and managing student behavior in an effort to avoid repeated misbehavior and suspension.

Consequences for violating the policies in this handbook, teacher/team standards, or rules may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Correct the situation
 - a. For example: If you make a mess, you clean up the mess. If you intentionally break something, it is your responsibility to fix it or replace what was broken.
- Parental involvement

- Isolation or time-out for short periods of time
- Loss of privileges
- Structured recess
- Behavior improvement agreements/behavior contracts
- Individual or small group sessions with an administrator
- Silent Lunch
- Lunch Detention
- Before or After School Detention
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities/loss of privileges, and/or field trips (with administration approval)
- In School Suspension
- Suspension
- Expulsion (Age 14 or over)

PSPA is not required to engage in progressive discipline. Some offenses are so serious they warrant more severe consequences including, but not limited to, immediate suspension and/or recommendation for longer-term consequences. This Student Code of Conduct is not to be seen as all-inclusive. The administration reserves the right to amend or add to these lists as unique situations arise. The administration further reserves the right to deviate from the stated disciplinary action(s) based on unique or aggravating factors.

Failure to follow the instruction of a teacher, administrator, or other school official and any conduct in violation of any written rule, policy or procedure, or code of PSPA will result in appropriate disciplinary measures.

Mistakes provide opportunities for students to learn, grow, and make better choices in the future. Ultimately, the goal is for students to do the right thing, even when no one is looking.

Disciplinary Levels and Definitions

Level 1 Offenses: Possible Consequences: Warning, Parent Conference, Detention, Loss of Privileges	1. Being tardy to school and/or class 2. Uniform/Dress Code violations 3. Littering on school property 4. Violation of the Technology Use Agreement
Level 2 Offenses: Possible Consequences: Parent Conference, Detention, Loss of Privileges (ex: field trips, loss of recess, after school events, special class activities), Form of Suspension (in or out of school),	• Committing repeated Level 1 offenses • Failure to comply with other assigned consequences • Deliberately disrupting the normal educational process in the classroom • Failure to attend an assigned class without a valid excuse, skipping school or cutting classes • Use of profanity and/or an obscene gesture • Lying to or deliberately deceiving a teacher or a staff member • Willfully leaving the classroom or school grounds without permission • Inappropriate public displays of affection • Failure to follow instructions of school staff • Unauthorized or inappropriate use of any electronic device while on school property not associated with the educational process during normal school hours.

Restitution	● Throwing objects in the classroom or on school grounds ● Repeated tardiness ● Use of inappropriate language ● Insubordination ● Violations of the Honor Code such as cheating and/or plagiarism ● Possession and/or distribution of pornography ● Taking unauthorized or inappropriate photos or videos of another individual ● Bullying/harassment ● Willful destruction of school property ● Any conduct committed off-campus that (a) if committed on campus would constitute a Level II offense and (b) has a reasonable relationship to school operations
Level 3 Offenses: Possible Consequences: Suspension or possible disciplinary hearing for repeated and/or severe behavior, which could include but would not be limited to a Long-Term Suspension or expulsion.	● Committing a combination of or repeated Level and/or Level II offenses ● Trafficking, possessing, and/or using tobacco/nicotine products on school property or at a school-sponsored event including the use or possession of electronic cigarettes or paraphernalia. ● Stealing or possessing stolen property ● Attempting to harm another student, staff member, or adult on school property or at a school-sponsored event. ● Threatening to physically harm or attack another student, staff member, or adult on school property or at a school-sponsored event ● Physically striking or attacking a student, staff member, or adult whether as an individual act or with the assistance of others ● Possessing, handling, transferring, or bringing a weapon or ammunition (including a toy weapon; example – toy gun, toy knife) on school property or at a school-sponsored event ● Creating or encouraging other students to join in a disturbance, so as to cause the disruption of normal school operations ● Using technology, such as social media, during or outside of school hours to cause a school disruption. ● Possessing, selling, exchanging, distributing, attempting to purchase, using, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any substance purported to be an illegal drug, prescription medicine, or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event. This includes the distribution of or purposely taking more than the prescribed amount of medically necessary prescription medication. ● Touching or conduct perceived as sexual or inappropriate in nature or which is deemed offensive to that person ● Damage/destruction/vandalism/arson of or trespassing on school property ● Hazing ● Bomb threat/hoax, false alarms ● Possession or use of explosives, fireworks, sparklers, smoke/stink bombs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event ● Any conduct committed off-campus that (a) if committed on campus would constitute a Level III offense and (b) has a reasonable

	relationship to school operations
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Short-Term Suspension: suspension from school, school activities, and school grounds for a period of up to ten (10) school days.

Long-Term Suspension: suspension from school, school activities, and school grounds for more than ten (10) school days.

Expulsion: The indefinite exclusion of a student, age 14 or over, from school enrollment for disciplinary purposes.

PSPA and its employees shall follow applicable rules concerning the discipline of students who qualify under relevant special education laws. There are no appeals for short-term suspensions of 10 days or less.

For Level III offenses, the school administration may recommend a Long-Term Suspension, and/or Expulsion, and/or participation in a Behavioral Contract. Decisions as to Long-Term Suspensions and/or Expulsion shall be made by school administration after appropriate notice to the parties involved and a hearing if one is requested. Student appeals from the decision of school administration shall be heard by a panel of two Board members who shall be appointed by the Board Chair. Appeals must be made in writing to the Board Chair within ten (10) days of the decision. The hearing of the panel will occur at a discipline hearing. Decisions of the Board panel shall be final, and there will be no further appeal to the full Board of Directors.

As required by law, PSPA will initiate a Threat Assessment if appropriate.

PSPA's disciplinary procedures will be exercised in a manner consistent with state and federal law, including the Gun-Free Schools Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

ACADEMICS & CURRICULUM

Academic Honesty

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to fostering a culture of honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility. Students are expected to complete all academic work honestly and independently unless collaboration is specifically authorized by the teacher. Academic dishonesty is a violation of both the PSPA Honor Code and the Student Code of Conduct.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating on assignments, quizzes, tests, or examinations
- Copying or allowing others to copy work
- Unauthorized collaboration or sharing of answers
- Using unauthorized notes, materials, or electronic devices during assessments
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on assignments
- Forging or falsifying signatures or school documents
- Plagiarism, including presenting another person's words, ideas, or work as one's own without proper acknowledgment
- Using artificial intelligence (AI) or other technology to generate work that is submitted as the student's own without teacher authorization
 - [AI Policy](#)

Students found responsible for academic dishonesty may receive a reduced or failing grade on the assignment, be required to complete an alternative assignment, and/or be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Standards

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to providing a rigorous, knowledge-rich education that challenges every student to reach their full potential. Students are expected to demonstrate consistent effort, personal responsibility, and a commitment to academic excellence at every grade level.

Instruction is designed to promote critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and the application of knowledge through meaningful classroom and real-world learning experiences. Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning, embrace challenges, and develop the skills necessary for success in college, career, and life.

Through high-quality instruction, ongoing assessment, meaningful feedback, and appropriate academic support, PSPA strives to help every student meet or exceed North Carolina academic standards while achieving continued personal and academic growth.

Student Promotion

Student promotion decisions are based on multiple measures of student performance and readiness, including academic achievement, mastery of grade-level standards, classroom performance, attendance, teacher recommendations, and other relevant factors. The school principal is responsible for making final grade placement decisions.

For students receiving special education services, promotion decisions will also consider the student's progress toward the goals and accommodations outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, as applicable. PSPA is committed to maintaining open communication with families regarding student progress. Teachers and school administrators will regularly communicate academic performance and will notify parents or guardians when a student is experiencing academic difficulty. When concerns arise, school staff will work collaboratively with families to develop intervention strategies and provide appropriate supports to help students achieve academic success. The goal of promotion decisions is to ensure that each student is academically, socially, and developmentally prepared for success at the next grade level.

Retention

The decision to retain a student is made only after careful consideration of the student's academic progress, developmental readiness, and individual needs. PSPA is committed to working collaboratively with families to provide appropriate interventions and support before retention is considered.

Parents or guardians of students being considered for retention will be notified in writing as early as possible, preferably no later than 45 calendar days before the end of the school year. Families may submit a written appeal to the school principal within five (5) calendar days of receiving the notification. The principal will review all relevant information before making a final grade placement decision.

When determining whether a student should be promoted or retained, school administration may consider multiple factors, including:

- Teacher recommendation
- Academic performance and mastery of grade-level standards
- State and local assessment results (e.g., i-Ready, End-of-Grade assessments)
- Academic growth over time
- Attendance history
- Behavior and classroom performance
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, when applicable
- Parent or guardian input
- Other relevant academic or developmental information

The principal is responsible for making the final decision regarding grade placement.

Students transferring to PSPA will generally be placed in the grade level recommended by their previous school. School administration may review academic records, assessment data, and other relevant information to determine the most appropriate grade placement. Documentation regarding previous retention or promotion decisions may be requested as part of the enrollment process.

Testing Schedule 2026-2027

PSPA will administer all required North Carolina State Tests. In addition, all PSPA students K-8 will participate in i-Ready assessments 3x a year. Grades 3-8 will take NC Check-Ins as determined by their principal. K-2 Students will participate in Dibels assessments 3x a year.

For campus-specific testing dates and assessment schedules, please refer to the applicable Campus Addendum.

Testing Compliance

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy administers all required local, state, and federal assessments in accordance with North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) guidelines and applicable laws. Assessment results are used to monitor student progress, guide instructional decisions, and identify students who may benefit from additional academic support, intervention, or enrichment. A designated School Testing Coordinator oversees the administration of all assessments to ensure compliance with state testing procedures, testing security requirements, and the North Carolina Testing Code of Ethics. All testing materials are maintained in a secure manner, and all staff involved in the testing process are required to adhere to established state testing policies and ethical standards.

Student Evaluation/Grading

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to providing families with timely and meaningful information about their child's academic progress. Student achievement is monitored throughout the year using classroom assessments, assignments, projects, participation, and other measures of learning.

The academic year is organized as follows:

- Elementary and Middle School (Grades K–8): Four nine-week grading periods
- High School (Grades 9–12): Two semesters

Report cards are issued electronically through Infinite Campus at the end of each grading period. Parents

and guardians may access their student's grades, attendance, assignments, and academic progress at any time through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Families will also be notified of interim grade review dates during each grading period.

PSPA does not distribute paper copies of report cards or progress reports. Parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring their student's academic progress through Infinite Campus and ensuring their contact information remains current.

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy will use a 10-point Grading Scale for Grades 2-12

GRADE	PROFICIENCY PERCENTAGE
A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	70 - 79
D	60 - 69
F	59 - below

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy will use a S, N, U scale for Grades K-1

GRADE	PROFICIENCY PERCENTAGE
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

S/N/U will also be used when deemed appropriate:

S= Satisfactory/ N= Needs Improvement/ U= Unsatisfactory

Report Cards

Report cards are issued electronically through Infinite Campus at the end of each grading period. Parents and guardians may access report cards, grades, attendance, and other academic information at any time through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. PSPA does not distribute paper copies of report cards.

