

**The Pepin Transitional  
Parent and Student Handbook**



*This handbook provides the most current information on the policies of The Pepin Academies. It should be considered a “work in progress”. Revisions will be made as necessary as we strive to provide the most effective and positive learning environment possible for our students and their families.*

## **The Pepin Academies**

### **Tampa Campus**

3916 E. Hillsborough Avenue  
Tampa, Florida 33610  
813-236-1755/ 813-236-1195 (fax)

## **Admission Requirements**

### **Admission Criteria**

All students attending The Pepin Academies must have a learning disability or learning related disability which may include, but not limited to: Specific Learning Disabilities, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment, Asperger’s Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity, Educable Mentally Handicapped, Pervasive Developmental Delay or a medical condition that affects learning such as Tourette’s syndrome and/or seizures. Students must have a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

## **Stakeholder Responsibilities**

### **Parent and Student Responsibilities**

- Be an active part in your student’s education. Assist with your student’s homework and school projects and ensure they are completed in given time frame.
- Ensure your student is in uniform as they arrive at school each day and replace uniform if it becomes worn, stained, or ill fitting.
- Ensure your student is on time and present in school each day, with the appropriate materials necessary to be a successful student. (i.e. pencil, pen, notebook paper, etc.)
- Call in each absence and/or tardy for your student by 8:00AM
- Ensure that your student gets enough sleep in the evening so that they do not fall asleep during the school day.
- Refrain from texting your student during the school day.
- Participate in face-to-face meetings with teachers.
- Support administration staff when discipline is required. (See discipline policy)
- Parents are strongly encouraged to commit at least 20 hours of volunteer time to the school. This can be accomplished by driving for field trips, volunteering at school events, and joining the Pepin F.I.R.S.T. parent organization.
- Return documents that need signatures on time.
- Participate in the annual GALA in a manner appropriate for your particular circumstance.
- Participate in the Pepin F.I.R.S.T.
- Read and keep up to date on communication from the school.
- Report to the administration, teacher or nurse any medication change, which might change your child’s behavior.
- Encourage your child to show respect for themselves and others.

### **Parent Etiquette**

In order to provide our students a positive learning environment where they are able to observe how to learn and live in a community, please maintain a positive attitude and exhibit respectful behavior to others while on school grounds or participating in school events.

Parents are expected to respect the classroom and classroom hours and address faculty and staff in a polite and courteous manner. Please do not address another student in regards to your child's behavior or circumstances, and report any information deemed necessary to the school administration. Please keep all appointments regarding your child's education. Remember, classroom time is learning time.

### **Teacher Responsibilities**

- ❑ Ensure each student a safe environment in which to learn and stretch abilities.
- ❑ Treat each student with respect and dignity.
- ❑ Be fair, not equal, because each student is different, to all students.
- ❑ Provide a quality education for each student according to the child's needs.

### **Administration Responsibilities**

- ❑ Administer the total education program of the school in conformity with its philosophy and goals.
- ❑ Facilitate a safe learning environment and present the needs of students.
- ❑ Work closely with teachers, students and parent organizations.
- ❑ Articulate school programs to parents.
- ❑ Support teachers in their effort to give a quality education to all students.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for professional development.
- ❑ Oversee school attendance, discipline and student activities.

### **Board Responsibilities**

- ❑ Determine policies and programs deemed necessary by it for the efficient operation and general improvement of the school.
- ❑ Develop a plan for board of director's member professional development.
- ❑ Record minutes of all meetings
- ❑ Control property and convey title to real and personal property.
- ❑ Adopt policies and procedures necessary for the daily business operation of the school.
- ❑ Student Discipline committee
- ❑ Manage the budget
- ❑ Seek community partners to supplement the funds received, especially for the physical plant.

### **IEPs**

Pepin Academies will make every attempt to schedule a mutually agreed upon time for IEP meetings. It is our policy to send two written notices of the IEP meetings. If we do not receive a response from you, or you are unable to attend, we will hold the meeting at the scheduled time and send home copies of the IEP for your review. If you feel additional information needs to be added and/or changed, another meeting will be scheduled. However, the same process will be followed as previously stated.

IEP's must be reviewed a minimum of once a year prior to the expiration date of the current IEP in order to comply with federal guidelines.

### **Curriculum**

#### **Academics**

The Pepin Academies follows the current Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and Florida Standards. These standards, expectations, and benchmarks are met through the utilization of multisensory teaching techniques such as visual, kinesthetic, and auditory learning modalities.

#### **Grading Scale**

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
Below 60	F

### **Promotion/Retention Policy**

Students must show a consistent effort in order to participate in the learning process and meet the requirements of Hillsborough County's Student Progression Plan. Every effort will be made to assist the student, however, if a student does not show that they are interested in their learning and demonstrates a reluctance to put forth effort, this behavior may result in failure and possible dismissal from our school. Promotion and Retention decisions are based on the student's individual progress as well as attainment of State and District benchmarks. Goals for student promotion may be determined by the student's individual educational plan.

### **Interim Reports of Grades**

Grades can be viewed at any time on our Edline system. New students and parents each receive a separate activation code. Once they go to the site, they will be prompted to set up a user name and password to access the system. We encourage parents to set up their own account instead of just using the student's account. This system also gives access to view class information, assignments and homework the teacher may post. Report cards are given out quarterly and must be picked up at the school on the designated report card pick-up days. Parents will be notified during the grading period if their student is receiving a "D" or an "F" in any of their academic coursework.

