

Pinnacle Academy

Parent Handbook

**Pinnacle Academy
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Pinnacle Philosophy

The Pinnacle Academy was started in 2001 with a clear vision of a private school that could offer an outstanding, special education in a structured, yet nurturing atmosphere. Years later, the school offers a private education to over 150 students and continues to grow and change with each passing year. Today, Pinnacle Academy provides its students with the instruction, inspiration and opportunity to learn and achieve at their highest potential. The school is unique among programs of exceptional education in that it offers a blended approach to teaching and thus, is able to adapt to the unique learning needs of an array of students. We are committed to teaching and treating exceptionalities through research-based, best-practice methods. We continually assess our program and make enhancements to meet our student's needs and to ensure that our program offers an eclectic approach to learning. We are blessed with teachers who go above and beyond by giving a great deal of personal attention to every one of their students. We are proud of our students and celebrate their individual strengths, talents, and interests. We believe that a student should look forward to coming to school every day. We also believe that parents should feel a sense of "family" throughout our school's campus. We empower parents with knowledge that will help them to actively participate in their child's success.

To fully appreciate what we do and what makes the Pinnacle Academy special, we encourage you to visit and experience firsthand the distinctive characteristics of the school. As you tour our building, we believe you'll notice the quality of the relationship between student and teacher and the high standard of learning taking place. We feel confident that you will see why many of our original teachers are still with us today.

Above all, we believe we have created an educational institution where students feel confident and motivated to learn, where they are understood and empowered, and where parents are taught to turn obstacles into opportunities. We hope that you will come and visit us.

With children in mind,

Dr. Kirstina Ordetx
Head of School

Our Mission

- *To empower students with language-based and learning differences to become independent and successful learners*
- *To provide a unique and incomparable education that delivers a blended model of multi-sensory, brain-based, and project-based learning approaches that supports the theory of multiple intelligences in learning*
- *To provide a model program of excellence in the field of alternative, exceptional education and best-practice methods in teaching*

The Pinnacle Academy makes no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, country of origin, or gender in the administration of education policies, applications for admission, scholarship or payment programs.

CORE VALUES

Our school's core values are important because they help our students to grow and develop during formative years. When values are understood, shared, and demonstrated, they build internal cohesion in our school community. Our faculty strives to model and embed these core values into everyday learning.

Respect

Kindness

Gratitude

Community

Admissions Process

Step 1-Schedule a tour of the school

During this visit, the caregiver will have an opportunity to observe the classrooms, review a curriculum and student data profile, and ask questions pertinent to the program.

Step 2-Application packet

Complete Application Packet and gather appropriate documentation for review by the Director.

Step 3-Schedule a placement assessment

During this visit, the caregiver will provide all documentation including education plan and any professional testing/evaluation reports. The child will accompany the caregiver and a dynamic assessment will be conducted by the Director and a faculty member to include a caregiver interview, review of application packet, academic review, and social observation.

Step 4-Placement determination

The Director will contact the child's caregiver to discuss availability of placement if recommended as a result of the placement assessment. If a space is not available, "wait list" procedures will be discussed. If placement is not deemed appropriate at the Academy, a list of recommendations and resources may be provided. The Administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of acceptance and placement due to

goodness of fit for the student and the existing students. In some cases, a prospective student's needs may exceed available supports, services, and expertise within our program.

Step 5-Transition Visits

A schedule will be determined to allow for the child to visit a classroom. We prefer that the child visit on three separate dates to ensure "good fit" and to allow for acclimation to the campus setting.

Step 6-Acceptance

Upon determination of placement availability and successful visitation, the caregiver will connect with the Business Office to discuss tuition fees and payment and to determine a start date.

The Summit Program is not able to accommodate students who present with a history of physical aggression, an inability to self regulate, a need for intensive 1:1 intervention, or do not demonstrate an ability to work independently.

Instructional Methods and Curriculum

The Pinnacle Academy offers a specialized, alternative education for students who have language-based learning differences, social anxieties, or other reasons that may prevent them from feeling successful in a traditional learning environment. Several programs have been developed to meet the diverse learning needs of our student body. Pinnacle's curriculum has been designed to meet the State mandated requirements, research-based recommendations, as well as the objectives emerging from the mission and philosophy of the school.

From its inception, Pinnacle has set out to implement the latest in cutting edge, research-based methodologies in an environment that is rich with brain-based, project-based, and multi-sensory learning approaches. In addition, we can support a variety of learners through differentiated instruction, pacing, structured literacy, and a combination of whole group, small group, and individual instruction.