Academic Accountability

To support academic success, students are expected to:

- Complete assignments on time and to the best of their ability.
- Actively participate in classroom instruction and learning activities.
- Demonstrate consistent academic progress toward meeting grade-level or course expectations.
- Arrive to each class prepared with the necessary materials and ready to learn.
- Use school-issued materials, technology, and instructional resources responsibly and only for

educational purposes.

- Seek assistance from teachers when additional support is needed and take responsibility for their own learning.

Textbooks/Workbooks

Students are responsible for the care and timely return of all textbooks, workbooks, library books, novels, and other instructional materials issued by the school. Students should bring required materials to class each day as directed by their teacher. If a student fails to bring an assigned textbook or instructional material to class for five consecutive class periods, the item may be considered lost. Parents or guardians may be billed for the replacement cost of lost, damaged, or unreturned materials. For the purposes of this policy, the term "textbook" includes any instructional resource issued to a student for classroom or home use, including novels, library books, and supplemental instructional materials.

Homework Policy

Homework provides students with opportunities to practice and reinforce skills and concepts taught during the school day while fostering responsibility, organization, and independent learning. Students are expected to complete homework assignments on time and to the best of their ability. Habitual failure to complete assignments may result in parent or guardian communication, academic interventions, or other appropriate supports. Teachers have the discretion to establish classroom homework expectations and determine opportunities for late or make-up assignments in accordance with classroom procedures and school policies.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the attempt to pass off the ideas, research, theories or words of others as one's own, without giving appropriate credit, *regardless of how that work was obtained*. Academic work produced through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is not considered a student's authentic, original work and as such, subject to being considered plagiarized work. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Most students know when they are intentionally plagiarizing, for example copying an entire essay of a book or buying a paper off the Internet. However, many people are tripped up by unintentional plagiarism, that is, not giving proper credit for others' quotes, facts, ideas or data. Plagiarism demonstrates a lack of integrity and character that is inconsistent with the goals and values at PSPA. Excellent written expression of well-formulated ideas is a fundamental skill for academic and career success. Plagiarism interferes with the assessment and feedback process that is necessary in order to promote academic growth. Plagiarism defrauds the instructor with a false view of a student's strengths and weaknesses. It may prevent further instruction in areas of weakness and delay the student in reaching his or her potential.

Plagiarism includes:

- Taking someone else's assignment or portion of an assignment and submitting it as your own.
- Submitting work written by someone else or rephrasing the ideas of another without citing the source.
- Presenting the work of tutors, parents, siblings, or friends as your own.
- Submitting purchased papers as your own.
- Submitting papers from the Internet written by someone else as your own (ex: utilizing artificial intelligence to complete coursework)
- Supporting plagiarism by providing your work to others, whether you believe it will be copied or not.

- Utilizing artificial intelligence tools to produce work that was not authored by the student.

The following behaviors promote true student achievement:

- Being prepared. Try to keep a realistic schedule balancing academic obligations and your social life.
- Make certain that you understand your assignments and the grading assessment / rubric that will be used. If you have questions about an assignment or an assessment, talk to your instructor. Do not rely solely upon a classmate for clarification.
- If you study for a test with a classmate, make sure that you do not sit near each other during the test since your responses (and errors) may be similar.
- Do not read or scan someone else's paper before writing your own. Some of the ideas in the other person's paper may be ideas that you would have used, but you will now need to credit the person whose paper you read.
- Use all avenues of support available to you. For help needed beyond the classroom, see your instructor, other instructors in the department, a peer tutor, or a parent or other adult who is well versed in the subject.
- Assignments should be considered individual unless the instructor states otherwise.
- Be organized. Having class notes in an orderly, easily accessible format will save time and anxiety when studying for a test or writing a paper.
- Keep current with assignments. If you need to read an entire novel the evening before a test or before a paper is due on that novel, your performance will suffer.
- If, for whatever reason, you choose to use another's ideas or solutions, cite that person as a source on your paper or project.
- Know what constitutes cheating, including all the variations of plagiarism.

The role of parental support in their children's achievement and ethical development:

- 1) Assess your child's abilities realistically. Help her/him to choose courses in which she/he will be successful and challenged without undue stress.
- 2) Don't push children beyond their limits with your expectations or aspirations. Many times students make bad decisions because the pressure to excel is greater than their ability to meet the expectations.
- 3) If you suspect your child is experiencing difficulty in a class, please contact the teacher. The sooner a problem is identified; the sooner steps can be taken to alleviate it.
- 4) If your child is caught cheating and you are called, please remember that this is a learning experience; help your child to accept the consequences for his/her inappropriate actions.

Repercussions:

Plagiarism is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and consequences will be given accordingly.

How to Avoid Plagiarism: Give Credit Where Credit Is Due! When in Doubt, Give Credit!

A good rule-of-thumb is to always give credit for any ideas that aren't yours by citing your sources.

Different disciplines, publications, and teachers have different standards for citation. Usually, your teacher will specify how you should present your citations, and if they don't, please ask.

FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Field trips are an important extension of the educational program at Pine Springs Preparatory Academy. These experiences provide students with opportunities to enhance classroom learning, explore real-world applications, and build positive relationships with their peers and teachers. Students participating in school-sponsored field trips are expected to follow all school rules, the Student Code of Conduct, and the directions of school staff throughout the duration of the trip. Students are expected to remain with their assigned group and may not leave a field trip early unless approved by school administration in the event of an emergency.

Due to the supervision responsibilities of approved chaperones, additional children or individuals who are not participating in the designated field trip may not accompany chaperones.

Field Trip Expectations

- A signed parent or guardian permission form is required for all field trips.
- All parent chaperones must be approved by the school and have a current background check completed within the previous 12 months.
- Students may be excluded from participation in a field trip due to disciplinary concerns, at the discretion of school administration. Any associated fees may be forfeited.
- Refunds cannot be guaranteed once payments have been submitted to transportation providers, vendors, or field trip organizations.
- Students are expected to participate in all required instructional field trips unless prior approval is granted by school administration. Failure to attend a required field trip without approval may result in an unexcused absence.
- Participation in optional field trips occurring outside the regular school day is voluntary.

Student Safety

To ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, students attending school-sponsored field trips remain subject to all school policies. When reasonable suspicion exists that a student possesses prohibited items or has violated school policy or the law, school officials may conduct a search of the student's belongings or assigned accommodations, consistent with applicable law. Local law enforcement may be contacted when appropriate.

Students with Disabilities

PSPA is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored field trips. Accommodations identified in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan will be provided as required by law. Parents or guardians are encouraged to communicate with school staff in advance of overnight or extended trips to discuss any additional support needs.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and provides parents and eligible students with specific rights regarding those records.

Under FERPA, parents (and eligible students once they reach age 18 or attend a postsecondary institution) have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records.

- Request the correction of records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.
- Provide written consent before personally identifiable information is disclosed from a student's education records, except as permitted by law.

FERPA permits schools to disclose education records without prior written consent in certain circumstances, including, but not limited to:

- School officials with legitimate educational interests
- Schools to which a student is transferring
- Authorized government officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Financial aid purposes
- Accrediting organizations
- Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Health or safety emergencies
- Other circumstances permitted under federal or state law

Directory Information

Unless a parent or eligible student requests otherwise in writing, PSPA may designate certain student information as directory information, including a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, honors, awards, and participation in school activities, as permitted by FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who do not wish for directory information to be released must submit a written request to the school office by the end of the first week of school.

Questions regarding student records or FERPA rights may be directed to the school's administration.

NC PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

On August 16, 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly ratified the NC Sess. Law. 2023-106, commonly known as the "Parents' Bill of Rights." The law enumerates the rights of parents to participate in and direct the education of their children. It also requires public school units, including charter schools, to adopt numerous policies implementing its provisions. PSPA's policies have been prepared and made available to members of the North Carolina Coalition for Charter Schools and have been adapted and adopted by the Pine Springs Preparatory Academy Board of Directors.

View Policy Online: [Parents Bill of Rights](#)

DRESS CODE

The purpose of the PSPA Dress Code is to promote a safe, respectful, and academically focused learning environment while fostering school pride and a sense of community. Students are expected to wear attire that is neat, modest, appropriate for school, and does not disrupt the educational environment. Pine Springs Preparatory Academy believes that appropriate dress supports student learning, encourages personal responsibility, and reflects respect for oneself and others. Students are expected to comply with the school's uniform policy while on campus, during school-sponsored events, and on field trips unless otherwise approved by school administration. Failure to comply with the PSPA Uniform Policy or Dress Code may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Uniform Policy

Students are required to wear the approved PSPA school uniform each school day unless an alternate

dress code has been authorized by school administration for a special event or designated school activity. Failure to comply with the Uniform Policy is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Parents or guardians may be contacted and asked to provide appropriate uniform attire if a student is not in compliance with the dress code. The official and exclusive provider of PSPA logo apparel is Lands' End. Uniform items displaying the PSPA logo must be purchased through the approved vendor. Uniform bottoms and other approved non-logo items may be purchased from any retailer, provided they meet the school's dress code specifications. Unauthorized vendors may not reproduce or sell apparel bearing the PSPA logo.

PSPA Dress Code

For campus-specific dress code requirements, please refer to the applicable Campus Addendum.

Special “Non-Uniform” Days

1. Spirit Wear Days

The first Friday of each month is designated as Spirit Wear Day unless otherwise communicated by school administration. Students may wear approved PSPA Spirit Wear, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, and hoodies purchased through the PSPA PTO, Athletic Department, or other school-approved organizations. Spirit Wear Days are intended to promote school pride and do not include apparel representing professional sports teams, colleges, universities, or other organizations.

Students wearing an approved PSPA Spirit Wear top may wear school-appropriate non-uniform bottoms. The following expectations apply:

- Bottoms must be school-appropriate and in good condition.
- Pajama pants are not permitted.
- Shorts, skirts, and skorts must meet the school's length requirements.
- Jeans may be worn but may not contain holes or tears that expose skin or undergarments.
- Leggings may be worn provided they are not see-through or excessively distressed.
- Shoes must meet the same requirements as the regular school uniform policy (closed-toe, closed-heel, securely fastened).

School administration reserves the right to determine whether attire is appropriate for Spirit Wear Days. Students who are not in compliance may be required to change into appropriate clothing and may be subject to the Student Code of Conduct.

2. Dress-Down Days

The third Friday of each month is designated as a Dress Down Day, unless otherwise communicated by school administration.