### **School Wide Discipline Plan**

Discipline is a process that uses teaching, modeling, and other research-based strategies to change inappropriate behavior and maintain appropriate behavior to ensure a safe, orderly, and productive learning environment.

The faculty and staff at The Pepin Academies provide students with an enriching, challenging, and nurturing learning environment. Each teacher has a classroom management plan addressing the rules and procedures applicable in their specific classroom. These rules and procedures are taught and reinforced on a daily basis to ensure our students have a clear understanding of the expectations for the learning environment. The best discipline occurs when the teacher is prepared and instruction is continuous.

The Pepin Academies is striving to obtain recognition as a model PBS school in the state of Florida this year. PBS stands for Positive Behavior Support. This is a framework for changing the culture and environment of a school to improve educational outcomes for students. The focus is on teaching and positively reinforcing appropriate and expected behavior. The three pillars of PBS at Pepin are:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility

The meaning of these pillars are defined for each area of the school and taught to the students at the appropriate developmental level by every member of the school community.

The Principal or designee may take disciplinary action against any student whose conduct is judged to be unacceptable for The Pepin Academies. All mitigating circumstances will be taken into careful consideration, including the student's exceptionality and how it may or may not impact their ability to comply.

Unacceptable behavior is divided into two categories. Level 1 infractions tend to be minor incidents that are typically handled by the classroom teacher. Level 2 offenses are more serious events that are handled by a member of the administrative team.

### **Referrals**

A referral is an official notification of a disciplinary problem. When issued, a copy is sent home for a parent/guardian signature. If the form is not signed and returned the next school day, a phone call is made to the parent/guardian. If the student is in high school or middle school, then a lunch detention will also be assigned. Any serious behavioral violations that create a pattern of misconduct may result in a suspension.

**Prior to a Referral:**

1. Parents and students must know teacher's rules and procedures
2. Teacher and other staff members must document minor infraction and actions taken. Several interventions should be attempted prior to writing a referral for persistent unexpected behaviors.
3. Teacher will communicate with parents about concerns related to their child's behavior on a consistent basis.

**Level 1 Behaviors include but are not limited to: (Level 1/Minor Infraction Referral)**

- Repeated violation of dress code
- Being outside of class without permission from teacher
- Purchasing food or drinks from vending machines during unapproved hours.
- Using electronic devices on campus (including cell phones) without permission
- Unexpected behaviors
- Tardies to school or class
- Refusing to work
- Inappropriate Language
- Chewing gum

**Level 2 Behaviors (Level 2/Major Offense Referral)**

Level 2 behaviors merit a more severe consequence and could render a student liable for suspension or expulsion from the Pepin Academies. These offenses include but are not limited to:

- Conduct or expression that denigrates any individual or class of individuals
- Bullying or harassment (to include electronic media-i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snap Chat, cell phones, etc.)
- Inappropriate touching
- Skipping Class or leaving campus without permission
- Theft
- Deliberate actions with the intent to hurt self or others, such as fighting, biting, rock throwing, etc.
- Defying authority
- Vandalism
- Disrespect to faculty or staff member
- Cheating or academic dishonesty
- Lying
- Possession of tobacco products
- Smoking
- Bullying (to include Ethnic/racial/gender slurs)
- Possession, use, showing effects of, or distribution of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs.
- Failure to comply with the terms of disciplinary probation
- Driving violations (High School only)
- Excessive tardiness and/or absences
- Public displays of affection
- Violation of the computer or Internet policy
- Excessive minor violations (listed above)

**Consequences for Level 2 Behaviors to be determined by Principal/Director of Student Support could include but not be limited to:**

- Parent contact and conference
- Out-of-School Suspension

**Searches in school buildings or on school property**

The school administration retains control over lockers and desk space loaned to students and regulates admission and parking of automobiles on school grounds. Therefore, if there is reasonable suspicion that drugs, weapons, dangerous/ illegal matter, or stolen goods are likely to be found, the school principal and/ or designee has the right and duty to inspect and search student lockers and

desks and student or non-student automobiles. The school principal and /or designee, in exercise of the school's duty to enforce school discipline and to protect the health and safety of the student body, also has the right and duty to search the student's person if there is a reasonable degree of suspicion that drugs; weapons; dangerous/ illegal matter, or stolen goods are likely to be found on the student's person. All items may be turned over to the police, resulting in possible criminal or juvenile court prosecution.

### **Cell Phone/Electronic Communication Use**

Cellular phones are not permitted to be activated anywhere on campus during school hours without permission by staff. If any faculty or staff sees or hears a student's phone, or if the student is caught text messaging, the device will be confiscated and held in the Director's possession, as this is not attending to the learning environment. The confiscated phone will be returned to the parent/guardian at the discretion of the Principal/Director. Repeated offenses may result in the student losing the privilege of bringing these devices to school. Inappropriate material on cell phones, iPads, or PSP's will not be permitted. In an emergency, family members must contact the school, not the student's cell phone.

### **Destruction of School Property**

Any student found guilty of defacing or destructing school property will be required to pay for any damages as determined by the school.

### **Suspension**

A suspension is a disciplinary action imposed upon a student who, in the opinion of the administration and based on the rules and conduct code of our school, is guilty of serious misconduct.

When a suspension is issued, the parent/guardians are notified and the date(s) the suspension is to be served. Administration may meet with the parent/guardians and the student to discuss the situation. Suspensions will only be out of school.