Student Assessment

Our faculty combines proven, standardized testing methods with our own signature data collection system to monitor each student's progress and performance over time. These assessment tools provide insight to the education team regarding each child's learning needs and facilitate the development of individualized education planning. A full list of assessment options may be found on the website.

Baseline Data Comparison

Once a student begins in the program, their performance will be assessed across various domains including all applicable subject areas, social, behavior, independence, and computer technology. Our signature checklists are aligned with the state standards educational benchmarks for each grade level and core curriculum content. In the primary and elementary schools, our social development subscales are designed to assess social pragmatic language, conversational skills, relationship development constructs, and Theory of Mind development.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The IEP outlines the student's present levels of academic and functional performance, provides measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, documents the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals, and identifies special education services, related services, program modifications and supplementary aids to be provided to the student. Formal conference times will be scheduled by the school three times per year. Sign up for time slots will be made available by the teacher.

Students in grades 9-12 will transition to a Post-Secondary Plan. Goals and objectives may be revised at any time during the year.

Classroom Placement

Classroom placement will be determined based on student performance, need for modifications and accommodations, supports available, teacher to student ratio, and faculty recommendation. Faculty and administration reserve the right to determine appropriate placement and make placement changes to best meet the student's educational and developmental needs at any time during the school year.

Registration does not "guarantee" a class assignment, but rather an individualized educational program that aligns with the Pinnacle Academy mission and philosophy and the student's specific, educational goals.

Faculty

Pinnacle Academy strives to recruit qualified and dedicated special education teachers and specialized clinicians to provide appropriate educational support to our students. Lead teachers are certified through the State of Florida and participate in extensive training pertinent to the Pinnacle program. Our faculty are professionally trained in the Orton-Gillingham approach, LindaMood Bell, Wilson Reading Systems, Differentiated Instruction, Executive Function Coaching, and other essential approaches to aid learning and performance.

Attendance

The school calendar provides for over 180 days of education (with extended year intensive). Where designated on the school calendar, “Staff In-service”, “Professional Day”, and “No School for Students” indicates that classes are closed to students on those days.

Students are expected to be on time and in school for the entire day each school day. On the day of the student’s absence, the parent should call the school office to report the absence. **Please do not contact the teacher via cell phone or email to report school absences.** The absence will be excused if it meets the criteria outlined below. The parent or guardian must contact the school within 48 hours of the absence or appropriate documentation is required. If this contact is not made, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to be excused from attendance. Excessive absences will lead to a parent conference.

An absence can be excused for the following reasons:

1. Student is ill or injured.
2. Major illness in student’s immediate family (this means parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, or others living in the home or who are close relatives).
3. Death in student’s immediate family.
4. Religious instruction in family’s faith. This requires a note from a parent before the absence.
5. Any absences, including those for field trips, participation in another academic class or program, or other parental requests as judged appropriate by the Administrator, provided that the request is submitted forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the absence.
6. A documented appointment with a doctor or dentist.
7. An occurrence of head lice.

Arrival and Dismissal

The objective of the school is to ensure that each student masters the required subject matter in preparation for advancement to the next grade level. Missed class time is impossible to replicate and is an impediment to student achievement.

Primary Building	Arrival 8:25-8:40 am	Pickup 2:00 pm
Elementary Buildings	Arrival 8:15-8:30 am	Pickup 2:30 pm
Upper Building	Arrival 7:45-8:15 am	Pickup 3:00 pm

Students in grades 7-12 are not to arrive to campus earlier than 7:45 a.m. Students in non-graded classes should check their class schedule for start times. Parents and students who arrive after classes begin (see above times) **must report to the office to receive a late slip notice to return to class. All student tardies will be recorded.** Frequent disruptions to the class due to tardiness will impact the student’s ability to meet

educational learning goals. Students are to leave food and non-educational items (toys, technology devices) outside of the classroom upon entrance.

Parents are required to accompany their children to and from class at drop off and pick up in grades pre-K through 5. Cars must follow the flow of traffic in the parking lot and are encouraged to pay careful attention to students crossing in the parking lot.

Students must be picked up from class on time. If late pick up becomes a problem, a meeting will be required by administration and fees may be assessed (\$1.00 per minute). An afterschool care program is available and can be accessed by contacting the office.

