

Family Handbook



Discovering abilities. Sharing joy.

2023-2024

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

We want to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to you and your child as valued members of the Pattison's Academy Family! We are committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that fosters your child's educational, developmental, and social growth. Additionally, we are here to support and empower our families in the rewarding yet sometimes challenging task of raising your child. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us should you have any questions regarding your child's school day.

The Family Handbook serves not only as a valuable information resource but also as a guide that outlines our mutual expectations. We kindly request that you take the time to thoroughly review the handbook and reach out to us with any clarifications or concerns.

By working together hand in hand, we can pave the way for your child to embark on a journey of happiness and achievement at Pattison's and beyond!

We look forward to a rewarding and positive school year and working alongside you to ensure our collective success. We are grateful for your support and cooperation.

Warm regards,

Dr. Laura Ganci
CEO

Holly Zipperer
Principal

OUR STORY

Pattison's Academy began when a group of families expressed the need for a place for their children with disabilities to grow and thrive. Integrating education, therapy and medical care, Pattison's innovative summer camp offered children a memorable summer experience, like every child deserves starting in 2006.

Recognizing the gap in adequate services for children with multiple disabilities, Pattison's has holistically grown into an organization operating four core programs, year-round. We do so through a comprehensive model that has changed the trajectory of care for children and young adults with disabilities.

We have become a beacon for inclusion while empowering families and advocating for our unique population throughout the Lowcountry.



MISSION STATEMENT

“Our **mission** is to **unlock potential** for individuals with **disabilities** and **empower** their **families.**”



What to Expect

Pattison's Academy's Charter School is a full day school program.

Instructional Hours are from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Our focus is to enhance students' individual strengths through a motivating learning environment that promotes independence and success. Having our students engaged, participating, and learning is the ultimate goal.

Our Curriculum

The framework for our curriculum is Unique Learning Systems (ULS), which is specifically designed for students with special needs. Each month there is a new topic unit with modified lessons in three differentiated levels. Units begin with Science and Social Studies themes and incorporate reading, writing, vocabulary, math, cooking, and art activities.

IEPs

IEP, or Individual Education Plan goals and objectives are aligned with the SC State standards to provide age and developmentally appropriate instruction in English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, Health, and Life Skills.

MOVE Program

Pattison's is proud to be a MOVE Program (mobility opportunities via education/experience) site. MOVE is a six step activity-based program designed to teach individuals with multiple disabilities basic functional motor skills to explore all environments. It is designed to help the student increase their independence with sitting, standing, walking, and transitioning.

Program Features

- Small class size with high staff to student ratio
- Classrooms equipped with assistive technology and positioning and mobility aids
- Variety of instructional models infused throughout the day: individual instruction, centers, small group, etc.
- A variety of research-based curricula utilized to support instruction
- Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapy available
- Focus on functional living skills, as well as community-based instruction
- Toileting and Hygiene Program
- Enhanced Curriculum Programs
 - Field Trips
 - Community Based Trips
 - In-house Special Programs (Art, Music, Adaptive PE)
 - Leisure Clubs
 - School Store

School-Based Therapy Services

Pattison's offers individual, group, and consultative physical, occupational, and speech therapy sessions. The frequency and duration of therapies are defined in each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Therapists work collaboratively with teachers in order to define optimal treatment plans and goals. Therapy sessions may be provided in therapy rooms, classrooms, or during specials. Please check your child's communication book for services received that day.

Parents are welcome to observe their child's therapy session. Please contact your child's therapist to make an appointment to observe a therapy session.



**PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**



**OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY**



**SPEECH
THERAPY**



**THERAPY
SERVICES**

School Supply List

In order to support your child's learning program we require various supplies: some supplies to be left at school; some supplies that go back and forth between home and school daily; and some supplies that we request throughout the school year.

Please label all personal items you send to school with your child's name.