Students may wear school-appropriate non-uniform clothing that is neat, modest, and suitable for the educational environment. The following expectations apply:

- Pajama pants are not permitted.
- Shorts, skirts, and skorts must meet the school's length requirements.
- Jeans may be worn but may not contain holes or tears that expose skin or undergarments.
- Leggings may be worn provided they are not see-through or excessively distressed.
- Shoes must meet the same requirements as regular school uniform days (closed-toe, closed-heel, and securely fastened).
- Clothing may not display profanity, inappropriate language, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, weapons, violence, or images or messages that are disruptive, offensive, or inconsistent with the school's mission and values.

School administration reserves the right to determine whether attire is appropriate. Students who are not in compliance may be required to change into appropriate clothing and may be subject to the Student Code of Conduct.

Parent Partnership

Parents and guardians are encouraged to review their student's attire before arriving at school. Taking a few moments to ensure clothing complies with the Dress Code helps prevent interruptions to the school day and avoids the need for families to bring a change of clothing. If you are uncertain whether an item is appropriate for school, we encourage you to choose a different option.

Backpacks

Students may bring a backpack to school for transporting books, school supplies, and personal items. Backpacks with wheels are not permitted, unless approved by school administration as a documented accommodation.

To help maintain a safe school environment, student backpacks, bags, and other personal belongings may be searched by school officials when there is reasonable suspicion that they contain items prohibited by school policy or law. Searches will be conducted in accordance with applicable laws and PSPA's Student Searches policy outlined in the School Safety section of this handbook.

SCHOOL HOURS AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Regular attendance is essential to student success. Daily participation in classroom instruction helps students develop academically, socially, and emotionally while maintaining continuity in their learning. Parents and guardians are expected to ensure that students attend school regularly and arrive on time each day, except in cases of illness or other excused absences permitted by law.

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy complies with the North Carolina Compulsory School Attendance Law and all applicable state attendance requirements.

Arrival & Dismissal

To ensure the safety of all students, parents and guardians are expected to follow all arrival and dismissal procedures and adhere to designated drop-off and pick-up times.

For campus-specific arrival/dismissal times and procedures, please refer to the applicable Campus Addendum.

Afternoon Dismissal

Students will only be released to individuals listed on the student's Authorized Pick-Up List. If someone not listed on the Authorized Pick-Up List will be picking up a student, the parent or guardian must provide written authorization to the school prior to dismissal. Any individual picking up a student must present a valid government-issued photo ID before the student will be released. A current PSPA car tag must be displayed during dismissal to assist staff in identifying authorized vehicles and ensuring an efficient dismissal process.

Late Pick-Up

Students remaining on campus after dismissal will be supervised in the school office until they are picked up. **For campus-specific late pick up policies, please refer to the applicable Campus Addendum.**

Legal Custody

Parents or guardians are responsible for providing the school with copies of any current court orders that affect legal custody, visitation, or restrictions regarding the release of a student. This includes custody agreements, parenting plans, restraining orders, protective orders, or other court-issued documents.

Updated documentation should be provided to the school immediately whenever changes occur. In the absence of a valid court order limiting parental rights, North Carolina law presumes that both parents have equal legal rights to access their child's educational records and to pick up their child from school. PSPA will comply with all applicable court orders that have been provided to the school. School staff cannot enforce custody or visitation arrangements that have not been documented through a current court order on file with the school.

Transportation

PSPA will not have traditional bus transportation for students in grades K-8, but will contract arrangements to provide any barrier transportation that is required by law. Transportation options for high school students are identified in the High School Addendum. Parents are expected to make transportation arrangements for students. Parents will be educated about the carline procedures. Parents will comply with all carline procedures and expectations in order to ensure the safety of all PSPA students, staff, and families. Carpooling is encouraged. For afternoon pickup, car tags are required for pickup. Unless the school has been informed in advance, only authorized contacts for the student (parent, guardian, emergency contact as listed in our Student Information System) may pick up students. The use of ride share options such as Uber, Lyft, etc. to pick up students are not accepted.

Parking

Families and visitors may park in any designated parking space during regular school hours unless otherwise marked or reserved. For the safety of students and staff, please observe all posted traffic signs, including "No Parking" and fire lane restrictions, particularly during arrival and dismissal times. All visitors must enter the school through the main entrance and check in at the front office before proceeding elsewhere on campus. Visitors may be required to present a valid government-issued photo ID and comply with all school visitor procedures. Please help maintain a safe and efficient campus by following all parking, traffic flow, and carline procedures established by PSPA.

Absences Policies and Procedures

Regular school attendance is essential to student success and is required by North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend school regularly and arrive on time each day.

Attendance Expectations

- Students should attend school every day unless prevented by illness or another excused reason permitted by state law.
- If your child will be absent, please notify the school by emailing your child's teacher or following your campus attendance reporting procedures.
- Students must be present for at least four (4) hours of instructional time to be counted present for the school day.
- Students arriving late or leaving early may be marked absent for missed class periods, particularly in Grades 6–12.

- Students who miss more than half of the instructional day will be marked absent for the day.

Released Time Religious Instruction

In accordance with North Carolina law, Pine Springs Preparatory Academy adheres to the law that allows students to participate in released time religious instruction during the school year, provided all statutory requirements are met.

Excused Absences

An absence may be excused when appropriate documentation is provided for one of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the student
- Isolation ordered by the local or state health department
- Death in the immediate family
- Medical or dental appointments (documentation may be required)
- Court appearance under subpoena
- Religious observance
- Participation in a pre-approved educational opportunity
- Catastrophic event or natural disaster
- Parent deployment or return from military deployment

Absences for reasons not listed above will generally be considered unexcused, even if a parent or guardian provides a note. Students should submit a written note or other required documentation upon returning to school following an absence.

Make-Up Work

Students with excused absences are expected to make up missed assignments within one (1) week of returning to school unless otherwise determined by the teacher. Students with unexcused absences may receive reduced credit or may not be permitted to make up missed assignments, at the discretion of the teacher and in accordance with school policy. Any approved make-up work must be completed within one week of the student's return.

Excessive Unexcused Absences

In accordance with North Carolina law:

- After three (3) unexcused absences, the parent or guardian will be notified.
- After six (6) unexcused absences, written notification will be provided advising the parent or guardian that continued unexcused absences may constitute a violation of the North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law.
- After ten (10) unexcused absences, school administration will require a parent conference and implement additional interventions as required by state law. When appropriate, the school may make referrals to outside agencies or initiate additional legal procedures.

Students who accumulate ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences may be withdrawn from enrollment in accordance with North Carolina attendance requirements. If withdrawn, the student's seat may be offered

to another applicant, and re-enrollment is not guaranteed.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Students must be present for at least one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the instructional day to participate in or attend extracurricular activities, including athletics, clubs, dances, performances, and other school-sponsored events. Students with an unexcused absence may not participate in extracurricular activities on the day of the absence.

Early Dismissal

If a student must leave school before the end of the instructional day, a parent, guardian, or authorized adult must sign the student out through the school office no later than:

- 2:00 p.m. – Elementary School (K–5)
- 2:30 p.m. – Middle School (Grades 6–8)
- 3:00 p.m. – High School (Grades 9–12)

Students will only be released to individuals listed on the student's Authorized Pick-Up List or those otherwise authorized in writing by a parent or guardian.

Planned Extended Absences

Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to schedule family vacations and other non-emergency travel during school breaks whenever possible. Extended absences during the school year may negatively impact a student's academic progress and are generally discouraged. If an extended absence is unavoidable, parents or guardians must notify the school in writing at least one (1) week prior to the student's first day of absence. School administration will review the request; however, notification does not automatically excuse the absence. Students are responsible for making up missed assignments in accordance with the school's Attendance and Make-Up Work policies. Absences that do not meet the criteria for an excused absence under North Carolina law will be recorded as unexcused.

Excused Absence for Educational Purposes

In accordance with North Carolina attendance guidelines, a student may be granted an excused absence for an educational opportunity when the primary purpose of the activity is educational and the experience is comparable to instruction that would otherwise occur in school.

Requests for educational absences must:

- Be submitted in writing at least five (5) school days before the anticipated absence.
- Clearly describe the educational purpose and learning objectives of the activity.
- Receive prior approval from school administration.
- Not result in excessive absences that would substantially interfere with the student's educational progress.

Requests submitted after the student returns to school will not be considered for approval. Family vacations or personal travel that are recreational in nature are not considered educational opportunities and will generally be recorded as unexcused absences, even if educational activities are included during the trip.

Examples of Approved Educational Opportunities

The following are examples of activities that may qualify for an excused educational absence:

- Attendance at a gubernatorial, presidential, or other significant civic event
- School-approved student leadership conferences or competitions
- Community service or volunteer experiences approved in advance by school administration
- Other educational experiences that directly support the student's academic learning

Examples of Non-Approved Educational Opportunities

The following activities generally do not qualify as educational absences:

- Family vacations or cruises
- Trips to amusement or theme parks, even if educational exhibits are available
- Domestic or international travel to visit family or friends
- Recreational travel or sightseeing

Approval of an educational absence is at the discretion of school administration and will be based on the educational value of the experience, the student's attendance history, academic progress, and the overall impact of the absence on the student's learning.

To request an excused absence for educational purposes, please complete [Request for Excused Absence Form](#) and return to the appropriate principal:

Tardy Policy

Students are expected to arrive at school on time each day and report promptly to all scheduled classes. Tardiness disrupts instruction and may negatively impact student learning. Students arriving after the start of the instructional day must be signed in through the school office by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult before reporting to class.

Tardies may be excused for reasons permitted under North Carolina attendance guidelines, including:

- Medical or dental appointments (documentation required)
- Court appearances (documentation required)
- Illness, when accompanied by parent communication and the student is signed in by a parent or guardian
- Other circumstances approved by school administration

Excessive tardiness will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and may result in parent conferences, attendance interventions, or other appropriate administrative action.

Early Check-Outs

Parents and guardians are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of school hours whenever possible, as early dismissals interrupt classroom instruction.

If a student must leave school before the end of the instructional day:

- A parent, guardian, or authorized adult must sign the student out through the school office.

- Students returning to school the same day must be signed back in through the school office.
- Parents are encouraged to notify the student's teacher in advance whenever possible.
- Students will only be released to individuals listed on the student's Authorized Pick-Up List or to individuals authorized in writing by the parent or guardian.
- A valid government-issued photo ID may be required before a student is released.

Early dismissals are considered part of a student's attendance record and may affect attendance reporting in accordance with PSPA's attendance policies.

Withdrawal Procedures

If a parent or guardian chooses to withdraw a student from Pine Springs Preparatory Academy, the school must receive the request in writing. The student's withdrawal date will be based on the date the written notification is received unless otherwise approved by school administration. When PSPA receives an official records request from another school for a currently enrolled student, the request will generally be considered confirmation of the student's enrollment at the receiving school, and the student will be withdrawn from PSPA unless the parent or guardian notifies the school otherwise. Prior to withdrawal, families are asked to return all school-issued materials, including textbooks, library books, technology devices, uniforms (if applicable), and any other school property. Parents or guardians are responsible for the replacement cost of any lost, damaged, or unreturned school property. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and applicable North Carolina law, PSPA will release student education records to another educational institution upon receipt of an official records request. Outstanding financial obligations or unreturned school property do not prevent the release of education records required by law; however, families remain responsible for any unpaid fees or replacement costs associated with school-issued property.