School Health Records

A physical exam, signed and stamped by a licensed provider and dated within one year prior to registration, is required for each student initially entering a Florida school. A physical exam is recommended every three years thereafter. Up-to-date immunizations are required, and all immunization dates must be on Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH680). A Florida physician will transfer out of state immunizations to DH680 form or Department of Health.

Immunization Requirements

Pre-Kindergarten

- 4 DTPs
- 3 Polio
- 1 MMR
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 1 Varicella

Grades K-6

- 5 DTPs
- 4 Polio
- 2 MMRs
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 2 Varicella

Grades 7-12

- 5 DTPs
- 4 Polio (last dose on/after 4th birthday)
- 2 MMRs
- 3 Hepatitis
- 1 TDaP
- 2 Varicella for grades 7,8,9, and 10
- 1 Varicella for grades 11-12

Each school year, a parent/guardian will complete and update all health information and consents on Gradelink. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school office about any changes in the student's health status during the school year, including reasons for absence or tardiness or changes in medication.

Dress Code

Uniform shirts are mandatory at the Academy in white, grey, shades of blue and shades of green. These may be ordered at Salty Printing ([link on website](#)). “Friday t-shirts” may be worn on Fridays and for class field trips and can be purchased from the school Spirit Store.

Students attending Pinnacle Academy should be neatly and appropriately dressed.

Students in grades 9-12 are permitted to wear a button down shirt, in school approved colors, with the Pinnacle Academy logo. These may be ordered at Salty Printing ([link on website](#)). Button down shirts must be tucked in at all times and worn with belted bottoms.

Sweatshirts that are worn in-doors must be embroidered with the Pinnacle Academy logo and worn over a uniform shirt. These may be ordered at Salty Printing ([link on website](#)).

All bottoms must be at least fingertip length with arms extended at sides.

To provide appropriate support and safety during daily outdoor activities closed toed shoes are required. Sandals, flip flops, and Crocs are not permitted at school.

In addition, the following are violations of the school dress code:

- Cutoff pants/shorts or clothes with frayed ends
- Hoods may not be worn on campus. Hats may be worn for outdoor activities.
- Clothing that exposes the midriff or undergarments
- Any clothing, jewelry, or hair styles that may pose a distraction to self or others (including facial piercing, hair colors that are unnatural, henna or other visible body art)
- Leggings are not permitted for students in grade 7-12

Classroom Visitors and Professional Observation

Faculty will encourage an open door policy at the Pinnacle Academy, which allows for parents to feel comfortable on the campus. However, we recognize that excessive classroom observations may pose a problem. Therefore, faculty is supported in following these procedures to ensure that observations are conducted for their intended purpose and limit ongoing disruptions to the classroom setting.

Conditions of visitations/observations:

- **All visitors must report to the front office, sign in, and receive an approved Visitor Badge to wear at all times while on the campus.**
- Classroom visitors shall consist of no more than two parents or legal guardians at any one time.
- Parents may request to have a designated, appropriately qualified professional observe when the educational team (including parent and involved professionals)

- has identified a need for a classroom observation during an IEP meeting wherein all parties were in attendance. This may include:
- Completion of assessment paperwork which requires observation across various settings.
 - Concern related to target behavior across settings (observation will follow team meeting and professional review of behavioral documents and data).
- Planned parent activities (parties, field trips, volunteer projects) will be scheduled with the classroom teachers.
 - Visits shall not exceed one hour at a time in an area in which the child is receiving instruction or participating in a learning activity. Formal observations in a classroom are limited to no more than two per month.
 - The observer is to refrain from distracting the teaching staff or students in the classroom. If questions arise, the parent may request a teacher conference at another time.
 - Parents are not permitted to video tape in the classroom without the Director's permission.
 - Longer or more frequent observations must have the approval of the Director.
 - Observations may not be appropriate in grades 7-12 and will need the approval of the Director.

Communication

Each classroom will establish a formal means of communication between home and school, including a weekly curriculum update and class summary. In an effort to reduce paper usage, most communication will be sent to parents via email and GradeLink. Parents are encouraged to use the Gradelink App if information is to be checked on their phones. Parents should address concerns or questions directly with the classroom teacher. If a resolution is not established, then concerns may be brought to the Director or a team meeting may be convened.

Messages

If parents should need to leave a message for the teacher or Director, they may contact the main office phone. **Parents should refrain from contacting faculty via their personal cell phone unless it is an emergency (including text messages).** Parents should respect the faculty's personal time and adhere to communication during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Any email messages will also be read and responded to during these hours. Faculty will only respond to information regarding scheduling and general questions via a school assigned email address. Any information regarding student performance, school incidents, or behavior should be discussed in person. Parents may request a meeting with the teacher and/or administration at any time that there are concerns.

