



# **Student Handbook**

## **2020-2021**



*For all policies not specifically addressed in this handbook, the policies in the New Horizons student rights and responsibilities handbook apply.*

Newport Academy and Center for Autism  
Administration

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to the Center for Autism. This handbook has been prepared to help orient students and parents to the program. Please read it as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to discuss any questions with a member of the staff. All students will have an education plan with goals that are designed specifically for them.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Center for Autism is a safe and therapeutic school environment for students with Autism who require a more specialized school environment than is otherwise available within their school system.

### Program hours:

Kiln Creek/Yorktown 8:15-1:55

Woodside Lane 7:55-1:46

### Staff hours:

Kiln Creek/Yorktown 8:00-3:15

Woodside Lane 7:45-3:00

### Office Hours and Phone Numbers:

Kiln Creek/Yorktown 7:30-3:30 369-2581 x2201

Fax: 369-5417

Woodside Lane 7:00-4:00 874-4444 x5500

Fax: 369-6042

This guide provides information concerning school regulations and procedures, transportation, attendance, and conduct. These regulations and procedures have been established to provide all students with an equal opportunity to gain the maximum educational benefit from their program: therefore, each student and family will be expected to be familiar with and to observe these regulations and procedures.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM**

The Center for Autism is a separate public day program established for the purpose of providing a safe and therapeutic school environment for students on the autism spectrum grades K-12 who require a more specialized school environment than is otherwise available within their school system. Inclusive in the program is a highly structured environment, positive behavior programming, low student /teacher ratio, individualized instruction to possibly include speech and language therapy and adaptive physical education, transition services, a focus on communication and social skill development, and community-based instruction. Center for Autism is a regional program serving the following school divisions: Newport News, Hampton, Poquoson, Williamsburg James City County, York County, and Gloucester. The primary goal of the program is to provide appropriate services in the least restrictive environment, enabling the student (through success) to return to his or her home school division.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Our philosophy is to:

- Create an environment of success.
- Provide positive programming.
- Help students identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Focus on students' strengths and build on them.
- Provide the best possible academic support while concentrating on behaviors that might impede academic success.
- Provide motivation for student attendance.
- Provide ongoing feedback and reinforcement.
- Utilize the IEP as a tool to optimize student success and facilitate a return to their zoned school.
- Provide positive role models.
- Help students feel more positive about themselves.

## **PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

### **Academic Program**

The Center for Autism provides a supportive, structured learning environment engineered to meet the specific needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Each student's Individualized Educational Plan addresses Virginia Standards of Learning, Aligned Standards of Learning, communication/language skills, functional academics, positive behavior supports, and social skills development based on their needs.

Our staff provide students with instruction to develop independent work skills and to support learning in group settings. Functional skills and routines are incorporated into instruction to promote student self-sufficiency and independence on tasks of daily living, leisure/play activities, and vocational tasks. Ongoing assessment is used to determine student strengths and needs, develop student goals, and evaluate their progress. The High School Curriculum is designed to award credits in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, some electives, and Health and Physical education, to earn a Standard or Applied Studies Diploma. Students have credit recovery opportunities through on-line programming and classroom instruction.

Technology is used to enhance student learning, communication, and behavior. Laptops, iPads, smart board technology are available and accessible to students. Community-based instruction provides opportunities for students to practice skills they have learned in a variety of settings.

## **Communication and Language**

Communication and Language instruction is a major focus at the Center for Autism and embedded in all instructional activities. Individual and group speech and language therapy, using evidence-based practices, as determined by each student's IEP. Evidence-based practices include, but are not limited to, picture exchange systems for communication, visual supports, social thinking, modeling, functional communication training, video self-modeling, social stories, and reverse mainstreaming.

Speech assessment and therapy address all areas of communication development, including articulation, voice, fluency, literacy, and language. Speech Therapists use and provide support for a wide range of communication systems, including various picture systems and speech generating devices, as determined by each student's IEP.

Speech Therapists frequently collaborate with instructional staff. All staff is trained to use effective strategies to support student communication throughout the school day. Emphasis is placed on the development of individual communication systems that can be used consistently across home, school, and community environments.

## **Positive Supports and Interventions**

The Center for Autism offers many interventions and supports which are individualized to meet student needs and promote positive behavior. An individualized Behavior Intervention Plan is developed and implemented for each student. It is based on a functional assessment of behavior with input from the student, guardian, and instructional staff. Behavior plans focus on identifying and avoiding triggers, teaching students appropriate replacement skills and coping techniques, and reinforcing desired behaviors.