### **Out-of-School Suspension**

- The student is not permitted on campus.
- The student will not receive credit for work he/ she has missed while suspended
- The student may not participate in or attend any after school clubs, sports events or extracurricular or athletic activities during the days of the student suspension.

### **Manifestation Determination Meeting**

Once an exceptional education student has received his/her 8<sup>th</sup> day of out-of-school suspension, a *Manifestation Determination* meeting will be called. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether there is a relationship between the student's disability and their misconduct. At this time, the committee will review the student's disciplinary history and determine how the student's disciplinary history relates to the following:

- The student's identified disability
- Intervals of suspension
- The severity of the behavior/infraction
- Patterns of misconduct

Each subsequent suspension will require a *Manifestation Determination* meeting to be held.

### **Emergency Situation**

Certain rule infraction(s) may constitute an emergency situation. An **emergency situation** is defined as one in which the student's presence at school poses a danger to persons, property or self. An emergency meeting of the administration will be convened to address the situation.

### **Mental Health/Guidance Services**

Guidance services are available for all students. Through individual and group counseling, counselors assist students in making decisions concerning personal/social adjustment, course selection and requirements, and college/occupational planning. Guidance staff members promote academic achievement, enhance personal and social development, assist students with educational and career exploration, coordinate academic and college/career testing and provide crisis intervention.

## Pepin Transitional Dress Code Policy

All uniform shirts must be purchased from our provider, Risse Brothers. Uniform shirts will have the **Pepin Transitional** logo. Each specific job site will inform you of their unique uniform policies as well. All students must be in their appropriate uniform once they enter the Pepin Academies. Students will not be allowed to change once they have arrived.

### Shirts

Official uniform shirt in black or job site shirts

- Shirts must be tucked into pants at all times.
- Uniform shirts must be clean, wrinkle and lint-free
- Undershirts are permitted underneath uniform shirts but must be either black or white without any design or lettering.
- If you will be training with the daycare program, scrubs may be worn on job site days

### Pants

Long pants (black), khaki style (no sweatpants, jeans etc. see director for details)

- Pants must be worn at the waistline.
- They must fit appropriately (not too tight, loose, long, or short)
- NO** Cargo shorts unless job site permits
- May not be ill fitting and must not cause a distraction of any kind (appropriate workplace pants). It is imperative you speak with the director if you are unsure if your pants are appropriate.
- Pants must be in acceptable condition at all times (free of holes, rips, un-faded, no bleach spots etc.)

### Jackets

- A navy blue, black, or burgundy jacket with NO lettering or embellishment whatsoever may be worn
- Heavy jackets/ winter coats may only be worn during cold weather

### Long-sleeve shirts

- A long sleeve solid white, black, navy blue or burgundy shirt may be worn underneath the uniform shirt in cold weather.

### Shoes

- Brown or black closed toed and closed-heel shoes must be worn on academic school days (specific job sites will vary on their specific rules)
- Laces must be tied properly at all times
- Shoelaces must be the same color as the shoe. (white, black, or brown)
- Shoes must be in acceptable condition

### Belts

Solid brown or black belts must be worn

- No studs, chains, sequins, flames, etc. on belts.

### Socks

Brown, black or white socks must be worn.

- Socks must be worn and visibly seen.

### Hats or Head Covering

- No hats or head covering (i.e.-bandanas) may be worn at any time unless specifically worn for religious reasons or during outside activities.
- A knit or stocking cap may be worn during cold days but must be removed upon entering the classroom

### Jewelry and Accessories

- ❑ No large or obtrusive jewelry may be worn.
- ❑ Specific job sites may have additional rules.
- ❑ No body piercings other than earrings
- ❑ Headphones will not be worn when at training site or while on campus unless permitted by direct teacher.
- ❑ Tattoos must not be visible while on the job site.

### **Grooming**

- ❑ All uniforms must be clean and in good repair.
- ❑ Hairstyles and colors that are distracting as determined by the school administration are not permitted.
- ❑ Personal cleanliness, proper hygiene and proper hair grooming should be maintained at all times. This includes finger nails clipped at approved length and cleaned.
- ❑ Specific job sites may have additional rules.

### **Student ID Badges**

- ❑ Student ID badges are to be worn at all times during days the student is in class AND the job site.
- ❑ ID badges are considered part of the uniform. Arriving to the job site or classroom without it is a violation of the school's dress code.

*There will be days within the school year when Free Dress will be allowed on campus. In addition, Pepin Transitional has many off-site activities. Students are required to wear appropriate clothing for these activities. The following minimal standards of dress will be in effect at these times:*

- Thongs, flip-flops, slippers, or bare feet are not permitted
- Shirts must have sleeves
- Tube tops, spaghetti straps, and clothing that expose the entire shoulder may be worn only with an over-garment (see Assistant Director for details)
- Garments exposing the midriff, cleavage, waistline (either front, back, or sides) shall not be worn.
- See-through or mesh garments may not be worn.
- Miniskirts, mini-dresses and short-shorts are not permitted. If you would like to wear a dress, please see Mr. Stansberry for further details. Garments and/or jewelry with area sexually suggestive, vulgar, have drug or alcohol-related wording or graphics which will provoke or may tend to provoke violence or disruption in the school shall not be worn.

### **Identification Badges**

***Students are required to wear an ID Badge while attending the job site. ID Badges are provided for students during orientation.***

The administration reserves the right to prohibit any clothing items, accessories, or grooming styles that are deemed to be disruptive to the learning environment or to present a safety concern.