Field Trips

Some of our classes will participate in off campus field trips. These experiences are designed with an educational purpose and enrich our program with hands-on experiences. Parents are informed about the details of the trips in advance and encouraged to help participate. For liability, siblings may not be included in class field trips. Occasionally a fee will be required for some activities. To participate in field trips, a student must have a signed parental permission slip on file at the school. Parents will be encouraged to chaperone and provide transportation for field trips whenever possible. All parent drivers must:

- Be at least 21 years old
- Have a valid driver's license
- Have completed the School District Volunteer Driver Checklist (this form checks the above and asks for insurance and driving record information)
- Understand that the vehicle's liability insurance is primary
- Have received a copy of the Guidelines for Volunteer Field Trip Chaperones
- Are provided all relevant field trip information

Pre-trip training for both students and chaperones should include the following topics:

- Behavior expectations, including the fact that school behavior and discipline rules apply on field trips
- Activities the students will be participating in
- Acceptable areas for the student to enter at the facility
- Special hazards that have been identified
- An itinerary of the trip
- A general map of the area
- The importance of washing hands after activities (especially if handling toxic substances or petting animals)
- The importance of staying with the group
- What to do if separated from the group
- Procedures for walking in high traffic areas
- Use of the buddy system
- Other related information

Homework

Homework is not intended to be excessive and is developed to provide opportunities for review and practice. Completion of homework assignments is important and the amount of homework varies with maturity, level of course, and teacher. Homework should have different purposes at different grades: younger students to foster positive habits; older students it should facilitate the acquisition of knowledge. Homework is to be the product of each student, not parents. Students who present with significant challenges in a specific subject area should be supported outside of school to complete assignments to align with the research that indicates that frequent exposure and review can enhance

performance and memory. Failure to complete assignments will be addressed in a teacher-parent conference.

Tutoring and Therapeutic Support Services

Students who are listed in the School District contract with Pinnacle Academy and are in the Pre-K to Kindergarten program will be provided with 60 minutes per week of occupational therapy and speech therapy. Other students will be eligible for consultation as determined necessary by the educational team. Observations, additional assessments, and administrative behavioral support are available on campus as needed.

Individual, private therapy and tutoring services are available through the on-site clinic. These services are available at an additional cost to the parent. The Therapy and Reading Center of Lakewood Ranch is in-network with various insurance companies and services are provided on site for convenience. Students in grades pre-K through 2 may receive “pull-out” services if recommended by the educational team. More information is available on the school website. The use of clinic services are not required and are simply provided for parent convenience and the intent of providing multi-disciplinary service support.

Summer Intensive

Pinnacle offers a 3 week extended program, consisting of the same intensity as the academic school year with an emphasis on intensive remediation of areas of academic development and strategy use. Students will be required to attend this program to ensure maintenance of skills. After years of experience and the analysis of our student’s needs, we strongly believe that the summer weeks offer our faculty an opportunity to target very specific skills in an intensive, tutoring-like format. Our teachers are dedicated and committed to these weeks and we expect that our families will support this opportunity.

Students in grades 10-12 may receive an exemption from the summer intensive schedule if they are actively participating in a work experience program during the summer school days and documentation is provided.

Student Behavior and Discipline Policy

Primary and Elementary School

Structure, consistency, and motivation are our key elements to creating a productive learning environment. Our faculty understands that children may experience difficulty adjusting to a new environment, increased demands, and novel sensory stimuli. For this reason, we may increase transition strategies, with the intention of fading these supports over time. We expect parents to recognize the importance of consistency and to support effective in-school interventions while outside of school to ensure each student’s success. Our learning environment is driven by positive reinforcement and motivation. When we implement these core components of behavior support, desired learning responses naturally increase.

We believe in treating behaviors according to their function. Our faculty is trained in the development and implementation of functional behavior assessment and behavior support planning. Though we do not advocate for the use of traditional “time out”, our students will be encouraged to use self assessment and problem solving strategies to demonstrate emotional self-regulation if necessary. Our classes are equipped with auditory and visual cues to encourage independence at an early age. Sensory integration techniques are embedded throughout the day in age appropriate activities to improve attention to instruction throughout the grades.