Inclement Weather Procedures

The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority. In the event of inclement weather or other emergency conditions, Pine Springs Preparatory Academy will determine whether to delay, close, or modify school operations based on current weather conditions, road safety, and local emergency guidance. Families will be notified of school delays, closures, or schedule changes through the school's primary communication platforms.

Please note: Decisions made by the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), or other neighboring county school districts regarding delays or school closures do not apply to Pine Springs Preparatory Academy. Families should rely only on official PSPA communications for school operating information.

VOLUNTEER POLICY

PSPA believes that education is a partnership between our school, our staff and our families. We feel that direct parent involvement with the school creates a much more effective environment for learning and development. As a result, PSPA expects that each family volunteers a minimum of 10 hours per school year, or one hour of service each month as a contribution toward the education of their child(ren). The areas for making these service contributions are many and include off-campus as well as on-campus volunteer opportunities. Some suggested areas are PTO, classroom support, administrative support, general school services, academic and enrichment services, athletics, campus maintenance, curriculum resources, special events, and public relations. The PTO coordinates many volunteer activities. Volunteers must have a background check before being permitted to interact with students.

1. All volunteers at PSPA are required to:
 - a. Have a background check performed through PSPA's third party vendor on file dated within 365 days from the date of providing volunteer services.
 - b. Have a Sex Offender Registry Check on file dated within 365 days from the date of providing volunteer services.
 - c. Complete, sign, and date a Volunteer Information & Background Check Form online.
 - d. The School Administration or his/her designee will formally approve volunteer applications, and volunteers must be placed on the Authorized Volunteer list before volunteering their services at the School. Administrative staff will have a copy of the Authorized Volunteer list and will prohibit any person not on this list from volunteering at the school.
2. Information collected during the screening process for volunteers will be treated as confidential to the extent allowed by the law.
3. The School Administration or her/his designee will review all criminal background checks. No person who has been convicted of crimes against children, sex crimes, or serious crimes of violence will be allowed to volunteer at the School. The School Administration will evaluate criminal records on an individual basis. If a criminal history presents itself in a review, the School Administration shall determine whether the results of the review indicate that the volunteer (i) poses a threat to the physical safety of students or personnel, or (ii) has demonstrated that he or she does not have the integrity or honesty to fulfill his or her duties as a volunteer. Final determination as to whether a parent may serve as a volunteer is at the sole discretion of the Superintendent.
4. All volunteers must report directly to the School office when they arrive and should sign in under Volunteer on the Ident-A-Kid system. The School office will provide an official badge identifying the volunteer that must be worn at all times. For your convenience, you may purchase a Jiffy Pass fob that will allow you to bypass Keyboard entry for volunteering. You will swipe the fob to check-in/-out of the premises. The cost of each fob will be \$6 and can be purchased at the front Desk. Jiffy Pass users will use Name Tags provided by PSPA. Jiffy Passes will be honored for the duration of the Background checks.
5. All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age unless they are supervised by another responsible adult as approved by the Administrator or his/her designee.
6. Volunteers work in partnership with, under the supervision of, and at the request of School administration and staff. Volunteers are expected to abide by all Board policies, procedures, and School rules when performing their assigned responsibilities. The School Administration or his/her designee shall make volunteers aware of all applicable policies, procedures, and rules at the Volunteer Orientation before they begin their first volunteer assignment.

7. Volunteers will not have access to confidential information in student records except as allowed by federal and state laws and regulations. Volunteers will be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding information seen and heard while working as a volunteer. If there is a safety concern or an emergency situation, it must immediately be communicated to someone in authority at the School.
8. Volunteers shall not use information learned or acquired in the course of volunteering for any reason other than in furtherance of their volunteer efforts at the School. For example, if a volunteer is a class parent and receives parent email information to communicate with parents, the volunteer shall not share parent email addresses with others and shall not use such email addresses to communicate with parents about anything other than for the purpose of serving as class parent.
9. Volunteers are to serve as positive role models. PSPA volunteers must always:
 - Use appropriate language
 - Dress appropriately
 - Discuss age-appropriate topics
 - Refrain from inappropriately touching students
10. Volunteers are prohibited from disciplining students. Behaviors requiring discipline should be reported immediately to the appropriate teacher or staff member.
11. Volunteers are prohibited from administering medications of any kind to students.
12. Volunteers should refrain from giving students gifts, rewards, or food items of any kind without the permission of School personnel.
 - Volunteers are expected to be prompt and dependable. Volunteers should notify the School office if an illness or emergency prohibits them from attending a volunteer assignment.
 - Volunteers may not take students off School property without the written permission of parents and School personnel.
 - Volunteers who are working in the classrooms during instructional time must leave children not enrolled in PSPA at home when volunteering.
13. Volunteers shall not share information that may be learned about students, staff, or school plans and operations during their time as a volunteer in a manner that could negatively impact the student, staff member, or overall school operations. This includes sharing information verbally or via social media.

PSPA does not tolerate any kind of discrimination or harassment by volunteers of the School and it is expected that all volunteers will comply with the School's policies related to such matters.

FOOD POLICIES

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to providing students with a safe, healthy, and positive dining environment. Families are encouraged to support healthy eating habits while following the school's food safety procedures and allergy guidelines.

Lunch Procedures

Students have two lunch options each school day:

- Bring a lunch from home

- Order lunch through My Hot Lunch Box, PSPA's approved lunch vendor, at www.myhotlunchbox.com

Meals ordered through My Hot Lunch Box are prepared by local restaurants, individually packaged, and delivered directly to the school. No money is exchanged on campus.

Please label all lunch boxes and reusable containers with your student's name.

Forgotten Lunches

Lunch counts are confirmed each morning. If a student arrives without lunch, the teacher or school staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian.

If a lunch cannot be delivered before the student's scheduled lunch period:

- Grades K–4: PSPA will provide lunch at a cost of \$7.00, billed to the parent or guardian.
- Repeated forgotten lunches may result in an additional \$1.00 charge per occurrence.
- Grades 5–12: PSPA will provide a basic meal consisting of a fruit and protein option.

Lunch Visitors

Parents and guardians wishing to eat lunch with their student must notify the student's teacher at least 24 hours in advance. Lunch schedules occasionally change due to field trips, assemblies, testing, or other school activities. Visitor requests cannot always be accommodated if instructional schedules are affected. To ensure student safety and efficient cafeteria operations, parents are not permitted to volunteer during student lunch periods.

Snack Procedures

Students may have time for a snack each day. Please pack a snack and a clear reusable water bottle every day. Please make sure you label your child's water bottle with their name. We encourage students to pack a healthy snack such as fruits or vegetables. Parents must disclose all food allergies directly to the teacher AND school office in writing. A sign will be placed outside the classroom as a notification that a specific allergy symptom is active inside the classroom.

Prohibited Food/Drink Items

The following items are not allowed on campus. Students bringing items above will have them taken and will be disposed of. They will not be returned at the end of the day.

- Gum
- Candy
- Soda
- Coffee and coffee-related drinks
- Energy drinks

Food Allergies

PSPA is committed to providing a safe learning environment for students with food allergies.

- Parents must notify both the teacher and school office of all food allergies in writing.
- Classroom allergy notifications may be posted as appropriate.

- Home-baked goods may not be brought to school for classroom consumption.
- Any food provided for classroom activities must comply with classroom allergy restrictions and school safety guidelines.

Birthday Celebrations

To maximize instructional time and ensure an inclusive environment for all students, birthday parties and the distribution of birthday treats are not permitted during the school day. Families are encouraged to celebrate birthdays outside of school hours.

Deliveries of food and other items

We do not accept the delivery of food, flowers or gifts for students in the main office. Only lunches and eyeglasses will be accepted in the front office. Homework, musical instruments, Chromebooks and additional coats, umbrellas, and other items will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances. We believe in encouraging student responsibility and would ask parents not to come back to the school with forgotten items.

Food that parents or students order online that is delivered to the school will not be given to the student. The delivery person will be told that we will not accept the order and any financial reimbursement or consequence will be for the parent and the delivery service to resolve.

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy values strong communication between families and school staff. Open, respectful, and timely communication helps foster positive relationships and supports student success.

Contacting School Staff

Email is the preferred and most efficient method of communication with teachers and staff. Staff email addresses follow the format:

First Initial + Last Name @pinespringsprep.org

Example: jdoe@pinespringsprep.org

Families may also contact the school offices during regular business hours:

- Elementary School: (919) 439-9448
- Middle School: (984) 217-1724
- High School: *(Insert High School Office Number)*

If a staff member is unavailable, office personnel will gladly take a message.

Meetings with School Personnel

Conferences with teachers, counselors, or administrators must be scheduled in advance. Because teachers are actively engaged in instruction and supervising students throughout the school day, unscheduled classroom visits or conferences are not permitted. Parents and guardians should allow up to two (2) business days for teachers and administrators to respond to emails or phone messages. School breaks,

holidays, and summer months may require additional response time.

Student Messages

To minimize classroom interruptions, personal messages will only be delivered to students in the event of an emergency. Parents and guardians should contact the school office if an urgent message needs to be communicated to a student during the school day.

Student Cell Phones

Students may not use personal cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices during the instructional day except as permitted by school policy or with authorization from school personnel.

Presenting Concerns

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy values open, respectful, and collaborative communication between families and school staff. Parents and guardians are encouraged to address questions or concerns promptly so they can be resolved in a timely and constructive manner. When a concern arises regarding a classroom matter, the student's teacher should be the first point of contact. Most questions and concerns can be resolved through direct communication with the teacher. If the concern cannot be resolved after communicating with the teacher, parents or guardians may contact the appropriate school administrator for further assistance. Administration will review the concern, communicate with the appropriate parties, and work collaboratively to seek an appropriate resolution. PSPA encourages all members of the school community to communicate respectfully and professionally, with the shared goal of supporting student success.

Grievance Policy for Parents and Students

Most issues that a parent or student have with the classroom, teacher or school do not rise to the level of a grievance and appropriate resolution will likely be found with the teacher and/or the school administration.

A grievance is a verifiable assertion that a school employee has violated a school policy, Board policy, or a law. Parents may file a grievance as follows:

1. **Filing A Grievance.** A grievance may be filed by a parent by submitting a written explanation of the issue and the specific school policy, Board policy, or law that is being alleged to have been violated by sending an email to the Chairperson for the Board of Directors of the school (whose such email can be found at the school website). The subject of the email needs to state: "Grievance" or otherwise give reasonable notice to the Chairperson for the Board of Directors that the parent is filing a grievance pursuant to this policy. A parent may file a grievance but only after the parent has exhausted the available remedies and filed as follows:

(A) The parent must show they attempted in good faith to resolve the issue with the appropriate teacher or principal; and

(B) The parent must show they attempted in good faith to resolve the issue with the school administration, including the Superintendent, via an in-person meeting; and

(C) The parent must show they were not provided an adequate remedy to rectify the grievance by the teacher, administration or the Superintendent; and

(D) The parent must file the grievance within ten (10) days after the in-person meeting with the

Superintendent.