Behavior Specialists provide support services for classroom staff and students through classroom observation, collaboration, and participation in the development of individualized Behavior Intervention Plans. They also support by evaluating individual student needs, creating and teaching the use of visual supports, designing individualized coping sequences, teaching transition strategies, monitoring progress, and providing individualized reinforcement.

All students have access to sensory and exercise activities, Cool Down Tool Boxes, social stories, visual supports, and quiet spaces to help regulate emotions, calm if upset, and re-energize or regain focus for educational activities. Teachers communicate daily with parents/guardians using a Daily Communication Form. Social Skills Instruction focuses on teaching students effective communication, problem-solving, coping, and anger-management skills. All staff is certified in crisis management techniques. The primary goal is to work with students to prevent crisis situations. If a student's behavior does escalate to crisis level, our staff work as a team to quickly and safely de-escalate the situation and calm the student. Our school-wide positive behavior system teaches students appropriate behavioral expectations and rewards student progress. Our students know it as STARR: Safe Students Teaching All Respect and Responsibility.

### **Adapted Physical Education and Recreational Therapy Programs**

The Adapted Physical Education Program at the Kiln Creek and Yorktown Middle School campuses offers a variety of recreational and sports activities adapted to the needs of each student through: Focus on personal fitness: healthy eating, the enjoyment of movement, and stress management. Exploration of a wide variety of leisure interests through experiential learning. Exposure to gross motor movement concepts, skilled movement principles, and instruction in responsible behaviors and sportsmanship.

The Recreational Therapy Program at the Woodside Lane campus offers a variety of recreational and sports activities focusing on the development of life skills, including problem-solving, positive social skills, communication, and cooperation within a team or group. Students are encouraged to explore and



engage in activities that enhance their physical fitness, improve their quality of life, and provide opportunities for socialization. Leisure education includes sport-related games, teamwork challenges, and a wide range of recreational activities that our students might engage in with their families, peers, or with other groups in their community.

## **Transition Services**

Virginia Regulations require that secondary transition services be addressed beginning at age 14. Participants in the Transition Planning process include the student, family, special educator, guidance counselor, career and technical educator, vocational evaluator, therapists, adult agency service providers, or any others who may be identified by the family or school as members of the transition planning team.

The IEP includes age-appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. Transition planning begins with a conversation among the student, the student's parents, and school personnel about the student's education, career, and adult living goals. Transition planning is based on student preferences, interests, needs, and strengths. Services and supports needed to help the student obtain his/her post-school goals are determined using transition assessment data. A wide variety of formal and informal assessments are used to evaluate these factors.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The following is a list of some things that will help parents help their children be more successful:

- Parents can help their students catch the bus every day.
- Parents should read, sign, and return the student's Daily Communication Form.
- Parents should provide written notes for any school absences. Please note that parent notes will not be accepted after the fifth absence. A doctor's note will be required so that we can promote school attendance.
- Attend all meetings, including conference days.
- Set schedules for his/her homework or time to help your child practice what they are learning at school.
- Parents should call the teacher immediately if there is ever a question or concern.
- Parents/guardians should complete all enrollment paperwork and return to the school in a timely manner.
- Parents/guardians should provide emergency contact information for their child.
- Our parents are the best source of knowledge about their children. It helps when parents share.
- When you hear something that concerns you, stay focused on your child's success. Try not to make judgments until you have spoken to the teacher.
- Parents are positive role models.
- Parents' availability for their children is crucial.
- Unless there is an emergency, parents should only call their child's teacher during non-student hours between 2:00 and 3:00. An interruption to class makes it difficult for all students to learn and causes unnecessary disruption.

## **STUDENT PACKET INFORMATION**

Each year you will receive a packet of information and forms to complete. It will include information about our open house for that school year, a summary of important information and procedures for parents, and current emergency and medical forms. Please take a few minutes to complete and sign these forms and return them at an open house or with your child on the first day of school. It is important that we have this information on file in a timely manner. Please do not hesitate to call our office if you have any questions regarding this packet. If you desire a copy of the completed forms, please let your child's teacher know.