If the student’s behavior does not respond to the existing positive supports in the classroom setting, then a functional assessment will be conducted. Parents will be notified at the onset of this process. A functional behavior assessment (FBA) is warranted when any of the following are applicable:

- The student’s behavior is disruptive to his/her ability to function or progress in the learning environment.
- The student’s behavior is disruptive to the class’ ability to function or progress in the learning environment.
- The student’s behavior places self or others at risk for harm.

Following the FBA, a behavior intervention plan (BIP) will be developed and reviewed with the parents. Parents are expected to follow through with this plan outside of school to ensure consistency and overall success.

If the student’s behavior poses a significant and consistent disruption to the learning environment, is considered a safety concern, or results in the student’s inability to perform in the classroom setting, the faculty and administrative team reserve the right to recommend an alternative placement where the student’s needs may be attended to with additional support.

Middle and High School

Student Code of Conduct

The Pinnacle Academy strives to provide a learning environment where students and families feel safe, confident, and understood and individual learning and achievement is nurtured. We are committed to helping every student to be successful in school. Working together with our students and families, we want to ensure a safe, orderly, and welcoming culture at the Pinnacle Academy. Students are expected to abide by the student code to:

- Share learning and social spaces respectfully.
- Treat fellow students, faculty, and staff with courtesy and kindness.
- Engage in behavior that supports a positive educational environment.
- Follow the school and class behavioral expectations.

Although we are an educational setting that provides positive strategies for classroom management, we reserve the right to implement consequences and/or deny acceptance to a student based on excessive or disruptive behavior. Discipline in the school setting may include consequences or loss of privileges. *Parents will be responsible for any damage to the school's property, as caused by the student.*

Yellow Card Protocol

Infractions of dress code, class tardies, classroom disruption, or disrespect will be recorded by a signature on the student's Yellow Card.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 st Offense | Warning-Teacher signature and Parent signature |
| 2 nd Offense | Warning-Teacher signature and Parent signature |
| 3 rd Offense | Meet with Behavior Support Specialist/Administration and Parent
Notice of Final Warning prior to In-School Suspension |
| 4 th Offense | In-School Suspension (Three suspensions will lead to student
expulsion) |

Students are to keep their Yellow Card in the CaseIt at all times. Yellow Card offenses will also result in a loss of extracurricular privileges on campus (clubs, officer positions, field trips).

In-school suspension will include academic course work and campus-based community services activities in designated areas.

The following are examples of a "serious offense" and will be followed by a suspension (in-school or out-of-school) or possibly expulsion at the discretion of the administration:

- Disrespect or disobedience to faculty
- Disrespect towards peers
- Destruction of school property
- Stealing from school or peer
- Making false accusations against another person
- Hacking, compromising, or sharing of school computer property or passcodes
- Fighting, bullying, physical aggression
- Leaving campus without permission or supervision
- Cheating on tests
- Bringing inappropriate computer games, programs, magazines, pictures, or books to school (includes text messages, emails, and social network applications)
- Statements expressing intended violence
- Major classroom disruption
- Cell phone use during class or without faculty permission/knowledge
- Injury to another student

Student Removal From Class

Classes at the Academy provide a low ratio and intimate learning environment designed for students who desire to engage in learning. Chronic disruptions to the classroom are

unfair to the class and will not be tolerated. If a student is removed from class following an initial warning, disciplinary action will be taken under the Yellow Card protocol.

Bullying

Pinnacle Academy is committed to protecting its students from bullying, harassment, or discrimination for any reason and of any type. Bullying will not be tolerated and shall be cause for disciplinary action. Faculty will establish what actions a student should take to gain adult assistance and report bullying in the school setting.

Bullying occurs when a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Bullying is considered threatening behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.

Cyber-bullying involves the use of technology to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyber bullying occurs when a student is threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise repeatedly targeted by another person.

A student may be sent home and removed from classes for five days while administration gathers information regarding student claims. Three suspensions will result in expulsion. Immediate expulsion may be determined at any time at the administration's discretion.

DRUG-FREE, SMOKE-FREE AND TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS

Pinnacle Academy is a drug-free, smoke-free and tobacco-free campus. The possession or use of any kind of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vaping jules, alcohol, or drugs by students, staff or visitors is prohibited at all times and at all student activities, on and off campus.

Lockers

Lockers will be assigned for students in grades 9-12 only. Students may not purchase locks for the locker and must refrain from defacing lockers with stickers or other permanent markings. Faculty reserves the right to inspect lockers and remove locker privileges if not utilized appropriately.