### **Attendance**

#### **Attendance Policy**

Florida School Law, Chapter 232 states that children up to age 16 are required to attend school regularly during the entire school year. To fully benefit from our instructional program, students are expected to attend school regularly, be on time for classes, and satisfy all course requirements. Poor attendance or excessive tardiness may result in failing grades and will be taken into consideration when evaluating a student for promotion and/or graduation. The attendance policy includes the following:

- ❑ An absence can be excused by a phone call on the same day. Voice messages must be clear and include the name of the caller, the name of the student, the date, and the reason for the student's absence. If a call was not received on the same day, then only written notification will be accepted for an excusal. This notification must be submitted in a timely fashion and with the above required information.

- ❑ All classwork is required to be made up for any absence.
- ❑ After the 3rd unexcused absence per semester, an attendance intervention form will be initiated and notification sent to the attendance committee.
- ❑ After the 7<sup>th</sup> absence per semester, a letter will be sent home reminding parents of the grade drop policy for 10 or more absences. The parent or guardian is also encouraged to contact the school for assistance.
- ❑ After the 10<sup>th</sup> absence per semester, any further absence must be accompanied by a physician's note or court document to be considered excused. A letter will be sent home informing the parent or guardian that the student will receive a grade drop of one letter for each nine weeks left in the semester. The parent or guardian will also be directed to contact the school to schedule an attendance conference with administration. If this is not possible, a social worker may visit the home.
- ❑ After the 10<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence per semester, a mandatory letter from the district will be sent home.
- ❑ After the 15<sup>th</sup> absence per semester, a letter will be sent to the parent or guardian regarding possible dismissal and the attendance committee will formally review the case. For medical excusals, a referral to Hospital Homebound may be considered. A social worker may visit the home.
- ❑ After the 15<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence per semester, the student has met the legal definition for truancy and law enforcement may be contacted. For students that have a driver's license, this may result in a suspension of this license.

### **Reporting an Absence**

The parent or guardian should call the school office by 8:00am to report the student's absence to the designated office personnel. Voice messages must be clear and include the name of the caller, the name of the student, the date, and the reason for the student's absence. The Pepin Academies may request additional documentation upon the student's return.

### **Excused Absences**

Examples of excused absences are:

- ❑ Illness of student (Physician's note may be required upon administration request)
- ❑ Medical or dental appointment
- ❑ Accident resulting in injury to student
- ❑ Death in the family
- ❑ Observance of a religious holiday (This will not count against a student's perfect attendance)
- ❑ Subpoena by a law enforcement agency or a court appearance
- ❑ Emergency reasons approved by the school administration

### **Unexcused Absences**

Examples of unexcused absences are:

- ❑ Truancy of a student
- ❑ Vacation
- ❑ Out-of-school suspension
- ❑ Any absence not excused by the administration of Pepin Academies

### **Tardy Policy**

A student who arrives to school after class has begun causes a disruption to not only other students but themselves. A student is considered tardy if they are not in their classroom by 8:00AM. Any student arriving after this time should report to the school office to receive a tardy pass. Students will not be permitted into class without a tardy pass. Parent must accompany student to the office when signing in late.

**Note: Excessive tardies for all schools, whether excused or unexcused, will be addressed by administration of The Pepin Academies on a quarterly basis.**

### **General School Information**

### **Pepin F.I.R.S.T.**

Pepin F.I.R.S.T. organization will be formed each year and will remain active. Parents and teachers are encouraged to be an active participant in this association in order to provide fund raising events and other activities as designed each year by the organization. All parents are encouraged to have input and be active on behalf of your child.

### **Arrival Policy**

Students may arrive after 7:30 a.m. and must report directly to the designated area. Please do not drop your student earlier than this time as there is not adequate supervision before this time. Once students enter the property, supervision must be present in order to ensure their safety. Continuous disregard for this safety rule will endanger your student's placement at The Pepin Academies.

### **Parent/Visitor Parking**

When visiting the school, parents and visitors are asked to park in the open field lot next to the main entrance or in visitors parking area in the back of the main building. You must report to the main office for a visitor's pass to enter the school area. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!**

### **Dismissal**

The Pepin Academies students are required to remain in their designated areas while waiting to be picked up. For the safety of your student, and to ensure a quick flow of traffic, please remain in your vehicle.

Dismissal time is not an appropriate time for a parent/teacher conference. If you would like to speak with your student's teacher, please make an appointment in advance.

### **Observers on Campus Policy**

The Pepin Academies welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with parents and qualified private providers in order to meet the needs of its students. In order to facilitate the many requests made for school observations in a timely manner, please follow the procedure outline below:

- Before scheduling any observation, the school must have a current "Authorization of Exchange of Confidential Information" on file for any provider who wishes to observe or consult. In addition, all observers are required to sign the Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form
- Requests for observations must be made at least one week in advance by submitting a Classroom Observation Request Form to the Director of Student Services.
- Each Classroom Observation Request will be considered on an individual basis based on its purpose, duration, and frequency. Every effort will be made to accommodate the request; however, our first priority is maintaining the learning environment for our students. To minimize classroom disruptions, the duration of observations may be limited based on purpose as well as staff availability. Observations will be scheduled based on classroom schedule, school personnel schedule, and the requests of the parent or private provider.
- A member of qualified staff will accompany visitors to classroom.
- Follow-up discussions with the classroom teacher and/or administration must be scheduled in addition to the actual observation.