## **PARENT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES**

The Center for Autism supports parents with frequent contact and interaction between home and school. It is suggested that parents and the Center for Autism classroom and related service staff establish a consistent mode of communication, e.g., e-mail, daily communication notebook that travels by backpack, phone calls, etc. Please discuss your preferred means of communication with your child's classroom teacher. The Center for Autism will continue to provide parent/family activities at various intervals during the school year to provide information and support. Parents are welcome to come and observe their child and participate in school activities. We have an open-door policy but ask that you be courteous and considerate when planning a visit. We ask that you call ahead and check-in with the classroom or support staff. Extra people in the classroom and changes in routine are often very disturbing or distracting to our students. When you do visit during student hours, please respect the matter of confidentiality regarding all students other than your own child. Prior to visiting the classroom, you will sign in at the office, obtain a visitor's badge, and complete a confidentiality form. Please also know that the staff is very busy during student hours. They would love to take the time to chat and answer questions, but that can best be done after students have left for the day. Support staff will be glad to try to assist you or get questions answered.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Bus transportation is provided for students through their school division. The Center for Autism will be glad to assist with questions or concerns, but school divisions set their transportation policies and procedures. If the bus is late or the bus has not picked up your child, please call your school division

transportation department for information. If you, a family member, case manager, or neighbor transport (drop off or pick up) your child, your child must be signed in or out in the register in the main office. If you plan to transport your child on a regular basis, a note regarding the transportation arrangements can be filed in the office, and daily sign-in will not be required.

### **Guidelines for Decorum in Meetings and Other Interactions**

- Polite and timely communication is expected at all times.
- Meetings and telephone conferences will be scheduled during regular business hours.
- Meetings and telephone conferences will occur during the allotted time.
- Parties should review relevant records prior to meetings
- Parents/legal guardians/adult students should provide relevant documentation to school personnel prior to meetings.
- School personnel reserve the right to speak directly with the responsible party (parents/legal guardians/adult students) when represented by attorneys or other representatives.
- Parties will give prior notice of intent to bring attorneys, advocates, or other representatives to meetings.
- Parents or legal guardians should notify school personnel prior to meetings that he/she will need a foreign language interpreter or interpreter for the deaf or hearing impaired.
- Parties will exhibit respectful and productive conduct.
- Parties will provide prior notice of intent to record meetings.
- Concerns about a party's conduct during meetings should be directed to the principal or administrator.
- Observations of students allowed under limited conditions.
- The Board and Executive Director reserve the right to direct communications regarding students to school personnel.

## **Other Important Information**

Attendance - Parents may excuse five absences during a school year without providing a doctor's note or documentation of a family emergency. All other absences will be considered unexcused.

Unauthorized Items – Items that are disruptive to other students and to the educational process are considered unauthorized items. Any student bringing disruptive items to school will be given the opportunity to give the unauthorized item(s) to support staff upon entering the building to be locked up and returned at the end of the day. Failure to comply with this may result in the confiscation of item(s) and further consequences. Unauthorized items include such things as radios, tapes/CDs, food items, disruptive clothing, or any item that becomes disruptive to others.

Students are not allowed to sell any items while on school grounds, including but not limited to: personal items, trading cards, CDs, food, or candy.

Material Restrictions / Contraband:

- Bandannas
- Compact Discs, DVDs, iPods, Tablets, and Portable Video Games
- Computer software
- Fireworks
- Gang-related paraphernalia
- Glass containers
- Knives
- Laser pointers
- Letter openers
- Lighters/Matches
- Magazines or materials containing nudity, sexual content, guns or aggression
- Open containers
- Phones
- Pornography
- Sums of money of \$50 or more to be reported to the parent
- Tobacco products and/or Electronic Cigarettes
- Tools
- Trading or playing cards
- Weapons

Confiscated Items: Parents/Guardians may pick up confiscated items at the school prior to the end of the school year. Any confiscated items not picked up by June 30 of that year will be disposed of.

Portable Communication Devices: Cell phones or other unauthorized communication devices are prohibited during the school day. Students who bring unauthorized communication devices to school will turn them in upon arrival and retrieve them when they exit the building. Students who refuse to turn in their device will have it confiscated, and a parent/guardian may pick it up.

Telephone Use: Students are not allowed to use school phones without permission. If a student adamantly feels a phone call is necessary, the staff will assist them.

Student Drivers: Students are not permitted to drive a vehicle to and from school. All students must be transported to and from school by school bus, parent/guardian, or an adult with prior written parental permission.

Grading and Homework: Students will be given a daily grade in each subject. Grades will be based on on-task behavior, participation, appropriate completion of tasks, and correctness.

Medication: All medication must be brought to the school by a parent/guardian. No medication is allowed to be transported by the student (book bag or in-person) or by bus staff. All medication must be checked-in, counted, and received by a med trained staff member.