2. **Certification of a Grievance.** Within ten (10) business days after receipt of a grievance, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors will determine, in his or her sole discretion, if a grievance meets the requirements set forth in Section 1 above. If the Chairperson of the Board of Directors determines in his or her sole discretion that the grievance meets the requirements set forth in Section 1 above, the grievance shall be considered “Certified”. If the Chairperson of the Board of Directors determines in his or her sole discretion that the grievance does not meet the requirements set forth in Section 1 above, the grievance shall be considered “Rejected”. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors shall notify the filing party whether or not the grievance is Certified or Rejected. If the grievance is Certified, the process as set forth below in Section 3 will be followed. If the grievance is Rejected, no further action will be taken by the school and the decision is final.

3. **The Certified Grievance Process.**

Step 1 Establishing Grievance Committee. Once a grievance has been Certified, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, in his or her sole discretion, will appoint a Grievance Committee made up of at least two (2) Board Members to handle the grievance. The Grievance Committee shall be appointed within thirty (30) days after the grievance has been Certified.

Step 2a Requesting Written Position Statements. The Grievance Committee will contact both the grieving party and the school administration within ten (10) days of appointment and request written position statements setting forth each side’s position as to the grievance and the desired outcome of the grievance. The written position statements are to be submitted within ten (10) days of the request.

Step 2b Setting a Grievance Hearing Date. Contemporaneously with the request for written position statements, the Grievance Committee will work with the parties to set a hearing date as soon as practicable, but not later than thirty (30) days after the Grievance Committee has been appointed.

Step 3 Grievance Hearing. Direct confrontation or interrupting while the other party is presenting to the Grievance Committee will not be tolerated. All parties are to remain civil, or the Grievance Hearing will immediately terminate. At the grievance hearing, the grieving party will have thirty (30) minutes to present any arguments to the Grievance Committee and should state the desired outcome of the grievance. The school will have thirty (30) minutes to present any arguments in rebuttal and should state its desired outcome. The grieving party will then have five (5) minutes to respond to the counterarguments by the school administration. Finally, the school will have five (5) minutes to respond to the counterarguments of the grieving party.

Step 4 Ruling. The Board Committee will rule on the grievance within ten (10) days following the Grievance Hearing. The ruling will be provided to the grieving party and the Superintendent in writing. The Grievance Committee’s ruling is final.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Visitor Policy

To ensure the safety and security of all students and staff, all visitors must report to the main office immediately upon arriving on campus, regardless of the purpose or length of their visit.

Visitors are required to:

- Check in through the school's visitor management system.
- Present a valid government-issued photo ID if requested.
- Obtain and wear a school-issued visitor badge at all times while on campus.
- Return the visitor badge and sign out before leaving campus.

Classroom visits must be scheduled in advance with the teacher and approved by school administration. To minimize disruptions to instruction, unscheduled classroom visits are not permitted. Visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner and serve as positive role models for students. All visitors must comply with the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook while on school property or attending school-sponsored events. School administration reserves the right to deny or revoke visitor access when necessary to maintain the safety, security, and orderly operation of the school.

Video Monitoring

To help maintain a safe and secure learning environment, Pine Springs Preparatory Academy utilizes video surveillance systems on school property. Video monitoring is used to promote the safety of students, staff, and visitors; protect school property; and assist in enforcing school policies and applicable laws. Video surveillance cameras are located throughout school buildings and campus grounds. Cameras are not installed in areas where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, including restrooms, locker rooms, changing areas, or health office examination areas.

Video recordings may be used to:

- Support school safety and security efforts.
- Investigate incidents involving students, staff, or visitors.
- Assist in enforcing school policies and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Serve as evidence in student disciplinary proceedings when appropriate.
- Assist law enforcement agencies in the investigation of suspected criminal activity.
- Review incidents involving school property or campus operations.

Video recordings are maintained for official school purposes only and will be accessed or released only as permitted by applicable federal and state law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other applicable privacy laws. Video surveillance recordings are not used as part of routine teacher performance evaluations or instructional observations. This policy does not prohibit the use of separate video recordings for instructional purposes or professional development with appropriate authorization.

Weapons Ban Policy

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment. The possession, use, display, or threatened use of a weapon or replica of a weapon is strictly prohibited on school property, in school vehicles, and at all school-sponsored activities, whether on or off campus.

For the purposes of this policy, a weapon includes, but is not limited to:

- Firearms
- Knives

- Explosives or incendiary devices
- Metal knuckles
- Razors
- Chains used as weapons
- Poisonous or noxious substances
- Replica or toy weapons that could reasonably be perceived as real
- Any object used or intended to threaten, intimidate, or inflict bodily harm, as determined by school administration

Only on-duty law enforcement officers or the assigned School Resource Officer (SRO) are authorized to possess firearms or other weapons on school property or at school-sponsored events, except as otherwise permitted by applicable law.

Disciplinary Action

Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension, long-term suspension, expulsion, and referral to law enforcement, as permitted by North Carolina law. Consistent with the Gun-Free Schools Act and North Carolina law, students who bring a firearm to school may be recommended for expulsion for up to one (1) calendar year, unless modified by the Superintendent or Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis as permitted by law.

Reporting Requirements

As required by North Carolina law, PSPA will notify parents or guardians and immediately report incidents involving weapons or acts of violence to the appropriate law enforcement agency and any other government agency as required.

School administration is required to report incidents occurring on school property involving, but not limited to:

- Assault involving the use of a weapon
- Unlawful possession of a firearm
- Unlawful possession of any prohibited weapon

This reporting requirement applies regardless of the age or status of the individual involved and includes incidents occurring on school buildings, buses, campuses, grounds, athletic fields, and other school property.

Student Searches

To maintain a safe, secure, and orderly learning environment, Pine Springs Preparatory Academy may conduct student searches in accordance with applicable federal and North Carolina law. School administrators or authorized school officials may search a student's person, backpack, electronic device, vehicle (when applicable), locker, desk, or other personal belongings when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal evidence of a violation of school policy, the Student Code of Conduct, or the law. In addition, with approval from the Superintendent, the school may conduct certain general or suspicionless safety searches on school property when permitted by law to promote a safe, drug-free, and weapon-free school environment.

School Property

Student desks, lockers, and other school-issued property remain the property of PSPA and may be inspected or searched at any time. Students should not expect privacy in school-owned property and may not use school property to store illegal, prohibited, or unauthorized items.

Confiscated Items

Illegal, dangerous, or prohibited items discovered during a search may be confiscated and, when required, turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency. School administration may also notify parents or guardians and take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students who refuse to cooperate with a lawful search may be subject to disciplinary action.

Emergency Data

To help ensure the safety of all students, every family must complete and maintain current emergency contact information at the beginning of each school year. Families are responsible for notifying the school immediately of any changes to contact information throughout the school year.

Emergency contact information includes, but is not limited to:

- Home address
- Parent/guardian phone numbers (home, work, and mobile)
- Emergency contact names and phone numbers
- Individuals authorized to pick up the student from school
- Any other emergency information requested by the school

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure that all emergency contact information remains accurate and up to date. Failure to maintain current information may delay the school's ability to contact families or respond appropriately during an emergency.

Emergency Procedures

The safety of our students and staff is Pine Springs Preparatory Academy's highest priority. The school maintains comprehensive emergency response plans and conducts regular safety drills in accordance with North Carolina law and school safety requirements.

In the event of a medical emergency or other incident requiring immediate attention:

- School staff will provide appropriate first aid within the scope of their training.
- Parents or guardians will be contacted as soon as possible using the emergency contact information on file.
- If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will contact the student's designated emergency contact.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be contacted whenever the situation warrants immediate medical attention.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and is unable to remain at school, the parent, guardian, or an authorized individual listed on the student's Authorized Pick-Up List must sign the student out through the school office.

Emergency Drills

PSPA conducts regular emergency drills throughout the school year to prepare students and staff for a variety of emergency situations. These may include:

- Fire drills
- Severe weather (tornado) drills
- Lockdown drills
- Secure or lockout drills
- Evacuation drills
- Other safety drills as required by law or school policy

During an emergency or drill, students, staff, and visitors are expected to follow all directions provided by school personnel. Classroom evacuation routes and emergency procedures are posted in each instructional area. If an emergency requires evacuation or reunification, parents and guardians will receive instructions through the school's designated communication systems. Students will only be released to individuals authorized on the student's Authorized Pick-Up List, and identification may be required before a student is released.

Hazardous Chemicals

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The school complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and safety standards regarding the storage, handling, use, and disposal of hazardous chemicals and other potentially dangerous materials. Hazardous materials used for instructional, maintenance, or operational purposes are stored securely and handled only by authorized personnel in accordance with established safety procedures. The school conducts required inspections and follows appropriate emergency response protocols to minimize potential risks to the school community.

Student Photos and Publicity

Throughout the school year, Pine Springs Preparatory Academy may photograph, videotape, or otherwise record students for educational, promotional, or school-related purposes. Images or recordings may be used in school publications, newsletters, the school website, social media platforms, yearbooks, marketing materials, or other official school communications. Parents or guardians who do not wish for their student's image or likeness to be used must complete the school's Publicity Consent Form and submit it to the front office or complete the form through the school's designated online platform. PSPA will make every reasonable effort to honor the preferences indicated on the Publicity Consent Form.

Safe School Plan

In collaboration with their local government and community partners, PSPA takes steps to plan for potential emergencies. Safety planning includes the following components: Campus Security Plan, Student/Parent Handbook distribution and familiarization, Student Supervision, School Rules, Fire and Tornado Drills and a Crisis Intervention Plan.

PSPA provides information to students and parents/guardians about school safety and health issues through written communication such as the Student/Parent Handbook and the Safe School Plan. It provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other

written communications such as the Employee Handbook.

Both students and employees are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all school related activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor.

Employees who violate safety standards, cause hazardous or dangerous situations, fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the School Administration. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

PSPA manages the following procedures by outlining the actions and responsibilities of staff and administration in addressing the following issues:

- Medical Emergency
- Student in Crisis
- Natural Disaster
- Public Health
- Evacuation (Level I, II and III)
- Fire Drills
- Earthquake
- Severe Weather (Tornado and Hurricanes)
- Lockdown
- Bomb Threats
- Hostage Situation

School Administration will ensure the procedures are current and applicable. All applicable parties will be made aware of the procedures. The School Administration is also responsible for making sure that drills occur on a regular basis. The Superintendent is responsible for communicating these procedures to the Board of Directors.