Items to be provided by family:

- Diapers, wipes, and gloves
- Extra clothing—including pants, socks, shirts, undershirts, underwear, etc.
- If requested by teacher or therapist—grooming and hygiene supplies

Items to be sent in daily:

- Daily Communication Book
- Medications
- Lunch and/or snack
- Any feeding supplies - pumps, etc.

Items requested per semester:

- 4 rolls of paper towels
- 4 containers of Clorox or Lysol wipes
- 3 Lysol sprays
- 1 laundry detergent
- 2 cases of water
- 4 packs of baby wipes
- 2 bottles of hand sanitizer
- 2 reams of paper
- 2 boxes of vinyl, latex, and powder free gloves

Visitor Policy

To ensure the safety and security of our school, ALL visitors must report to the front office upon arrival, as well as sign in and out in the visitor's log.

While families are welcome to visit, please be aware that our students and staff are focusing on the important job of learning. In order to promote that learning environment and keep interruptions to a minimum, we kindly request advanced notice of your visit when possible. If you would like to speak with your child's teacher or therapist, please make an appointment prior to your visit.

Volunteering

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering or needs observation hours for college training, contact Kaitlyn Crawley at kaitlyn.crawley@pattisonsacademy.org

Communication

Making the most out of your family's experience at Pattison's involves open lines of communication between school and home. See below for all the ways you can expect to be communicated with this school year.

Daily Communication Book

We will provide each student with a daily communication book that should be sent back and forth to school every day. It is here that you will receive information about your child's school day including information regarding toileting, hygiene, lunch, etc. This is also a great place for you to share information with the staff—such as how your child slept, toileting concerns, or anything else you consider relevant. Please note that we will also send home important memos and information about various school functions. PLEASE check this book frequently.

IEP Meetings

Annual IEP meetings are scheduled yearly (or sooner if requested). Expect to receive a parent input form a month prior to your scheduled IEP meeting. A draft IEP is developed and sent to you for feedback and input prior to the actual meeting. The full team (including families) report on progress, levels, recommendations, and goals for the coming year.

Email

If, at any time, you would like to reach a member of our staff, feel free to email them at:

firstname.lastname@pattisonsacademy.org

Conferences

Parent/teacher/therapist conferences are scheduled annually in the fall. Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time during the school year. Phone conferences are also available upon request.

***To minimize disruptions to the classroom and to ensure the focus is on the students and learning, cell phones and text messages will only be used to share essential information between the nurse, teacher, and family.*

Family Expectations Policy

At Pattison's Academy, we believe that a collaborative partnership between parents/guardians, caregivers, and the school is essential to provide the best possible education and support for our students. As valued members of our school community, we expect all parents/guardians and caregivers to uphold a respectful, inclusive, and cooperative environment that promotes the well-being and success of every student. To ensure a positive and harmonious atmosphere, we have established the following family behavior expectations:

Active Engagement

Attend parent-teacher conferences, workshops, and school events to actively participate in your child's education. Maintain regular communication with teachers and staff to stay informed about your child's progress, challenges, and achievements.

Respectful Communication

Treat all staff, students, and other parents with respect and courtesy. Use appropriate language and tone when communicating with school personnel and fellow parents/guardians. Address any concerns or disagreements through constructive conversations, following the school's designated communication channels (see grievance policy). Refrain from confrontational or aggressive behavior that may disrupt the school environment.

Inclusivity and Sensitivity

Embrace the diverse backgrounds and abilities of our students, staff, and families. Be considerate of individual differences and cultural norms, fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

Failure to adhere to these family behavior expectations may result in a range of actions, including verbal reminders, written communication, and, in extreme cases, restricted access to school activities or involvement.

By adhering to these parental behavior expectations, you contribute to the creation of a positive and supportive learning environment. We appreciate your partnership in our mission to provide the best educational experience possible.

Confidentiality

Respect the privacy of other families and students by refraining from sharing confidential information. Avoid discussing sensitive matters related to the school community on social media or in public spaces.