### **Conferences**

All conferences with teachers must be scheduled. Please contact the teacher via email, phone or written notice.

### **Make-Up Work Policy**

A student who has an excused absence is permitted to make up work missed. Parent or student must make arrangements to pick up work and all work must be completed within a time specified by the teacher. It is a general rule that the student is allowed the total number of days they were absent plus one (1) to make up work that was missed during an absence.

It is the teacher's responsibility to give initial instructions before assigning homework or giving make-up work. It is the policy of The Pepin Academies to assign homework only as a reinforcement of a concept that has been taught and not as an initial assignment. "Practice does not make perfect, it makes permanent."

### **Change of Phone Numbers and Addresses**

It is imperative we have current phone numbers and addresses for all our children. Please notify the school office immediately of any changes in phone numbers (home, cell, and work) or addresses.

### **School Business Absence**

Students on school business will be counted as present and be allowed to make up missed work.

### **Examples of school business:**

- Field trips approved by the administration
- An academic activity directly related to the instructional outcomes
- A summon to one of the administrative offices
- Participation in regularly scheduled, school sponsored athletic event
- Other approved activities such as Student Council, club meetings, etc. as designated by the school administration

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an important part of our curriculum and students are expected to participate in all field trips. If you are unable to pay for field trips, please notify the appropriate staff and arrangements will be made. Students with a lunch, aftercare, or library balance of \$20.00/ higher will not be permitted to attend field trips until the balance is paid. In the event your student is unable to attend a field trip, please note that a refund cannot be given. Students not attending field trips will be required to complete classroom assignment relating to the subject of the field trip.

Occasionally, classes may have field trips contingent upon criteria established through contracting. You will be notified about the eligibility and qualifications requirements for these field trips. Be advised that if your student does not earn this privilege, they will not be able to attend and will remain on campus to follow regular schedule. Students are required to make up all work from his/ her classes that may have been missed due to the field trip.

A field trip form signed by the parent is required for each field trip (telephone permission is not accepted). Chaperones are an integral part of our field trips to help with supervision and transportation. Please note...when on a field trip, parents are to act in a supervisory position with students. Any parent chaperoning for a field trip must go through SERVE verification and approval. Please find form in entry packet. No parent will be able to chaperone or volunteer in the classroom until SERVE verification has been received.

### **Social Networking Group Events**

Students will be able to attend monthly Social Networking Group Events organized through the school. Each event may involve a cost. It is not a requirement for students to attend any of the events. If your student chooses to attend, they must abide by the rules stated in the handbook and through instructions/regulations listed for each individual event as well as the rules/regulations of the Pepin Academies. Parents are expected to pick up students from the events at the designated time. Failure to do so could result in the student no longer permitted to attend the events.

### **Early Release of Student**

We expect our families to make every attempt in arranging all appointments for their student after school hours. **If this is not possible, a parent or guardian must report to The Pepin Academies main office to properly check their student out of school.** A note or phone call **MUST** be turned in to the administration office on the day of the early release request. **Please do not call ahead** and expect us to have the student waiting for you in the office unless in the case of an extreme emergency. This disrupts the educational momentum in the classroom. **No student will be allowed to be signed out after 2:30 pm. At this point, they must wait for general dismissal.**

### **Non-School/Personal Items**

The Pepin Academies is not responsible for the loss or damage to personal items that are brought to school and therefore, students are encouraged to leave these articles at home.

### **Student should not bring the following items to school:**

- Toys, games, dolls, or stuffed animals without specific permission from their teacher
- Items of value

- ❑ Trading or game cards, candy or gum

## **Parties**

Birthday parties for individual students are not allowed. Invitations to parties at a student's home are not to be distributed at school unless all members of the class are invited. No food is to be brought in for a class.

## **Health Issues**

### **Emergency Illness Procedures**

If a student becomes ill at school, every effort shall be made to notify parents, guardians, or an emergency contact person. An emergency information card must be on file in the school office. Students will be released to persons on the emergency card **ONLY** unless otherwise notified by parent. **It is extremely important to keep your emergency card up to date with all current phone numbers and contact information.**

### **Immunization Requirements for School Entry**

- ❑ Students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades who are making their initial entry into a Florida school must present a record of a physical examination within the last twelve months.
- ❑ The immunization record must show that the child has met the minimum state requirement.

### **Health Policy**

Students too ill to remain in class must request permission from their teacher to report to the office for admittance to the clinic. Parent or guardian shall be contacted and a determination made whether the student shall go home or return to class.

The health clinic is available to students from 7:30AM to 3:30PM. Once school begins, students must have a pass to see the school nurse and are not permitted to see the nurse between classes.

### **Medication Policy**

Prescription medication shall be administered at school by the school nurse. Students must have a Physician Authorization Form on file in order to receive over-the-counter medications. All medications must be brought to school by a parent or guardian. No child should bring medication to school. **NO student is permitted at any time to self-administer medication(s).**

Medication must be brought to school in the container in which it was purchased.

A separate supply of medication must be kept at school. Medication shall not be transported between home and school on a daily or weekly basis. The medication label must indicate the student's name, name of medication, physician's name, dosage, and time (frequency)

If medication requires equipment for administration (cup, spoon, dropper), the parent is responsible for supplying the articles labeled with the student's name.

New parental authorization forms may be requested periodically. When medication is discontinued or the end of the school year arrives, medication not taken home by the parent shall be destroyed.