STUDENT HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SAFETY

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The school's health and wellness policies are designed to promote student well-being while helping prevent the spread of illness and ensuring compliance with all applicable health and safety requirements. PSPA follows all guidance and requirements issued by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), and the local health department, as applicable. Additional information regarding medical requirements, immunizations, medications, illness guidelines, and other health-related procedures is available on the PSPA Health Services webpage. Families are encouraged to review this information annually and throughout the school year as updates occur.

[Health Service Information](#)

[Diabetes Education for Parents](#)

Suicide Prevention and Crisis Resources

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to supporting the mental health, safety, and

well-being of all students. Students and families are encouraged to seek help whenever they or someone they know is experiencing emotional distress, a mental health crisis, or thoughts of suicide.

The following confidential resources are available 24 hours a day:

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text **988**
- You may also text **HOME** to **741741** to connect with a trained Crisis Counselor.

North Carolina Peer Warmline

- Call **855-PEERS NC (855-733-7762)**

The North Carolina Peer Warmline is a free, non-emergency support line staffed by trained peer support specialists who provide encouragement, emotional support, and assistance connecting individuals with appropriate community resources. In accordance with North Carolina law, Pine Springs Preparatory Academy annually verifies that these contact numbers are current and provides this information in required locations, including the school website, student registration materials, student planners or calendars (if applicable), student identification cards for grades 6–12 (if issued), the home screen of school-issued electronic devices (when applicable), and materials distributed during suicide awareness activities. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger or experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICIES

Equal Education Opportunities

PSPA provides equal education opportunities for all students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected classification. PSPA adheres to the legal obligations and requirements under all state and federal laws, including without limitation, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1997, including identification, evaluation, and provision of an appropriate education.

Anti-Harassment Policy

PSPA is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to learning, free from improper and illegal discrimination and harassment, particularly that which is based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected classification. Furthermore, PSPA is committed to promoting the worth and dignity of all individuals, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, or disability. Discrimination involves intentionally treating anyone in an unequal or disparate manner because of that person's inherent or natural personal characteristics when such treatment causes the victim to suffer adverse educational, employment, or other school-related consequences. Harassment is any unwelcome offensive verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to significantly affect the conditions of one's employment or a student's learning. Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following: abusive jokes, insults, slurs, name-calling, threats, bullying or intimidation, unwelcome sexual advances, or the exchange of benefits for performance of sexual or other favors.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Of the various types of harassment, sexual harassment is worthy of special considerations beyond those applicable under the School's general Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy. No employee or student shall engage in sexual harassment against any other student, employee, or another person in the school community. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or sexually suggestive comments when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for student or employment decisions affecting such individuals.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following: deliberate, unwelcome touching; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward, or in the presence of, an individual or to describe an individual; or the display of sexually suggestive objects, signals, or pictures. A hostile environment exists if the conduct of a sexual nature is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or creates a hostile or abusive educational or work environment.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students are always prohibited in all circumstances. School employees are prohibited from engaging in romantic or other inappropriate relationships with students and are required to report such relationships or reasonable suspicions thereof, to the School Administration or other appropriate administrator. Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected sexual harassment shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct.

Bullying

PSPA follows the North Carolina law regarding bullying and harassing behavior. Bullying or harassing behavior is any **pattern** of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that:

1. Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
2. Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are prohibited at the School and during school-related activities between students, employees, school agents, volunteers, visitors and any other person associated with or under the control of the School. Procedures established by the School for reporting suspected discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be followed in any instances involving such conduct. PSPA prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. This policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints. Any PSPA employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official. A student or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or School employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report the incident to the appropriate school official. The School Administration is authorized and expected to establish training and administrative procedures to help eliminate discrimination, harassment, and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all individuals.

Procedures for Handling Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

- Any student who believes s/he is the victim of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination should immediately inform a trusted teacher, advisor or school official. Students are also encouraged to inform their parents. Likewise, if a student witnesses a situation of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination, they should share what they witnessed to a school official.
- When anyone reports harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination to a school employee, that employee shall notify the School Administration as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- If the School Administration is involved in the allegation, then another administrator will immediately inform the Chair of the Board of Directors who will conduct the investigation, working in concert with the School's Board of Directors. In all other cases, the School Administration will be immediately informed and will conduct an investigation or appoint a designee to conduct the investigation.
- In conducting an investigation, a group may be convened to include some of all of the following: the student's advisor, other teachers or administrators, the school counselor, and any other appropriate personnel. Interviews will be conducted as appropriate. At all times during the investigation, confidentiality will be balanced with the need to gather facts.
- The School Administration, Board Chair or designated investigator will communicate, as appropriate, with the student's parents. A confidential report will be prepared and filed. Based upon the outcome of the investigation, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

Special Education and 504 Services

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is committed to providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all eligible students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and all applicable North Carolina laws and regulations. Students who are eligible for enrollment and admitted through PSPA's enrollment process will be enrolled regardless of disability. Upon enrollment, the school will obtain educational records from the student's previous school to ensure continuity of services and supports. PSPA provides a continuum of special education and related services designed to meet each student's unique educational needs. Services are determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) appropriate to enable the student to make meaningful educational progress. Parents or guardians who believe their child may be eligible for special education services or accommodations under Section 504 are encouraged to contact the school's Exceptional Children (EC) Department, Section 504 Coordinator, or school administration to discuss referral and evaluation procedures.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Eligible students with disabilities are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). FAPE means special education and related services that:

- Are provided at no cost to parents or guardians.
- Meet the requirements of IDEA and the State of North Carolina.
- Include appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary educational services, as applicable.
- Are provided in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

English Language Learners

Pine Springs Preparatory Academy provides language instruction and support services for students identified as English Learners (ELs) in accordance with federal and state laws, including Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Students transferring to PSPA who have already been identified as English Learners will continue to receive appropriate EL services. For newly enrolled students, a Home Language Survey is completed as part of the enrollment process. Students whose survey indicates the use of a language other than English may be screened for English language proficiency using the WIDA Screener, as required by NCDPI.

EL Services

Students who qualify for English Learner services receive instructional support based on their individual English language proficiency levels and academic needs. Services may include:

- English language development instruction
- In-class instructional support
- Small-group or individualized instruction
- Classroom and state assessment accommodations, when appropriate
- Instructional resources and assistive supports to promote language development and academic success

The type, frequency, and level of services are determined by the school's EL staff in collaboration with classroom teachers and school administration. Instruction focuses on developing English language

proficiency while supporting student success in grade-level academic content.

Assessment and Monitoring

English Learners participate annually in the ACCESS for ELLs® assessment, administered statewide to measure English language proficiency and monitor student progress. Students who meet the state-established English language proficiency criteria will exit direct EL services and will be monitored for academic success for the period required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Students who continue to experience academic challenges after exiting EL services may receive additional support through classroom interventions, tutoring, or the school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Parents and guardians will receive required notifications regarding English Learner identification, placement, services, annual assessment results, and student progress through conferences, progress reports, report cards, and ongoing communication from the school.

Homebound Services

PSPA only provides homebound services to students who require the service as an accommodation in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan. For a 504 Plan, the parent/guardian must provide current evaluation documentation for the student's disability from a physician. The parent/guardian must supply the school with a release of information to access information from the physician who supplied the evaluation. In the case of an IEP, the IEP team will determine the evaluation data needed.

Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this Parent and Student Handbook:

- “We,” “Us,” “Our,” “School,” “The School,” “Pine Springs,” “PSPA,” “Organization,” “Corporation,” “Company,” “The Board,” “Board,” “Board of Directors,” and “Employer” refer to “Pine Springs Preparatory Academy”.
 - “Parent,” “Guardian,” “You,” “Your,” and “Yours” refer to the individual who is acknowledging the receipt and the understanding of this Parent-Student Handbook.
 - In addition, the term “School Administration” may be used interchangeably to refer to the designee appointed at the direction of the School Administration, such as but not limited to, the Superintendent and principals.
1. **Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** A blueprint or plan for a child’s special education experience at school as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
 2. **504 Plan:** A blueprint or plan for how a child will have access to learning at school as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 3. **Exceptional Children (EC):** Are students with physical attributes and/or learning abilities that differ from the norm (either below or above) to such an extent that they require an individualized program of special education and related services to fully benefit from education.
 4. **MTSS Team (MTSS): Multi Tiered System of Support:** This team creates PSPA’s academic or behavior support plan for individual students if needed.
 5. **English Learner (EL):** Is a student who is unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often comes from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically requires specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses.
 6. **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Team:** This team assesses services required by ELL students. It may include the student’s teacher, the ELL instructor, the parent(s), the MTSS team

and the School Administration, who may also work with the student.

ADDITIONAL MISC POLICIES

Personal Items

Students are encouraged to bring only those items necessary for their educational program. Personal belongings that are not required for school should be left at home.

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property brought to campus. Families are encouraged to label all personal belongings, including backpacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, jackets, and other personal items, with the student's name. School staff may confiscate any personal item that is determined to be unsafe, inappropriate, prohibited, or disruptive to the educational environment.

Confiscated items may be held in the school office or by a staff member until they are retrieved by a parent or guardian. Such items may also be subject to search in accordance with the Student Searches policy. Pine Springs Preparatory Academy is not responsible for the loss or damage of confiscated items while they are in the school's possession.

Lost and Found Items

Items found on school grounds or left in classrooms, common areas, or other campus locations will be placed in the school's Lost and Found. Students may check the Lost and Found before school, during designated times, or after dismissal with staff permission. Whenever possible, items labeled with a student's name will be returned directly to the owner or held in the school office until claimed. Unclaimed items that are not labeled will be donated to a local charitable organization after approximately 30 days. PSPA is not responsible for personal items that are lost, stolen, damaged, or left unclaimed. Families are encouraged to clearly label all personal belongings, including backpacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, jackets, sweaters, and other frequently misplaced items.

Fundraising Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide parameters to ensure all fundraisers conducted at PSPA are directly related to school improvement, school community development or learning enhancement.

Approval: All fundraisers must be approved by the School Administration or his/her designee prior to implementation and shall conform to the following conditions. Fundraising activities and projects shall be kept within a reasonable limit.

Restrictions: The following are to be avoided in the context of any PSPA fundraisers:

- Students and parents are prohibited from soliciting PSPA staff and other families on school property.
- In the instance of approved school fundraisers, students and staff may not be required to participate in selling any type of product.

PSPA 2026-2027 TECHNOLOGY USE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PSPA believes that the use of a variety of technologies are an integral and essential part of education as well as the school workplace. Therefore, PSPA equips students and staff with a laptop or chromebook, a School-Issued Google Workspace for Education Account, PSPA Network Access, and additional technology resources for instructional or workplace purposes. Students are expected to use these resources responsibly, adhering to the Student Code of Conduct and the Honor Code as detailed in the PSPA Student Handbook.

The following guidelines are provided to help students and staff identify responsible use of PSPA technologies and network resources. For any questions regarding the application of these guidelines, please contact the Director of Technology or District/Building Level Administrator.