## **Physical Intervention and Time Out Procedures**

All Center for Autism staff is trained in a physical intervention system by certified instructors. All staff are trained in de-escalation strategies and will assess and attempt to de-escalate crises before using any physical intervention. Physical intervention will only be used when there is a safety concern due to physical threat, destruction of property, refusal to leave a designated area, or behavior that could cause injury to self or others. The Center for Autism may utilize a time out room when students exhibit behaviors such as loud and disruptive behavior, which disturbs the learning environment, verbal or physical aggression, or when a student requires a quiet place to calm down and refocus. Time out rooms are supervised, and students are monitored at all times for safety. Students are encouraged to use voluntary time outs when experiencing strong negative emotions to assist them in calming down and evaluating their feelings. Students may be asked to remove shoes, belts, jewelry, and empty pockets if these items pose a safety concern. Parents will be notified of all-time outs or physical interventions involving their child.

### **Guidelines for Student Grooming and Dress**

Students should wear clothes appropriate for school. (Students must wear protective equipment when performing hazardous operations. This includes not only safety glasses and shields but also gloves, aprons, hats, etc. Clothing must cover legs and arms as required.) All students are required to wear shoes, shirts, and pants or skirts at all times on school grounds.

Students who refuse to comply with the dress code may be separated from other students until the situation is corrected.

1. Hats, bandannas, sweatbands, sun visors, or other headgear are not to be worn in the building (except as required for safety in the class).
2. Lewd or suggestive attire may not be worn.
3. Apparel, which advertises, glorifies, or symbolizes any illegal substance, alcohol, or tobacco, may not be worn.
4. Pajamas, tank tops, halter-tops, or apparel specifically designed as beachwear may not be worn.
5. Footwear must be worn at all times. Flip-flops and bedroom slippers are not permitted.
6. Shirts must be worn appropriately (pulled overhead, both shoulders and both arms).
7. Sunglasses are not to be worn in the school building.
8. The midriff must be covered at all times. Clothes that expose the stomach or lower back while sitting, bending, or stretching are considered inappropriate for school.

9. The waist of pants and shorts must be between the waistline and the hip (pelvic) bone. Skirts and shorts must hang no more than two inches above the knee.
10. Clothing, which may be offensive to different cultures or groups of people, is not permitted.
11. Clothing, colors, or items, which may be considered "gang" related, may not be worn on campus.
12. Coats and jackets will be put in the designated area immediately upon arrival to school and remain there until dismissal.



**Center for Autism & Newport Academy  
2020 - 2021 School Calendar**

New Teachers Report	Aug 17
New Paraprofessionals Report	Aug 26
All Staff Report	Aug 27
Staff Development	Aug 27 – Sept 4
Newport Academy and CFA Open House	Sept 4 (10:00 – Noon)
Labor Day - Closed	Sept 7
All Students Report - 1st Qtr Begins	Sept 8
Professional Day	Oct 9 (ER)
Interim Grades in Power Teacher	
1st Qtr Ends	Nov 2
Professional Day/ Election Day/ Parent Conferences	Nov 3 (NS)
2nd Qtr Begins	Nov 3
Quarter Reports Issued	Nov 11
Thanksgiving Holiday - Closed	Nov 25 - 27
Interim Grades in Power Teacher	
Winter Break - Closed	Dec 21 – 31, Jan 1
All Students and Staff Return to School	Jan 4
Martin Luther King Day - Closed	Jan 18
Exam Days/ Work Days	Jan 25 -27 (ER)
2nd Qtr Ends	Jan 27
Teach Workday	Jan 28 (NS)
Regional Professional Development Day	Jan 29 (NS)
Second Semester Begins/ 3rd Qtr Begins	Feb 1
Qtr Reports Issued	Feb 9
President's Day - Closed	Feb 15 (NS)
Interim Grades in Power Teacher	
Professional Day	Mar 5 (ER)
3rd Qtr Ends	Apr 2
Spring Break - Closed	Apr 5 – 9
4th Qtr Begins	Apr 12
Qtr Reports Issued	Apr 20
Interim Grades in Power Teacher	
Memorial Day - Closed	May 31
Exam Days/ Work Days	Jun 16 – 18
Last Student Day, 4th Qtr Ends, Qtr Reports Issued	Jun 18
Last Teacher Day/ Workday	Jun 21

**Calendar Notes:** This calendar applies to CFA and Newport Academy students and staff only. Twelve-month staff should follow the Holiday schedule. Professional Day constitutes a conference day, assessment day, or professional development day. Dates are subject to change due to inclement weather and other emergencies.

NS = No students, ER = Early Release for Students, \* = Dates are subject to change



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT  
OF  
CFA PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

*Please sign and return this form to school:*

I have read and reviewed the Center for Autism Parent/Student Handbook. I understand that if I have any questions about the information contained within the handbook, I may contact a school representative.

Parent/Guardian Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_