Grievance Procedure Policy

Pattison's Academy is committed to maintaining open lines of communication and addressing any concerns or grievances that parents/guardians, caregivers, or stakeholders may have. We value your feedback and are dedicated to resolving issues in a fair, respectful, and timely manner. This Grievance Procedure outlines the steps to follow when raising a concern or grievance related to our school's programs, services, or policies.

Step 1: Informal Resolution

Direct Communication: If you have a concern or grievance, begin by contacting the relevant teacher, staff member, or administrator involved. Openly discuss the issue to seek clarity and resolve misunderstandings.

Teacher-Parent Communication: If the concern involves a specific student or classroom matter, schedule a meeting with the teacher to address the issue and explore potential solutions.

Administration Involvement: If the issue remains unresolved, you may request a meeting with the school principal or appropriate administrator. They will work with you to address your concern and explore possible resolutions.

Step 2: Formal Grievance

If your concern remains unresolved after the initial steps, you may initiate a formal grievance process by following these steps:

Submit a Written Complaint: Provide a written complaint detailing the nature of the grievance, including relevant information such as dates, people involved, and any prior actions taken. Submit the complaint to the school's principal.

Investigation and Resolution: The school will conduct a thorough investigation into the matter. This may involve interviews, document reviews, and discussions with involved parties. The investigation aims to understand the situation and determine appropriate actions for resolution.

Response: Upon completing the investigation, the school will provide a written response outlining the findings and proposed resolutions. The response will be communicated to the complainant within a reasonable timeframe.

Appeal Process: If you are not satisfied with the proposed resolution, you may appeal the decision by submitting a written request to the school's administration. The appeal will be reviewed by an appropriate individual who was not involved in the initial investigation.

Confidentiality: All parties involved in the grievance process are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed and the resolution proposed.

Non-Retaliation: Pattison's Academy prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who raise concerns or grievances in good faith. We are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all stakeholders.

Contact Information: The school's designated grievance contacts are as follows:

Holly Zipperer
Principal
holly.zipperer@pattisonsacademy.org
215-285-1281

Collette Doe
Chief Programming Officer
collete.wade@pattisonsacademy.org
843-402-7850

Laura Ganci
Chief Executive Officer
laura.ganci@pattisonsacademy.org
954-805-9427

Transportation Policy

At the start of each school year, the transportation coordinator will reach out to each family regarding the pick-up/drop-off time and location for the student.

The driver will stop the bus, sound the horn and wait for the child to be brought out by the caregiver. If the caregiver has not made an appearance within five minutes, the bus will continue on its route.

Once the student is brought to the bus, the driver and aide will assist the student onto the bus utilizing the lift or stairs. The driver and aide will ensure the students are in their proper seats and secured appropriately (4-point tie-downs, seatbelts, harnesses, etc.). If the child requires a transfer, lifting, or carrying into their appropriate seating, this will be completed by the family.

In the event of a medical emergency on the bus, including seizures, the bus will safely pull over to assess the situation.

The parent/guardian will be contacted.

If in accordance with the child's seizure plan, EMS will be called.

Students may not eat or drink on the bus (including G-tubes).

If your child is not coming to school or you will be transporting them, please notify bus staff as soon as possible.

*** By signing this handbook I agree to the terms below:

I understand there is **NOT** a full-time nurse on the bus ride to/from Pattison's Academy and the care of the student will be limited to the scope listed in the "Emergency Medication" orders. The RN/LPN assigned to the school will make this plan available to those who need to know and will monitor the students and update the medical cards periodically.

I, the parent/caregiver, assume the risk and responsibility associated with my child riding the bus to/from Pattison's Academy and fully understand the limited care provided during the bus ride.

Attendance Policy

Pattison's Academy is a full-day program—student hours are 8:00 am - 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Our school year begins in August and ends in June. Please refer to the school calendar for planned school closings and early dismissal dates.

If your child is going to be late, leaving early, or absent please call, email, or text your child's teacher. Planned absences can be reported in advance.