## **School Lunch Program**

The Pepin Academies is an approved sponsor and participates in the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program. Pepin follows all federal and state laws and guidelines regarding nutrition and free and reduced priced breakfast and lunch for qualifying families. Application for the federal free and reduced program are in your pre-enrollment packet and also available at school. Students may

bring their lunch. Our school lunch program offers a wide variety of food items; however, if your child is not eating during lunch, we respectfully ask that you provide food items that they will eat from home. The prices are as follows and are subject to change:

**Breakfast:** Free for approved students  
\$.50 for approved reduced priced students  
\$2.75 for full pay students

**Lunch:** Free for approved students  
\$.75 for approved reduced price students  
\$4.25 for full pay students.

Parent and guardians may send breakfast/lunch money daily, weekly, monthly or annually. Please send lunch money in an envelope with your child's name on it and turn it in the office. Checks should be made payable to The Pepin Academies. Parents/ guardians may also make on-line payments through our website via the "My Student Account" link.

There are also a la carte drinks and snacks available in the cafeteria daily. These a la carte items must be paid for in cash or may be put on the child's breakfast/lunch account only if a permission form is completed and on file with the lunch staff. This form is in your pre-enrollment packet and also available at the school.

Contact Jason Aponte at 813-236-1755 if you have any questions.

### **Weather Emergency Warnings/Drills**

#### **Tornado**

Tornado safety rules are posted in each classroom. Students are to follow these directions. Tornado drills are conducted on a regular basis.

#### **Inclement Weather**

If it should be necessary to close school for any reason, the announcement will be sent to parents ASAP and/or made over local radio/TV stations. It is our policy to follow Hillsborough County School District's determination of school closings. In times of natural disasters, such as hurricanes, our school will follow safety precautions as deemed necessary by the school administration.

#### **Fire Drills**

Fire Drill safety routes are posted in each classroom. Students are to follow these directions. Students shall leave the building quickly and silently in an orderly manner. When the building is emptied and the signal given, the students will return immediately in an orderly manner to their classroom.

### **Internet / Computer Use**

Pepin Academies provides its teachers and students with access to a variety of resources on the Internet. Within the context of our mission statement, this Internet access will be used to meet goals of our curriculum. Students will have the opportunity to enhance their learning through a wealth of additional resources for reference and research.

It is important to understand that using the Internet is a privilege, not a right. This privilege will not be granted if a student violates the Internet or Computer policies set forth below.

In an effort to educate students about efficient, ethical, and appropriate use of the Internet, the following policies are in place:

#### **Basic Information**

- The school has additional software to further block inappropriate sites.
- Students will be supervised/ monitored at all times while using the Internet.
- Students will be able to access the Internet in computer labs, classrooms, and in the media center.
- Students are not permitted to use the Internet without adult supervision.
- Any student using the Internet is held fully responsible for his/her actions. If he/she acts irresponsibly, his/her consequences depend on the violation. Consequences range from school disciplinary actions (lunch detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, dismissal) to law enforcement and / or other appropriate agencies.

### **Inappropriate or Unacceptable Uses of the Internet/ Computer**

- ❑ Using the Internet for any and all illegal activities or financial interactions
- ❑ Setting up, accessing or reading e-mail without permission
- ❑ Entering chat rooms and playing on-line games without permission
- ❑ Attempting to access vulgar or pornographic sites/ materials
- ❑ E-mailing chain letters
- ❑ Conducting any and all activity and use that violates the mission and purpose of the school
- ❑ Degrading or vandalizing computer equipment or changing/ disrupting computer system performance
- ❑ Accessing the school network or DOS without permission
- ❑ Downloading viruses
- ❑ Conducting and all activity and use that violates the mission and purpose of the school

### **The school will make every effort to ensure that students are using the Internet appropriately but cannot be held responsible for the following:**

- ❑ The reliability of the content of a source received. Student should evaluate and cite sources appropriately
- ❑ Costs that a student may incur if he/she requests a product or service for a fee
- ❑ Any consequences of disruption in service that may result in a lack of resources (Although every effort will be made to ensure a reliable connection, there may be times that the Internet service is down or scheduled for use by the teachers).
- ❑ Guaranteeing privacy of access or mail; the media specialist, teachers, and administrators reserve the right to investigate possible misuses or monitoring any activity that comes through or Internet connection.

### **Media Center Policy**

Pepin Academies Inc. is a K-12+ school with a very diverse population of students. As a result of a wide spread of age, interest, and ability, the collection must develop to maintain interest for all students equally. Both the 1st and 14th amendments to the U.S. constitution, as well as court rulings such as American Amusement Machine Association, et al., v. Teri Kendrick, et al., 244 F.3d 954 (7th Cir. 2001); cert. denied, 534 U.S. 994; 122 S. Ct. 462; 151 L. Ed. 2d 379 (2001), have established that a minor is entitled to many of the same freedoms from government interference regarding materials they might access.

We wish to ensure that you, the parent/legal guardian, understand that you are the only one that can legally decide as to your child's, and only your child's, access to content available here at the school media center. "Library Collection and Checkout Policy Waiver" must be signed in order for your child to check out books from the upper interest level sections. Any special needs as indicated in your child's IEP will also be considered regarding any material restrictions as agreed upon by you and the school staff. If you have any questions and concerns, you may contact the media specialist.