Student Acceptable Use Technology Policy

The Pinnacle Academy is pleased to offer students access to a computer network, as well as the Internet. We believe that this service offers considerable and diverse resources to our student's education. Our goal is to facilitate engaged learning, resource sharing, and communication. The student's use of the school's technology network is directed by the faculty and is offered to promote academic growth.

Internet access enables the exploration of thousands of libraries, databases, and other sources of information around the world. Families should be aware that some materials on the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, or potentially offensive. While the purpose of the school is to use the Internet for constructive, educational goals, students may still find ways to access unauthorized information. We believe that the educational value of the Internet outweighs the disadvantages. We respect each family's

right to decide whether or not to allow their child access to the school's Internet. The Pinnacle Academy is committed to use a filtering software and to promote the use of computers in a manner that is responsible and appropriate. Students will not be provided with an email account. Faculty reserves the right to review communications and files to maintain system integrity and to ensure that the network is being used responsibly. Students are not to access personal webpages, Face Book, or any other social media account while at school. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a loss of personal computer use privileges.

Upper School students (grades 7-12) will be assigned a school Google account to manage assignments and communicate with their teachers. This account is for educational and school related purposes only. Any misuse or violation of policy on this account will lead to consequences. All student activity on this account may be monitored by faculty.

Cell Phone/Technology Use Policy

Phones are available for student use. In an emergency situation, students may request permission to use a school phone. Students are prohibited from powering up a cellular phone, smart watch, or messaging device until the end of the day. All technology devices (including cell phones, iPods, iPads, personal computer, or other electronic device) are to be powered off unless the student is given explicit permission by the faculty to use a device for educational purposes. If the electronic device is on or in use without permission, it will be confiscated by the instructor immediately. The electronic device will not be returned to the student at the end of the day without a parent present. Any and all devices are subject to confiscation and search under the suspicion of improper use. Parents should not telephone their children during school hours, as their child's device will not be turned on. It is not always possible to deliver a message received near the end of the day to the classroom. Parents who wish to arrange transportation changes or send messages to students are asked to make arrangements as early in the day as possible and do so by calling the front office. **Please do not instruct your child to power up his/her cellular phone or messaging device.**

Network etiquette and unacceptable use is reviewed with each student and is posted in the computer lab.

- Adhere to the rules of copyright law and assume that all software is copyrighted (unless labeled "freeware" or "public domain").
- Be responsible at all times for the proper use of access privileges.
- Close any URL (site) that has inappropriate material. Report the site to a teacher.
- Be respectful of the care and proper use of technology materials.
- Do not download any unauthorized software programs or files.

Failure to comply with the school's policies regarding the use of technology may result in disciplinary action and/or reimbursement for causing damage to equipment.

Standardized Testing

In the Fall, students in Grades 7-12 will be administered several formative and summative assessments to provide data to support academic goals and objectives. Please refer to the school calendar for semester exam dates. Students who do not take semester exams will receive an 'Incomplete' grade for the course.

College Testing

Each Fall, students in grades 8-10 will be offered to take the PSAT 8/9 on the campus, in order to introduce them to the SAT format and project possible outcomes or highlight deficiencies within a class. Tenth and eleventh grade students will receive test coaching, practice simulations, and resources to prepare for the ACT or SAT testing (off campus).

Transcripts

Transcripts are provided to other schools when a written request is received. No transcripts or final report cards will be released unless accounts are paid in full.

Advisory Program

All students in Grades 7-12 are assigned a faculty advisor who guides lessons in character development and leads discussions to promote problem-solving and team building among the student body. Through daily contact, the advisor helps students with their academic, social, and emotional development and encourages a student to take initiative and responsibility and to uphold the school's core values. Advisors serve as role models for ethical behavior by virtue of their personal standards, dedication, and conscientiousness. They often act as leaders for focused, constructive discussions of the concerns of students. The advisor serves as a willing listener and resource to enable a student to clarify concerns, to identify resources, and to devise possible solutions.

Community Service

Community Service is essential for developing an understanding of the interdependent nature and needs of our community. Pinnacle Academy believes it is important that students contribute to their community by serving others. Therefore, students are encouraged to participate in group and individual community service activities in our local communities. On occasion, these activities may be under the supervision of faculty and staff or a participation effort of the school community.

Upper School students are required to complete 25 volunteer hours per school year. It should be noted that to be eligible for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship a student must complete one hundred (100) hours of documented community service during their high school career. Students are responsible for obtaining signatures for service projects and record their hours in the Gradelink portal. Community service hours will be recorded on the student's transcript for graduation.