State Law and CCSD policy set specific rules for school attendance and lawful and unlawful absences. Pattison's Academy must abide by these laws and policies. When a student is absent from school, a note must be brought to the teacher upon his/her return to school. The note must include a date, reason for the absence, and a parent/guardian signature. When a student has an IEP, all excused absences in excess of 10 consecutive days require the IEP team to hold a special review meeting and may change the student's placement to medical homebound. A physician must certify that the student is unable to attend school but may profit from instruction given in the home or hospital.

We are required by law to report truancy. It is imperative that families communicate absences to their teacher daily or if it is extended due to medical procedures, hospitalizations, etc., the days of expected absences. If circumstances require an extended absence (e.g., medical procedures, hospitalizations, etc.), families should also communicate the days of the expected absence.

Extended Absence

If your child is scheduled for surgery or requires an extended absence, please notify the classroom teacher as well as the nurse. After a 10-day absence, your child may qualify for homebound services, if they are medically cleared.

Prior to your child's return to school, we will need a written medical clearance from your doctor including special instructions (precautions, limitations, positioning needs, etc.). A new therapy prescription may be indicated, as well.

Student Health

As per state and county regulations and to provide the best quality care for your child, annual completion of the student packet including all health forms is required. The completed forms are due before the start of each school year. If the required forms are not completed in their entirety and returned back to school, your child will be unable to participate in school.

We must have a current address and contact number for each child at all times. We also require the names of two relatives or neighbors we may contact if we are unable to reach you. Please notify us of any changes in your contact information. If your child becomes ill at school, a parent, guardian, or emergency contact must pick up your child within one hour of being notified. If no authorized adult picks up your child within one hour, Pattison's Academy will contact emergency medical services.

During the school year, if there are any changes in your child's health status, allergy profile, or medications it is important to inform the school nurse and provide any needed documentation from the healthcare provider.

Any medications or procedures (including G-tube feedings) require written permission from the prescribing healthcare provider and the parent. Without exception, the medication must be in the original bottle and the label must match the prescription.

South Carolina state law requires that we have complete dates of all immunizations received. If your child receives any updated immunizations, please provide us with a copy. If your child does not receive immunizations, a medical exemption letter from the physician or religious exemption from the parent is required. Students will be unable to participate in school without the above documentation.

If your child has any doctor appointments or testing, relevant copies of reports are appreciated to provide continuity of care.

Medical Emergency Policy

Emergency Action Plans

If your student has a known medical issue or need (e.g., G-tube, seizure disorder, asthma, severe allergy, etc.), an "Emergency Action Plan" (EAP) will be developed at the beginning of the school year where all action steps will be identified to provide a safe environment for your student.

Doctors Orders

Any student requiring TUBE FEEDING will require a physician's order to administer at school.

Any student requiring MEDICATION administration for both daily or emergency medications will require a physician's order to administer at school.

-ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE UP TO DATE AND LABELED WITH YOUR STUDENTS NAME-

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Policy

If your student has exhibited abnormal behavior that requires further medical attention, EMS will be called. If an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) has been implemented, the steps indicated in the plan will be applied.

If your student has never received DIASTAT (or other controlled substances for seizures) before, EMS WILL automatically be called per school guidelines.

If your student receives DIASTAT regularly, EMS will NOT be called and parents will be responsible for pick up.

The Principal will make every attempt to notify parents as soon as possible in the event of an incident requiring additional medical attention occurs.

If no legal guardian/parent has arrived at school prior to EMS transport, a staff member will travel with the student to the nearby hospital or facility and meet the parents to give additional reports.

Staff members will not be permitted to stay at the hospital or facility with a student for lengthy periods of time. Parents/guardians are required to arrive at the hospital or facility as soon as possible.

Policy on Management of Communicable Diseases

If a child exhibits any signs of illness he/she should not attend school. If symptoms occur at school you will be called to take him/her home. Please ensure you have a plan to pick up your child.