PSPA and Social Media

Only digital communications that come directly from PSPA via email or text, or information shared on PSPA-managed social media platforms, should be considered official communications from or about the school.

The official PSPA social media platforms are:

- PSPA Website: <https://pinespringsprep.org>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pinespringspreparatory>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/pinespringsprep/>

While not managed by PSPA, the PTO maintains a Facebook page at:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PineSpringsPrepPTO>

PSPA does not manage nor endorse any other social media platforms that may reference our school.

Technology Use Policy

Staff and students are provided access to the PSPA network through PSPA-issued devices for creativity, communication, research, and other academic tasks. All use of computers, data, software, and other technology resources provided by PSPA is the property of the school and is intended solely for school educational purposes. Users are expected to use the network responsibly. Network access is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. Each user is personally responsible for their actions while accessing and using the school's network and technological resources.

- **Privacy:** PSPA reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic and to retrieve and review any data composed, sent, received, or stored using its network, Internet connections, or loaned devices. Users should not expect privacy when using any technology or transmissions originating within or around PSPA property, or when using their PSPA-issued Google Workspace Account on or off campus.
- **Cyber Bullying:** PSPA strictly prohibits cyber-bullying, which involves using information and communication technologies—such as email, text messages, instant messages, personal websites, online social directories and communities (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X), video-posting sites (YouTube), and online polling websites—to engage in deliberate or repeated hostile behavior. Cyber-bullying, whether it occurs during or outside school hours, on or off school premises, and aims to defame, harm, threaten, intimidate, or harass students, staff members, or the school, goes against the PSPA Student Code of Conduct and Honor Code and/or Faculty-Staff Handbook.
- **Materials and Language:** The use or access of profane, abusive, pornographic, obscene, and/or impolite materials or language is strictly prohibited. Accidental access should be reported to the Director of Technology promptly. Intentional circumvention of network filters and/or filtering applications is also prohibited.
- **Installing/Copying:** Students and staff are prohibited from installing or downloading any hardware, software, applications, shareware, or freeware onto PSPA loaned devices or network locations. Additionally, students must refrain from copying others' work or intruding into other students' files. It is essential to uphold all copyright laws.

- **Access:** Unauthorized access to the primary network is strictly prohibited. Hacking, using Proxy Technology, or making modifications to the network by any user, except for the Director of Technology and IT staff, is expressly forbidden. To that end, Use of VPN technologies and others similar to it is strictly forbidden unless authorized by the IT Staff. Sharing the primary network password with others is also prohibited. The staff network is used for PSPA Employees. The student network is used for PSPA Students. Guests may utilize the "Guest" Network for access. All users of the "Guest" network are expected to adhere to the PSPA Internet Policy as outlined in this document.
- **Data Protection:** Users are required to refrain from attempting to damage or destroy equipment or files. While PSPA endeavors to maintain the safety and integrity of data, the school does not provide any warranties, either expressed or implied, for the services it offers. PSPA will not be held responsible for any damage to data unless explicitly governed by state or federal law.
- **Passwords:** Students are reminded not to share their password with anyone except a guardian or IT - Administrative staff. It is prohibited for students to use or share login information and passwords belonging to other students. Each user must use their own username and password when using a school-issued device and should not login to someone else's device without the express consent of a PSPA Staff Member. Sharing of another user's password is strictly prohibited. Users should promptly notify the Director of Technology if they suspect that someone else knows their password or if they believe the security of their device has been compromised. Likewise, PSPA Staff passwords are also sensitive pieces of information and one's Google Workspace password should not be used for other personal or confidential accounts.
- **Email and Documents:** Email correspondence conducted using a user-assigned email account is the property of PSPA. Similarly, documents and files created by users on the PSPA network are also considered property of PSPA.
- **Educational Applications:** PSPA uses Google Workspace for Education for its core services for learning and teaching. PSPA may also grant access to vetted Google Additional Services and/or third party applications for educational purposes such as video instruction, testing, etc. By signing this technology policy, parents or guardians agree that PSPA may use Google Additional Services or third party apps for educational purposes. If a guardian determines that they do not want their child to access a Google Additional Services or third party application, we strongly encourage them to talk with an administrator at PSPA.
- **Copyright:** In accordance with U.S. Copyright laws, users of PSPA technologies and/or the network are required to comply. Users must provide proper attribution for any image, directly cited information, video, multimedia presentation, or other content unless it is in the public domain or licensed under Creative Commons. Copying others' work and presenting it as one's own constitutes a violation of copyright law.

Student Personal Devices

Overview

In 2025, the State of North Carolina passed a law that restricts students' use of cellular phones and other wireless communication devices during instructional time (North Carolina General Statute § 115C-76.100). Even prior to the passage of this law, PSPA students were, and still are, prohibited from using any personal wireless communication devices at school, except those explicitly permitted by the teacher for educational purposes. This policy applies to cell phones and wearable technologies. A Wireless Communication Device is a wireless, portable device that can provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties. The following is a non-exhaustive list of wireless communication devices prohibited by this policy: cellular phones, laptops, gaming devices, smart watches, and any personal technology device. Personal devices may not be connected to the school's

network and must utilize personal cellular data. Guardians who feel their student must carry a personal electronic device for medical needs, 504/IEP, etc. are encouraged to speak with a District/Building Level Administrator.

If non-permissible devices are brought to school, they must be turned off and stored in the student's locker, backpack, or another designated location approved by the principal. School employees may immediately confiscate any wireless communication or portable electronic devices that are on, used, displayed or visible in violation of this policy. Absent compelling and unusual circumstances, confiscated devices will be given to school administration and returned only to the student's parent or guardian.

Disciplinary Consequences

An initial violation of this policy is a Level II disciplinary offense. The following factors will be considered when determining appropriate disciplinary consequences: whether the wireless communication device was used (1) to reproduce images of tests, obtain unauthorized access to school information or assist students in any aspect of their instructional program in a manner that violates any school board policy, administrative regulation or school rule; and (2) to bully or harass other students; (3) to send illicit text messages; (4) to take and/or send illicit photographs; or (5) in any other manner that would make more severe disciplinary consequences appropriate.

Search of Wireless Communication Devices:

In accordance with state and federal law, a student's wireless communication device and its contents, including, but not limited to, text messages and digital photos, may be searched whenever a school official has reasonable suspicion to believe the search will provide evidence that the student has violated or is violating a law, board policy, the Code of Student Conduct or a school rule. The scope of such searches must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the nature of the suspected infraction. Searches of content on a student's wireless communication device will only be conducted by the School Principal, Assistant Principal, or Superintendent.

Liability:

Students are personally and solely responsible for the security of their wireless communication devices. The school is not responsible for the theft, loss or damage of a cellular phone or other personal wireless communication device.

Exceptions to Policy:

Wireless Communication Devices are not allowed during instructional time except for the following situations:

- When expressly authorized by a teacher for educational purposes.
 - A teacher must clearly state the intended educational purpose to students and shall have documentation available to support the use (e.g., lesson plans detailing why devices would be needed).
 - The teacher shall only allow devices for the duration and purpose allowed.
- When expressly authorized for a teacher for use in an emergency.
- When required by the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan;
- As required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical

condition.

- Students who need wireless communication devices to manage health care must request access from the school and as part of that request, must provide documentation from a licensed medical professional outlining the necessity of access to the device.
- If approved by administration, students with documented medical conditions shall be granted permission to use the wireless communication device only as necessary for their condition.
- The school shall make accommodations as needed to ensure the student has access to their device but without compromising the educational environment.

Internet Security Policy

To enhance user safety and security, PSPA implements technology protection measures, such as Internet filters, to block or filter inappropriate electronic content, communications, and information, including within electronic mail, chat rooms, messaging, and other forms of electronic communications. While accessing the network, users may encounter materials that lack educational value, as it is not feasible to control all content on a global network. Despite these safeguards, PSPA believes that the benefits of accessing valuable information and interactions outweigh the potential risks of encountering objectionable material. Technology protection measures may be adjusted or temporarily disabled for legitimate research or other lawful purposes, specifically under staff supervision for minors.

PSPA's policy objectives include:

- Preventing user access to or transmission of inappropriate material via the Internet, electronic mail, or other direct electronic communications over its computer network.
- Preventing unauthorized access and unlawful online activities.
- Preventing unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information, especially of minors.
- Complying with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h)] by applying network filtering to visual depictions of material deemed obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors.

Network User Terms & Conditions

Access to the PSPA network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action. Internet access is managed in collaboration with government agencies, regional/state networks, and private networks. The smooth operation of the network depends on users conducting themselves in accordance with the guidelines and responsibilities outlined in this agreement. PSPA's networks are intended to be used responsibly, efficiently, and legally to support the educational and work objectives of PSPA. Violation of any terms or conditions may result in account termination and denial of future network access.

1. **Purpose of Network Use:** Use of the PSPA network during school hours should align with educational and research purposes and be consistent with PSPA's educational and workspace objectives. The use of the Network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in the suspension or revocation of the privilege. Any misuse of the Network may result in disciplinary action.
2. **Network Etiquette:** The use or transmission of offensive, vulgar, threatening, or abusive

language is strictly prohibited. Messages that relate to or support illegal activities may be reported to the authorities. Disrupting network communications is also prohibited. Users should understand that all information accessible via the network is considered the private property of the individual or organization that created it, and it may be protected by copyright, trademark, or other legal protections.

3. **Security:** Security on the PSPA Network and/or any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Network.
4. **Denying Access:** Minors are not granted access to the Internet without proper parental or guardian permission. If a parent or guardian is uncomfortable with the option of his or her child accessing the Internet, the student may be assigned to a different activity when classmates are using the Internet. Teachers must provide alternative assignments to students in this circumstance.
5. **Disclaimer:** PSPA, makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, of the quality or dependability of the Internet service it is providing, or the information obtained from the Internet. PSPA will not be responsible for any damages suffered while using the Internet. This includes but may not be limited to loss of data, delays or delivery failures or service interruptions caused by technical problems or by human error.
6. **Username, Account ID, Account Numbers, and Passwords:** Usernames, account numbers, account IDs, and passwords issued to users must remain confidential. Any user violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.
7. **Independent Navigation on the Internet by Faculty and Staff:** PSPA employees are encouraged to explore Internet resources that are specifically related to the performance of their workplace.. Downloading, uploading, saving and/or printing files and images containing content that is inappropriate for an educational environment and/or a professional business setting, is prohibited. Employees are expected to employ professional judgment in the determination of inappropriate content and poor judgment in this respect represents a basis for disciplinary action.
8. **Students Use of Devices and the Internet:** Student use of the Internet requires teacher consent and guardian permission granted via the Student Technology Use Agreement Form/Student Handbook. Student Internet use is permitted for school related activities only. Teachers, administrators, and staff will strive to maintain appropriate levels of supervision of Internet use by students. Students are not permitted to search for, download, or print any objectionable, vulgar, or offensive material. Authorized representatives of the School may monitor the use of the school's equipment and network for safety and security. This may include viewing incoming and outgoing email messages, documents, etc.
9. **Harassment Free Workplace:** PSPA strives to maintain a workplace that is free of harassment and that is sensitive to the diversity of its employees and students. Therefore, PSPA prohibits the use of computers and the e-mail system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, or anything that may be construed as harassment or disrespectful of others. This also includes student use of the network for distribution of spam, malware, etc.