### **Volunteer Commitment**

Charter schools can no longer ask families to pay a monetary amount in lieu of volunteering time at the school. While this makes mandating volunteerism at the Pepin Academies impossible, it is our belief that parent volunteers are essential to the success and viability of our school. Parents are strongly encouraged to help out at school in a variety of ways: driving students to events, securing donations of goods and services in support of our various community events, or personally donating time in service to the school. It is hoped the level of support we have previously received from our parents and the community will not be lessened. Parent volunteer hours will continue to be monitored and tracked. The Pepin F.I.R.S.T. organization will be key in helping organize volunteering initiatives.

### **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

*This policy has been developed as prescribed in F.S. 1006.147 and in conformity with Florida Department of Education (FLDOE.)*

The Pepin Academies will not tolerate unlawful bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited during any educational program or activity conducted by The Pepin Academies, during any school- related or school-sponsored program or activity or through the use of data or computer that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of The Pepin Academies.

## DEFINITIONS

**“Bullying”** means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more student or employees. It is defined as any unwanted and repeated written, verbal or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve:

- Teasing
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Cyber stalking
- Cyberbullying
- Physical Violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property

**“Harassment”** means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical contact directed against a student or school employee that:

- Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear or harm to person or damage to personal property
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

**“Bullying”** and **“Harassment”** also encompass:

- Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered **retaliation**.
- Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying and/or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
  - Incitement or coercion
  - Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of The Pepin Academies
  - Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

**“Harassment”** or **“Bullying”** also means electronically transmitted acts (i.e., internet, e-mail, cellular telephone, personal digital assistance (PDA), or wireless hand-held device) that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student, and the behavior both causes mental and physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s).

**“Cyberstalking”** means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate or to cause to be communicated words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

## EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

The Pepin Academies expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, level of cognition, level of social awareness, demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of the school facilities and equipment. It is understood that due to the nature and social limitations concomitant with the identified disabilities of

many of the students, cases of suspected bullying will be diligently investigated in order to determine, to the best of the investigator's ability, causation relative to the students disabilities. Such behavior is essential in maintaining an environment that provides an education that enables each student to excel as a successful and responsible person. The standards for student behavior shall be set cooperatively through interaction among students, parents/guardians, staff and community members, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of such an atmosphere requires respect for self and others as well as for The Pepin Academies and community property on the part of students, staff and community members. School administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers serve as role models for students and are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, to treat others with civility and respect, and to refuse to tolerate harassment and bullying. Students are expected to respect the person, property, and the rights of others; to obey constituted authority; and to respond to those who hold that authority. The Pepin Academies shall provide for appropriate recognition and positive reinforcement of good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment or who are found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment or found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall include discipline in accordance with Academies policies and administrative procedures. Egregious acts of harassment by a certified educator may result in a sanction against the educator's State-issued certificate. (See Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida-F.A.C. 6B -1006)

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment or found to have falsely accused another as a means of bullying or harassment of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

## **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING**

Any student or student's parent/guardian who believes the student has been or is the victim of bullying or harassment should immediately report the situation to the principal. The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who will be responsible for notifying the principal. Complaints against the principal should be filed with The Pepin Academies Board of Directors.

All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal, director, or as described above. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy to the principal or as directed above.

Written and oral complaints shall be considered official reports. Complaints may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint.

The principal shall establish and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers, and parents the procedure for reporting bullying and how such a report will be acted upon. A victim of bullying and/or harassment, anyone who witnessed the act and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying and/or harassment has taken place may file a report.

## **PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATION**

The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act. All complaints about bullying and/or harassment that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated by an individual, designated by the principal and/or director, who are trained in investigative procedures. Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses shall be conducted privately and shall be confidential. The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including but not limited to:

- Nature of the behavior
- How often the conduct occurred

- Past incidents or a past continuing patterns of behavior
- Relationship between parties involved
- The characteristics between parties involves
- Identified disabilities of parties involved
- The identity of the alleged perpetrator, including whether the individual was in a position of power over the individual allegedly subjected to bullying or harassment
- The number of alleged bullies/harassers
- The age of alleged bully/harasser
- Where the bullying or harassing occurred
- Whether there have been other incidents in the school involving the same or other students
- Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment
- The context in which the alleged incidents occurred

Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of the policy requires determination based on all facts and surrounding circumstances and shall include a recommendation of remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior and a written report to the principal.

A maximum of 10 school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps. The highest level of confidentiality possible shall be provided regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying and/or harassment and for the investigative procedures that are employed.

The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action initiated pursuant to this policy.

## **SCOPE**

The investigator will provide a report on results of the investigation with recommendations for the principal to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of The Pepin Academies authority. If the action is within the scope of The Pepin Academies, stated procedures for investigating bullying and/or harassment shall be followed. If the action is outside the scope of The Pepin Academies and believed to be a criminal act, the action shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If the action is outside the scope of The Pepin Academies and believed not a criminal act, the principal shall inform parents/guardians of all minor parties.

## **PARENT NOTIFICATION**

The principal shall report the occurrence of an incident of bullying as defined by Academies policy to the parent/guardian of all students known to be involved in the incident on the same day an investigation of the incident has been initiated. Notification shall be by telephone, personal conference, and/or in writing by email and shall be consistent with the student privacy rights under applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The notice shall advise the individuals involved of their respective due process rights including the right to appeal any resulting determination or action to the State Board of Education.

According to the level of infraction, the victim's parents will also be notified by telephone and/or in writing of actions being taken to protect the child. The parents/guardian of the perpetrator will also be notified. The expediency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident.