Examples of illness may include: runny nose that is excessive and/or discolored mucus, skin rashes, severe pain or discomfort, eyes with discharge, fatigue or abnormal sleeping pattern, difficulty breathing, decreased appetite/refusing to eat/drink, diarrhea, elevated temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit, vomiting, apparent sore throat, severe coughing.

Your child should be referred to your pediatrician or specialist for further evaluation of symptoms.

Students must be symptom free and fever free for 24 hours without the use of antipyretic medications (Tylenol, Motrin, etc.) before returning to school.

If your child is diagnosed with an illness, please report it to the school nurse. If your child is exposed to any communicable disease or illness at school you will be notified.

Emergency Closures and Evacuation Plan

Emergency Closing

Pattison's follows CCSD announcements regarding school closings, delays, or early release due to inclement weather.

Closings and delays will be posted on the CCSD website, Facebook, and local news stations.

In the event of an early dismissal parents/guardians will be contacted by email and telephone.

Emergency Drills/Evacuation

To ensure our students and staff are prepared for emergencies, Pattison's practices drills for fire, weather, and security issues.

In the event of an actual emergency situation, Pattison's will follow the protocols set forth by CCSD and law enforcement. Families will be notified about these situations as soon as it is appropriate to do so.



Confidentiality

Your confidentiality is important to us! Issues, topics, and concerns you discuss with any member of our school will remain confidential. However, confidentiality does not apply to cases of suspected abuse/neglect of children or the elderly, cases of potential harm to self or others, and in specific court or other legal proceedings.

Student Records

Student educational and health records are kept in secure file cabinets maintained by Pattison's administration and may be viewed by professionals who are directly involved in your child's educational program (e.g., teachers, therapists, school nurse, administrators). Parents, guardians, CCSD liaisons, licensing/accrediting agencies, and the Department of Social Services may also be granted access to these records. A consent to release/obtain and share this information is signed as part of the student registration process annually.

Our Wrap Around Services



**ADDITIONAL
SERVICES**



**THERAPY
SERVICES**



**THERAPEUTIC
SUMMER
CAMP**



**EARLY
INTERVENTION**

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Case Management: Pattison's Academy Case Management Services assists consumers in becoming eligible for South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN) services. We also coordinate services for children and adults who have qualified for eligibility through SCDDSN. We develop an individualized plan for each person and target Medicaid Services, waiver programs, and other community resources to facilitate access to necessary medical, social, and educational services. Our goal is to help individuals with disabilities reach their maximum potential.

Consultative Services:

Equipment Clinics

Orthotic Clinics

Handwriting Clinics



THERAPY SERVICES

Promoting independence through comprehensive therapies.

Our therapists create individualized and challenging programs to address the specific needs of each of our children. We utilize a child and family-centered model to ensure that our children's progress is meaningful and impactful in their everyday lives.



THERAPEUTIC SUMMER CAMP

An enriching and memorable summer experience,
like every child deserves!

A hands-on, exhilarating experience making memories of a lifetime. Through community-based instruction, campers build life skills and gain social development. Because of the inclusion this program promotes, our campers are better off and our community is further enriched.



**PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**



**COMMUNITY-BASED
INSTRUCTION**



**SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**



**CULTURAL
ENRICHMENT**



EARLY INTERVENTION

Bridging the gap between early childhood development and school age years.

Early Intervention supports families as they navigate early years of a child with developmental delays or disabilities. Through close collaboration with the families we serve, Pattison's Early Intervention team assists in navigating the often complex maze of services to achieve developmental goals.





Parent Agreement

please submit a signed copy

I have read the Family Handbook to completion and agree to the content and terms listed throughout. If I have questions or concerns, I will address them directly with the administration.

NAME of Parent or Guardian

NAME of Parent or Guardian

SIGNATURE of Parent or Guardian

SIGNATURE of Parent or Guardian

To sign electronically [CLICK HERE](#)