Student Drivers

Due to a limited number of student parking spaces, student parking passes will be issued to high school seniors on a first come, first serve basis. Junior students may apply if spaces are available. All student drivers must complete the Student Parking Application form and must have been driving with an official Driver's License (not a Learner's Permit) for one full year. Proof of license and insurance must be provided to register the vehicle. The form may be obtained from the front office.

Employee Ethical Code and Mandatory Reporting

The Pinnacle faculty shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard the dignity of the profession, respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty. Each faculty member will recognize and adhere to the Code of Ethics as outlined in the Florida Code of Conduct. All employees have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the State hotline as mandated by the law.

School Illness Policy and Procedures

To introduce some of the health problems which may be encountered in school settings, we are giving you a brief description of some common contagious diseases. Most of these conditions will result in loss of school time if not treated properly. It is the responsibility of the school to protect all children and staff from contagious disease. Therefore, it is often necessary to send children home if they have symptoms of illness or present with lethargy. The Director reserves the right to determine if a student should be sent home.

***Students feeling ill do not always have a fever, however, a student with a temperature over 100 F will be sent home from school.*

***In an effort to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases, the staff will send a child home if the spread of germs/infection cannot be prevented with the available supervision.*

***If you are contacted by the school to pick up your child due to illness or injury, you need to make arrangements to pick up your child within 30 minutes. The school does not have adequate space to retain sick and injured children who need to go home or be seen by a doctor.*

***In the event that your child becomes acutely ill with a very high fever (103F and above), abdominal pain with vomiting, severe respiratory difficulty, extended seizure activity, first time seizure, or your child is severely injured, emergency medical services (911) will be called to provide emergency care and transportation to your designated hospital if your emergency contact person cannot be reached.*

***If sent home, the child will be required to refrain from attending school until symptom-free for 24 hours (without suppressant medication) and will be required to present a readmission form from the doctor upon reentering the classroom.*

***Parents are required to disclose medical history and information regarding seizures. The seizure policy and protocol will be reviewed with the parent. In the event of a first time seizure (no known history), 911 will be called.*

Doctor's Note

If the student is sent home for suspected illness or contagious symptoms, a doctor's note will be required for re-admittance into the classroom. For your assistance, we have created a form to be filled out by the physician to ensure the clearance clearly states the symptoms being assessed and whether they are or are not contagious. *We cannot accept notes from a doctor simply stating "May return to school"*. Please note that if the child is returned the following day with a doctor's note, it is up to the discretion of the Director to determine if the child appears well enough to be present as per the CDC recommendations outlined above.

Emergency Contacts

If a parent cannot be reached, the Director will contact those persons on the child's emergency list. Please be prepared for such situations and make arrangements ahead of time. Please keep all emergency and work numbers current.

Medication Policy

When at all possible, we encourage parents to schedule so that medications may be given at home under their direct supervision. When this is not possible, the Medication Authorization Form must be completed by the student's parent and medical doctor before a medication is given. A separate form is necessary for each medication request and for an Epi pen. Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container. The written instructions on the pharmacy label will be followed. Dosage will not exceed instructions on the label regardless of parent instructions. Pinnacle Academy does not employ a nurse on the campus. Therefore, medications will be administered by non-medical personnel. *Parents are required to inform the child's teacher of any changes in medication, so that surveillance may be provided related to potential side effects (i.e. tics, seizures).* This includes medication administered both at home and at school. For the safety of your child, you may be asked to maintain a medication log for continuous communication.

Procedure

A. Parental Procedures and Responsibilities

The parent/guardian must:

1. Complete and sign the following forms: (a) *Permission to Dispense Medication*, (b) *Waiver and Release*, and (c) *Medication Dispensing Information*;
2. Deliver all medication to the Lead Teacher in its original prescription bottle. Where appropriate, parents shall count out the number of pills/tablets delivered to the Pinnacle Academy in the presence of a faculty member as a form of confirmation of total amount of pills in the school's possession. Prescription medication shall be in the original prescription bottle with label intact. Non-prescription medication shall be in the original unopened bottle which includes the person's name, medication, dosage, and time of day medication is to be given.
3. Communicate with faculty regarding specific instructions for medication including self-administration where appropriate and any changes to the medication, including

increases, decreases, or termination. Changes in medication should be authorized by the prescribing medical doctor.