If the bullying incident results in the perpetrator charged with a crime, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the identified victim involved in the bullying incident about the Unsafe Schools Choice Option (No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 932) that states:

*"A student attending a persistently dangerous public elementary school or secondary school, as determined by the State in consultation with a representative sample of local educational agencies, or a student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense, as determined by State law, while in or on the grounds of a public elementary or secondary school that the student, attends, be allowed to attend a safe public elementary school or secondary school within the local educational agency, including a public charter school."*

Upon the completion of the investigation and if criminal charges are to be pursued against the perpetrator, the appropriate law enforcement agencies shall be notified by telephone and/or in writing.

## **COUNSELING REFERRAL**

The Pepin Academies shall provide a referral procedure for intervening when bullying or harassment is suspected or when a bullying incident is reported. The procedure will include:

- A. A process by which the teacher or parent may request informal consultation from school staff (e.g. school mental health counselor, school psychologist, etc.) to determine the severity of concern and appropriate steps to address the concern
- B. A referral process to provide professional assistance or services that may include school intervention with a problem-solving focus to consider appropriate services (parent/guardian involvement required) or, if a formal discipline report or formal complaint is issued, a student referral for such school intervention as counseling support or other action (parent/guardian involvement required.)
- C. A school-based action to address intervention and assistance as determined appropriate by the intervention team than includes
  - a. Counseling and support to address the needs of the victim(s) of bullying or harassment,
  - b. Intentions to address the behavior of students who bully and harass others (e.g. empathy training, anger management, etc.)
  - c. Intervention which includes assistance and support for parents as may be deemed necessary or appropriate.

### **DATA REPORT**

The Pepin Academies will utilize Florida's School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data as prescribed. If the bullying and/or harassment incident occurs, it will be reported in SESIR coded appropriately using the relevant incident code and the related element code. Discipline and referral data will be recorded in Student Discipline/ Referral Action Report and Automated Student Information System. In a separate section, The Pepin Academies shall include each reported incident of bullying or harassment that does not meet the criteria of a prohibited act under this policy with recommendations regarding such incidents.

The Pepin Academies will provide bullying incident, discipline, and referral data to the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) in the format requested, through Survey 5 from Educational Information and Accountability Services and at designated dates provided by the Department.

### **TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION**

Students, parents, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and school volunteers shall be provided instruction at least annually on The Pepin Academies policy and administrative procedure regarding bullying and harassment. The instruction shall include evidence-based methods of preventing bullying and harassment as well as information about how to effectively identify and respond to bullying in schools. Instruction regarding bullying, harassment, and violence prevention and school safety efforts shall be integrated into The Pepin Academies curriculum at the appropriate grade levels. Additionally, specific, targeted instruction will be provided in the prevention of bullying/harassment aimed at students (as well as by students) with disabilities as well as accurate identification of what constitutes bullying/harassment and what does not.

### **POLICY PUBLICATION**

At the beginning of each school year, the Principal shall inform school staff, parents/guardians/other persons responsible for the welfare of a student of The Pepin Academies student safety and violence prevention policy.

The Pepin Academies shall provide notice to students and staff of this policy in the Code of Student Conduct and in employee handbook. The principal will also provide such notification to all contractors providing services to The Pepin Academies.

The principal shall implement a process for discussing at least annually The Pepin Academies policy on bullying and harassment with students. Reminders of the policy and bullying prevention messages will be displayed as appropriate.

### **IMMUNITY**

A school employee, school volunteer, students, parents/guardian, or other persons who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school official and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set for in The Pepin Academies policy is immune from cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident.

Submission of a good faith complaint to report bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments. Such immunity from liability shall not apply to an employee, student, volunteer determined to have made an intentionally false report about harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

**Pepin Academies  
Classroom Observation Request Form**

*Each Classroom Observation Request will be considered on an individual basis based on its purpose, duration, and frequency. Every effort will be made to accommodate observation requests but our first priority is maintaining the environment for our students. Observations may be limited based on purpose as well as staff availability. Visits will be scheduled in an effort to accommodate classroom schedule, school personnel schedule, and requests of the parent or private provider. If there is a need for a follow-up discussion with the classroom teacher, this must be schedule in addition to the actual observation. Complete and return to the Director of Student Support for approval.*

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Individual Making Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (cell) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Title (if qualified provider): \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Observation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Visit Days and Times: (please provide at least three options): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time needed (please state reason if observation is to be greater than 90 minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have requested to observe a classroom or program attended by student with disabilities. I acknowledge that select confidentiality laws may be applicable. In exchange for permission to observe, I agree to the following conditions:

1. *During the observation, I will not address the teacher or support staff present, interact with students, or otherwise disrupt the learning environment.*
2. *During the observation, I will remain in the location directed by teacher or staff.*
3. *I will not ask questions during the observation pertaining to the students in the classroom related to their services, disability, or achievement.*
4. *I will not seek to study or look at work samples from students other than the one I am observing during the observation.*
5. *I acknowledge that I cannot disclose any student identifying information to others related to the observation.*
6. *I acknowledge that school student record information, including all information related to the student's disability and individualized education plan is highly confidential information protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, etc. and that I have no right to access such information for students without permission. To the extent that I glean information related to another student's disability, educational needs, and/or education program during the observation, I must maintain said information in strict confidence, and I may not disclose it to others.*

---

Signature of Observer

---

Date