PSPA Technology Student Respectful Use Policy

In support of this mission, PSPA provides a Technology Help Desk to assist students, parents, and staff with PSPA issued accounts, Google and 3rd party applications, routine device problems, reporting of PSPA Chromebook damage, etc.

Students in Grades K-5 Traditional will leave their Chromebook at school unless it is determined the device is needed for remote learning. Students in 6th-8th Grade Traditional will be able to take their Chromebook back and forth from Pine Springs Prep Academy to home. Students in the PSPA Blended Academy will use their Chromebook for remote learning and may also use them when on the PSPA Campus. At the discretion of PSPA Administration this may be altered to meet the educational objectives of the school. All students/parents are encouraged to review the Pine Springs Prep Technology Use Policy and Student Respectful Use Policy as these documents apply to all students in our traditional and PSPA Blended Academy.

The student will:

- Follow the PSPA Technology Use Policy and PSPA Technology Student Respectful Use Policy as well as any additional technology policies indicated in the PSPA Student Handbook.
- Apply the Student Code of Conduct and Honor Code to all uses of technology.
- Respect the PSPA network and devices as these are PSPA Property. The distribution use of spam, malware, or any information intended to circumvent the network is expressly prohibited.
- Use their school issued Google Workspace Accounts and their PSPA loaned Chromebook exclusively for educational purposes. Students agree not to use another student's Chromebook (for example, logging into another student's chromebook is prohibited).
- Abide by U.S. copyright laws and complete assignments and/or projects by properly citing images, information, multimedia works, etc.
- Abide by the Student Handbook cyberbullying policy.

Respectful Use of Chromebooks and Personal Technology

Students will:

- Treat their loaned Chromebook, charger, and stylus (if issued) with care and respect as these items are PSPA property.
- Only login or use their assigned Chromebook. Students should never use another student's Chromebook.
- Use their loaned Chromebook exclusively for school related activities and learning.
- Come to school with their Chromebook fully charged (6th-8th Grade students agree to not bring their school issued charger to school).
- Keep their Chromebooks in working order and report theft, damage, loss of the charger, loss of the stylus (if applicable) to the PSPA Technology Help Desk or Director of Technology.
- Protect their Chromebook when the Chromebook is not in use by using a Chromebook sleeve. Eating and/or drinking while using the Chromebook is strongly discouraged and damage caused by such is considered negligent.
- Respect the identification tags on their Chromebooks such that they will not modify or remove them. Moreover, students should not decorate their loaned Chromebooks in any manner, e.g. stickers, markers, or paint.
- Respect installed software and applications on the Chromebook and not remove or add unapproved programs, apps, or software. This includes VPN apps as well as any app that blocks network filtering software or applications as well as creates additional networks to circumvent the PSPA network. Proxy use as well as development of web resources to circumvent the network is prohibited.
- Restrict the use of their personal technology (cell phones, wearables) when on the PSPA campus unless given explicit permission by PSPA faculty or staff as denoted in the Student Handbook.

Repairs and Damages

Students are issued a loaned Chromebook at the beginning of their tenure at PSPA. The loaned Chromebook is associated with the PSPA issued Google Workspace account which in turn is tied to the serial number/asset tag of the device. Students are prohibited from logging into or using another student's device. In the case of repair or damages, parents and/or the guardians of a student agree to ultimately be responsible for the damage that their child may cause to the informational resources/services offered by PSPA, including loaned devices, a school issued account, and/or the school network. Parents and students agree to report damaged or lost items to the PSPA Student Tech Help Desk and/or the Director of Technology in a timely manner. Each student device, charger, and stylus (if issued) are required for PSPA Tech Checks, Testing Tech Checks, and End of Year Chromebook collection. If a student leaves PSPA prior to the end of the school term, all PSPA Technology must be returned without damage and in its entirety to a PSPA Technology Employee. The device, the school issued charger, and the stylus (if issued) must be returned. At the time of Chromebook distribution, Parents/Guardian must agree to all provisions of the PSPA Parent Student Handbook that relate to Technology Use.

PSPA Technology Fee (PTF) - Optional Insurance

In the 2026-2027 school term families are encouraged to opt in to a \$35/student PSPA Technology Fee. The PTF is an optional technology insurance offering to offset expensive technology damages. The PTF covers the cost of routine care/repair of Chromebook as well as accidental damage, and a loaner device while the repairs are being made (PSPA reserves the right of 24 hours to assess damages and make the repairs or issue a loaner). This fee not only covers routine damage, but the replacement of one broken screen, one broken keyboard/trackpad, dual broken ports, or one broken motherboard. Replacement devices may or may not be of the same model if a given device can not be repaired. Negligent damage is not covered by the PTF. Examples of negligent damage include removal of keys from the keyboard, opening and tampering with the motherboard, attempting to fix one's chromebook, etc. Families will have two weeks from the time of Chromebook distribution to sign the Technology Use Policy as well as provide payment for the PTF using an approved PSPA payment method. Beyond this time, a Parent/Guardian that does not provide payment of the PSPA Technology Fee, agrees to pay for all damages (accidental and negligent) out of pocket as per the technology fees denoted in this document. Parents and/or guardians of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch should contact the school counselor at their respective school about PTF coverage as PSPA will cover the cost of the PTF for those students. Chromebooks will not be distributed to any student who has outstanding technology fees resultant of damage caused during the 2025-2026 school term. In such cases, Chromebook distribution will occur when the balance has been met. When a replacement device is necessary, PSPA will decide what type of device will be provided.

Items covered by the PTF include:

Physical damage of the Chromebook due to accidental incidents including but not limited to theft of a device (must provide police report), destruction due to natural disaster, accidental dropping resulting in cracked screens, accidental spills that damage the keyboard/motherboard, etc. We note that while PSPA technology can repair/replace screens to ensure active touchscreen capability, there are some instances where stylus entry can not be recovered due to motherboard damage.

Items not covered by the PTF:

Intentional damage, abuse, neglect, or improper use/care which results in structural damage including bending, missing parts/components (removal of keys, lost styluses, removal of the screen bezel, deep dents, hardware damage from food/drink, cracks, modifications of

identification tags, disassembly of the device). The PTF does not cover lost PSPA property such as charging devices or lost styluses (missing parts).

Chromebooks should be transported and stored when not in use in a Chromebook Sleeve or Chromebook Shell.

Eating or drinking while using a Chromebook is strongly discouraged and damage caused by such is considered negligent in nature.

Standard Technology Repair / Replacement Fees: (Covered if accidental in nature and the PTF has been paid.)

Technology Fees include but are not limited to the following:

- Replacement of a Lenovo: \$350.00
- Screen, Keyboard, or Motherboard Replacement (or other major repair): \$150.00
- Replacement of a loaner: \$100.00
- Stylus replacement:: \$25.00
- Charger replacement: \$25.00
- Key Replacement: \$15/key unless the whole keyboard must be replaced or more than 5 keys are missing - negligence (see above \$150)

APPENDIX A: PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE FORM

Directions: This form *must be returned* to his/her teacher properly signed by a parent/guardian.

I have read and understand the rules and information outlined in the

Parent-Student Handbook and the information on student health and wellness. We agree that

_____ and our
(PRINT NAME OF STUDENT)

family will be held accountable for these rules and regulations.

Student's Printed Name: _____ Grade: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Grade 3 or higher)

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher/Pioneer Time Teacher Name: _____

Grade: _____

APPENDIX B: HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND INCOME FORM

Disclaimer: The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is asking schools to collect the information on this form. You do not have to give this information, but if you do not, we cannot determine your child's eligibility for extra benefits under state and federal programs. We will hold the information you provide us as private and confidential to the extent required by law.

Household Size and Income Form

Students attending public schools may be eligible for supplemental education services, resources and opportunities based on the size and income of the household in which they live. Please complete this form to help your child's school determine whether your child(ren) may qualify for additional education support.

PART 1. ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

List name of all adults and children who live in the Household (First, Middle Initial, Last)	School the child attends, or indicate "NA" if household member is not in school	Grade Level	Check if a foster child (legal responsibility of the state welfare agency or court). If all children listed below are foster children, skip to Part 3 to sign this form.	
			☐	
			☐	
			☐	
			☐	
			☐	
			☐	
			☐	

PART 2. TOTAL HOUSEHOLD GROSS INCOME (before deductions). List all income on the same line as the person who receives it. Check the box for how often it is received. Record each income only once. If you enter "0" or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

☐ **DECLINE TO PROVIDE INCOME** – Check this box if you don't wish to provide your income information.

1. NAME (List only household members with income, including any students in the home who have income)	2. GROSS INCOME AND HOW OFTEN IT WAS RECEIVED														
	Earnings from work before deductions	Weekly	Every 2 Weeks	Twice Monthly	Monthly	Public assistance, child support, alimony	Weekly	Every 2 Weeks	Twice Monthly	Monthly	Pensions, retirement, Social Security, SSI, VA benefits, All Other Income	Weekly	Every 2 Weeks	Twice Monthly	Monthly
(Example) Jane Smith	\$200	☒	☐	☐	☐	\$150	☐	☒	☐	☐	\$0	☐	☐	☐	☐
	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐
	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐
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	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐	\$	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 3. SIGNATURE (ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBER MUST SIGN)

I certify (promise) that all information on this form is true and that all income is reported. I understand that the school will get state and federal funds based on the information I give. I understand that school officials may verify (check) the information. I understand that if I purposely give false information, my child(ren) may lose benefits.

Sign here: _____ Print name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Privacy Notice

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is asking schools to collect the information on this form. You do not have to give this information, but if you do not, we cannot determine your child's eligibility for extra benefits under state and federal programs. We will hold the information you provide us as private and confidential to the extent required by law. However, we will share your socioeconomic status with various state and federal programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, with auditors for program reviews, and with law enforcement officials to help them [look into](#) violations of program rules.

HOUSEHOLD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Have you included all your children as household members?
- ☐ For each household member receiving income, is the frequency checkbox checked?
- ☐ Have you signed the form?

DO NOT FILL OUT THIS PART. THIS IS FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY.

Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52; Every 2 Weeks x 26; Twice A Month x 24; Monthly x 12

Total Income: _____ Per: ☐ Week ☐ Every 2 Weeks ☐ Twice A Month ☐ Month ☐ Year

Household size: _____

EDS: Yes _____ No _____

EDS Coordinator: _____ Date: _____