All faculty will participate in training regarding the administration of an Epi pen. Epi pens will be secured in a quick-release cabinet in the selected building and will accompany students during off-campus activities.

School Closure

In the event of hurricane/storm/flood watch or warning, faculty and parents are encouraged to monitor the local television and radio stations. Calls will be placed to the faculty, who will implement a student body phone chain to notify parents of school closure. If the School District closes due to inclement weather conditions, local television and radio stations will be notified and will post this information. **If the Manatee County School District is closed, then Pinnacle Academy will be closed.**

Tuition and Service Payments

Parents may discuss available payment options with the Billing Department. Ultimately, parents will be responsible for paying tuition by the due date(s) and will not receive reminder notices. In the event a family is delinquent in the payment of tuition and fees, the School retains the right to:

- Prohibit classroom attendance
- Accelerate tuition payments
- Hold progress reports, report cards, transcripts, and diplomas
- Utilize a collection attorney

Parent Involvement

The Parent Teacher Organization of the Pinnacle Academy was developed in 2008. The PTO's efforts serve to enhance and support our students, while helping them to achieve their greatest potential. The PTO promotes assistance to teachers in the classroom setting, holds fund-raisers for supplemental educational materials and experiences, supports school and family social interaction, and provides a non-biased forum for sharing information on issues that impact our campus. The members of the PTO are all those families and staff members who are associated with Pinnacle Academy. The PTO Board represents the membership. This Board is composed of PTO members who are either elected or appointed to Board positions. The Board meets on a quarterly basis throughout the school year and Board members, along with other appointed PTO members, manage the organizational and financial aspects of all the PTO functions.

The PTO operates on an annual budget, which is approved by a PTO membership vote at an annual PTO meeting held early in the school year. The money used to sponsor PTO activities is raised through PTO projects and annual fundraising events.

Mission

The mission of the Pinnacle PTO is to:

- Share information about school developments from the classroom into the home
- Encourage opportunities for volunteering and increased parental involvement
- Foster networking and social support among caregivers
- Support fundraising efforts to enhance special programs.

A current list of the PTO Board of Directors may be found on the school website.

Volunteering

Parents are required to complete 15 hours of volunteer service at the Pinnacle Academy each year. Volunteerism is one of the outstanding strengths of the school and grows out of the mutual respect between school and home. The Volunteer Committee provides information to parents regarding available opportunities throughout the academic year. Parents will be offered an option to pay a fee as an alternative to completing volunteer service hours. **All parent and family volunteers will be required to report to the front office, sign in, and wear an approved Volunteer badge at all times while on the campus.**

Requests from Parents to Sell Merchandise/Services

Pinnacle periodically receives requests from parents and student family members to sell merchandise from their own businesses on the school property or to the school community. This type of situation may pose a conflict of interest and therefore, will be avoided altogether. In-kind donations of goods and services are always appreciated and allow for the Pinnacle Academy and its PTO to provide its students with enhanced opportunities. Parents are encouraged to advertise businesses in the school newsletter.

Transfer/Withdrawal

In the event that a parent should desire to withdraw a student from Pinnacle Academy after completing registration, a notice of intent to withdraw must be submitted to the Business Office. After April 1, the parent/guardian acknowledges the financial obligation to the Academy and agrees to the terms provided in the registration contract. Once the student has been registered at the Academy, all tuition and related fees are considered obligatory and non-refundable for the annual school year term. Any outstanding balance to the student's account may be subject to late fees and/or collections/attorney fees.

Student Records

Student records of grades, assessment, and transcript are kept in a secured file storage room in the school office for faculty and administrative use only. These files are updated

on a continual basis. Student transcripts and report cards are also maintained in GradeLink.

If parents should choose to apply to another school, records should be formally requested from the prospective school via fax. A Release of Records waiver must be signed by the parent and received by our Administration prior to the sharing of student information with another school or professional. Records will not be released if there is an outstanding balance on the student's account.

GradeLink

In an effort to protect our environment and to streamline communication between school and home, we have adopted a web-based student information system, Gradelink. Gradelink allows for parents and students to log in to a secured portal to view class news, important notifications, photos, calendars, assignments, grades, report cards (graded classes 3-12), and transcripts. Faculty and Administration will communicate with student caregivers via Gradelink when school-wide or class-wide notifications are sent out. Please be sure to access your Gradelink account, become familiar with navigating Gradelink, and check your student's portal weekly to remain informed and abreast of important school news.